

Healthy Food Guidelines for First Nations Communities

What is recommended to reduce our risk?

To reduce our risk of chronic disease such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, we all need to change what we put on the table.

We can work towards:

- Making Our Communities Healthier - Working to change the nutrition environment and promoting healthy eating is essential.
- Increasing our use of traditional foods - Protecting, restoring and relying on our traditional foods more, can provide greater food security to our community and healthier food choices. We know that when traditional foods are eaten, we are more likely to get the nutrients our bodies needed than when traditional food is not eaten.
- Decreasing our use of sugar-sweetened beverages - Reducing the use of sugar sweetened beverages will help protect our teeth and our children's health. A recent study suggests that most of the sugar sweetened beverages are eaten at home while 15% seems to be occurring in schools.
- Increasing our intake of vegetables and fruits - Our traditional plants and many of the fruits and vegetables from the farm and market (most of which were originally cultivated by Indigenous Peoples of North, Central and South America) have medicinal, nutrition and healing properties that can protect us from chronic disease if we eat a variety daily.
- Serving healthier food choices in reasonable portions - By learning how to modify and choose recipes that have less fat, sugar, and salt and by following a balanced plate approach when serving foods at the table, we can collectively reduce our risk for obesity and diabetes.
- Increasing the number of community gardens in our communities – Promoting the development of community gardens brings the community together to promote healthy eating and provides nutritious foods for community events.

Ways to help your body:

- Eat lots of vegetables, fruit and berries (5-8 servings everyday by including vegetables and/or fruit at meals or snacks)
- Become comfortable with reading labels to make healthier food choices
- Choose wholesome fresh food over packaged and processed food
- Know what is in your food and beverages
- Make time for cooking and eating together at the table with family and friends

Choose Traditional Foods

There has been a recent generational shift with indigenous individuals moving away from their own self-sustaining, local food systems into industrially derived food supplies. This change has drastically affected the dietary quality and health of these people. Please see the video series created by The Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE) based in McGill University, Canada, responding

to requests from indigenous leaders from around the world to help stop loss of traditional food system knowledge with research and community-driven activities that bridge the generations.