

In-your-face scan shows cancer risks of sun, sloth and smoking

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ONE of the province's best-known beauties has aged by almost 30 years in five minutes — but it's all for a good cause.

Miss Northern Ireland Finola Guinnane agreed to have photos taken using a new high-tech facial scanner on the Action Cancer Bus.

The technology shows how our faces will look after decades of cancer-causing sun damage, smoking and calorie-laden food — and the results are dramatic.

This unique computer programme, which is used by police trying to trace criminals or missing people, manipulates photographs to provide a stream of images of a person's face as it changes with age.

A photograph of the 22-year-old Belfast model was digitally altered to highlight the damaging effects of smoking, overeating and sun exposure.

After viewing the results, she said: "I don't smoke or sunbathe and I try to keep my weight at a good level.

"That's important to me personally because I like to be healthy, but also professionally because a model needs to look well.

"But, I have to say, the pictures really are very dramatic and show the huge effect all of these things have on your face after a while.

"I hope that people who want to change their lifestyles will look at these pictures and be encouraged to get rid of some of those bad habits."

The process starts with a facial photograph which is then uploaded onto a computer.

With a few simple clicks of the mouse the computer programme — which is available on Action

Cancer's Big Bus — reveals the ageing process if you take care of yourself.

However, it can also add the effects of smoking, overeating and sun exposure and within minutes it produced three images of a 52-year-old woman complete with wrinkles, uneven complexion, sun spots and sagging skin.

Action Cancer's health promotion officer Malachy Nixon said a horrified reaction is typical of people who take part in the process.

"Most people who do this are quite shocked when they see the results, but that is the idea," he explained.

"We can tell people they are doing themselves damage and putting themselves at risk of cancer by not taking care in the sun, smoking and by being obese, but they don't necessarily

take that onboard. It is particularly true with younger people who maybe eat a lot of burgers, and while it doesn't affect them at the time, it will have a very dramatic effect after 20 or 30 years.

"Hopefully this will encourage people to make changes to their lifestyle."

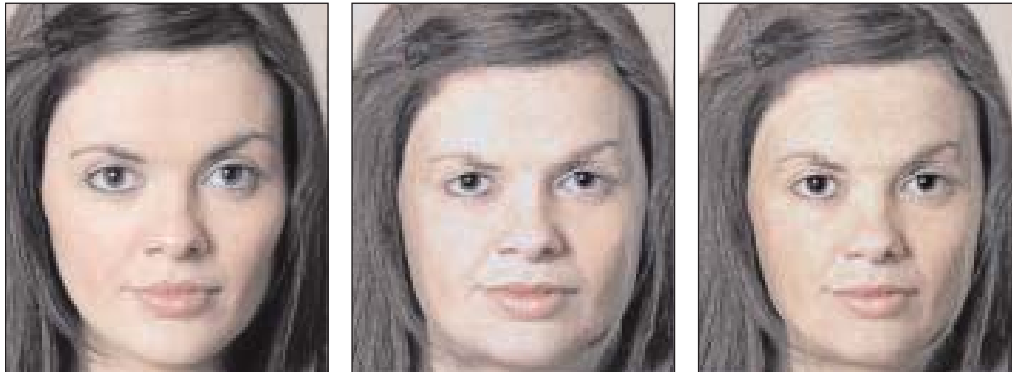
To make a booking for the Big Bus to visit your community group or company telephone 028 9080 3344 or email bigbus@action-cancer.org.

background

The Action Cancer Big Bus is a mobile health promotion unit which provides a range of services to people around Northern Ireland. In the past 10 years retailer SuperValu has contributed more than £1m to the charity's mobile cancer services. These include digital breast screen-

ing and over 70 health promotion and MOT health checks for men and women.





Finola Guinnane, and what she would look like at 50 if obese (centre), or if she smoked (right)

