Be Sun Savvy
Education in Mercer County

The Situation
Skin cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in the United States, and most cases are preventable. One in five Americans will develop some type of skin cancer in their lifetime. Risk factors for skin cancer include excessive sun exposure, fair skin, a history of sunburns, and age. Tanning bed use before the age of 30 has been shown to increase skin cancer risk by 75%, according to The World Health Organization and the International Agency on the Research for Cancer. Protecting skin with sunscreen, wearing protective clothing including a hat and sunglasses, staying out of the sun at midday, and avoiding tanning beds are some methods to help prevent skin cancer.

Extension Response
A lesson was developed by specialists in the NDSU Health, Nutrition, and Exercise Sciences Department. The lesson teaches strategies to protect skin from damaging ultraviolet rays (UV), and how to identify skin cancer risk factors.

Impacts
Two programs were presented to audiences in Mercer County in addition to news releases and Facebook posts in 2016.
- Beulah Elementary School Relay Recess, 289 students in grades K–4 at Beulah Elementary School.
- Dakota Gasification Company (DGC) Health Fair, 160 adult participants.
The DGC Health Fair presentation included using the Dermascan. This allowed participants to “see” the sun-damaged areas on their faces and neck. Using a UV light, this allows the “teacher” and participant to simultaneously view areas on their skin that might be damaged by the sun. Youth participants experienced a demonstration using UV beads. The beads are used to measure strength of the sun rays that cause skin damage. All participants received sunscreen furnished by the ND Cancer Coalition.

Public Value Statement
Reducing skin cancer creates substantial financial saving toward health care costs for individuals, families, and the nation.

Primary Contact
Dena Kemmet
Extension Agent/4-H Youth Development
1400 Hwy 49 N. #103, Beulah, ND 58523
701-873-5195
Dena.Kemmet@ndsu.edu

Resource Links
https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/boomers/skin