Healthwise for Guys

Public Value Statement
Improving health behaviors can increase quality of life and save millions of dollars in collective health-care costs for North Dakotans throughout their lifetime.

The Situation
According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics, North Dakota men have a higher rate of skin, colon and prostate cancer than the national average. According to an online survey of men’s health concerns with 555 respondents, the four topics of greatest concern to the respondents were 1) cancer, especially colon cancer (53 percent), 2) high blood pressure (47 percent), 3) heart disease (44.5 percent) and 4) overweight/obesity (42 percent).

Previously, NDSU Extension hosted 11 community forums to learn concerns in agriculture and associated programs, and children, families and community-related programs. In the area of health and wellness, forum participants indicated that nutritious foods and exercise programs are a priority within the health and wellness area. We also have been asked to reach younger adults (18 to 35), and these actively engaged men are part of the target audience.

Extension Response
Prior to this, a men-specific health program did not exist, and the survey responses from men indicated their interest in a men’s health program. The “Healthwise for Guys” program includes a website, handouts, displays, presentations and men’s health toolkits, which have been used in workshops in 11 counties in North Dakota. In many locations, “Healthwise for Guys” programming is used in conjunction with the Pesticide Training program. In the first six months of the program, nearly 800 men participated.

Impacts
Participants in the three cancer-related programs increased their knowledge, knew where to go for accurate nutrition and health information, and were willing to share what they learned with others. In the sun safety program, about 98 percent of participants indicated their lifestyle had room for improvement and 98 percent would recommend the program to others. In the colon and prostate cancer programs, 95 percent indicated their lifestyle had room for improvement and 96 percent would recommend the program to others.

A follow-up survey has the following results to date:

- 50 percent of respondents are eating more fruit and vegetables
- 42 percent are doing skin self-checks
- 25 percent are wearing hats with brims in the sun
- 25 percent are using SPF 30 sunscreen
- 33 percent are having skin checks by a health professional

Feedback
“I try to use sunscreen more often and wear long sleeves. I’m after my wife and kids all the time to cover their skin.” - Participant

Resource Link
www.ag.ndsu.edu/healthwiseforguys

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