



4-H +Me = Health: Sun Safety

What will we learn? 4-H members will understand the risk factors associated with sun exposure and will learn ways to protect their skin from sun damage.

Why is this important? Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers. It accounts for nearly half of all cancers in the United States according to the American Cancer Society. There are easy ways to reduce the risk of skin cancer by protecting your skin from sun damage.

Prep time needed: 15–20 minutes; up to 1 week to order and receive UV beads

Activity length: 20–30 minutes

What will we need?

Preparation:

- Sun protection materials: hats, sunglasses, sunscreen, etc.
- Twine or string
- UV beads (can be ordered from many places online, include Educational Innovations or Amazon.com for about \$6 for 250 beads)
- Colored beads
- Optional: Check with county hospitals or doctors to see if they have sunscreen samples

At the meeting:

- Table space for each member to work

What do I need to do?

Preparation:

1. Gather suggested supplies, including ordering UV beads.

At the meeting:

1. Ask your club members what they like about the sun and being outside. Possible answers include fun outdoor activities, it feels good, etc.
2. Then ask what some negative consequences of being out in the sun too long could be. Possible answers include overexposure to heat and high temperatures, heat ex-haustion, heat stroke, exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation, harmful to skin, may cause skin cancer, etc.
3. Ask members to name some things they can do to protect themselves against the sun. Examples include wearing loose clothing such as long sleeves and pants, sun-glasses, hats, sunscreen, drinking plenty of water, checking medications for any sun restrictions, etc. When using sunscreen, apply SPF 15 or higher and apply 30 minutes before going into the sun.

4. Explain that ultraviolet (UV) light is one of the invisible frequencies of light given off by the sun. The UV-sensitive beads contain a pigment that causes them to change color when exposed to UV light.
5. Have each member create a bracelet by adding colored beads to a string. Include one of the white UV beads in the middle of the other beads. Wearing UV bracelets allows you to see when you are being exposed to UV light and can help you remember to wear sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat to stay protected!
6. Take the bracelets outside to see how they work. Try placing a pair of sunglasses over the UV beads while in the sun to see if the glasses help protect the beads from UV light. The glasses should block harmful rays, which is why it is recommended to wear sunglasses to protect your eyes.
7. After the meeting, encourage members to investigate UV light at different times of the day (morning, noon, later afternoon) by using their bracelets. They can also explore whether cloud cover changes the amount of UV light they are exposed to. At a follow-up meeting, ask members to share their discoveries and talk about what they learned.

Summary: Simple steps can protect your skin from sun damage and reduce your risk of sun cancer.

What 4-H projects does this activity connect with: Health and Weather

Resources:

4-H Manual, *Exploring Your Body, Helper's Guide*, from Minnesota Extension Service BU-6857, lesson 1