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LIVING IN BALANCE



In Native American Tradition

Physical Activity/Inactivity:

Traditionally, Native Americans were very active. They ran, walked, hunted and danced.

Lack of physical activity can contribute to high cholesterol and weight gain and raises your risk for developing heart disease and diabetes.

Obesity is a major risk factor for both type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Obesity rates in the United States have more than doubled in the past three decades. On average, 30 percent of all adult Native Americans are obese.

Combined with healthy eating, regular physical activity can keep your weight under control, improve blood cholesterol levels and prevent and manage high blood pressure.

To Honor Life and Tradition:

Blood Pressure

- ❖ Increase your physical activity.
- ❖ Stay at a healthy weight or lose weight if you are overweight.
- ❖ Use less salt and fewer processed or convenience foods.
- ❖ Reduce stress. Laugh more!
- ❖ Quit smoking.
- ❖ If you have high blood pressure, take your medication.
- ❖ Use less or stop drinking alcohol.
- ❖ Know your blood pressure number. Your blood pressure should be under 130/80.
- ❖ Have your blood pressure checked at every doctor visit.
- ❖ Talk with your doctor and ask questions about how best to lower blood pressure. Diabetes and high blood pressure cause about 3 out of 4 cases of kidney failure.



BLOOD PRESSURE

Blood Pressure:

Blood pressure is the force of the blood leaving the heart. There are actually two pressures in the blood vessels. The higher blood pressure number is when the heart is contracting, the lower blood pressure number is when the heart has relaxed.

Too much force or high blood pressure on the blood vessels can damage them. Those mostly affected are blood vessels in the eyes, kidneys, heart and brain, which can lead to heart disease, as well as kidney disease, eye disease and stroke.

American Indian/Alaskan Native adults are 1.3 times as likely as white adults to have high blood pressure.



To Honor Life and Tradition:

Physical Activity

- ❖ Run, walk, hunt, dance.
- ❖ With permission of your doctor, be physically active at least five times a week for a total of 30 minutes each day to improve your health. Activity can be done in three ten-minute segments.
- ❖ Find ways to get moving. Watch less TV, walk with a family member or a friend.
- ❖ Even doing gardening or housework can improve your health.
- ❖ Physical activity helps lower stress and prevents and lowers the risks for heart disease.
- ❖ Play games that require physical activity with your children.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Cholesterol:

Some foods of the past were low in fat, like fish and game.

With high cholesterol, fat can build up inside a blood vessel. The higher the cholesterol is in the blood, the more it builds up in the blood vessels. This makes the openings in the blood vessels get smaller. If the openings become too small, not enough blood gets through. Blood vessels can become so narrow that they can cut off blood flow and increase your risk of heart attack and stroke.



To Honor Life and Tradition:

Do not start smoking. If you have started smoking, then make the decision to quit.

- ❖ List your reasons for quitting, and place the list where you can see it often.
- ❖ Set your quit date.
- ❖ Get prepared. Think of habits or routines to change. Throw away tobacco-use material. For your weaker moments, buy raw vegetable or other healthy snacks.
- ❖ Get help. Your doctor can provide helpful ways to quit. Choose a method that you think will work best for you.
- ❖ Make a plan. Think about how you will handle weaker moments.
- ❖ Plan for uneasy times. Plan for how you will handle others smoking around you.
- ❖ Get support. Ask for support from your partner, family and friends.
- ❖ Reward yourself. Decide how you will spend all the money you save once you quit.

Nebraska Tobacco Quitline

TOLL-FREE

1-800-QUIT-NOW
(1-800-784-8669)

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TOBACCO

Tobacco:

Tobacco was given to Native American people to be used only at special times such as during spiritual ceremonies. It is also used as offerings of thanksgiving to Mother Earth and other beings of the Universe for their gifts that help the people. Too much tobacco use leads to becoming addicted to the nicotine that is in the tobacco. Smokeless tobacco products are not a safer alternative to smoking.

- ❖ Smoking increases your risk of heart attack and stroke, and increases your risk of sudden cardiac death two – four times. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death among American Indians/Alaskan Natives.
- ❖ Tobacco use also causes bladder and kidney cancer and the majority of cancers of the mouth, lips, cheeks, and tonsils.
- ❖ Tobacco is the only consumer product that, when used as directed, causes death.
- ❖ Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States. Compared with non-smokers, smoking increases the risk of men developing lung cancer by 23 times and women developing lung cancer by 12 – 13 times.
- ❖ Respiratory cancer death rates have increased in the American Indian/Alaskan Native populations, the only subgroup of the four major U.S. racial/ethnic subgroups to experience such an increase.
- ❖ Tobacco smoke seriously affects the health of children and other non-smokers.
- ❖ Smoking causes early wrinkling of the skin and yellowing of the teeth and skin.

Native Americans have an especially high risk of suffering from tobacco-related death and disease because they have the highest prevalence of smoking and other tobacco use compared to any other population group in the United States.

To Honor Life and Tradition:

Cholesterol

- ❖ Be more physically active.
- ❖ Eat lean meats such as game or fish.
- ❖ Eat food high in fiber and more whole grains.
- ❖ Eat 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
- ❖ Eat less of foods high in fat and cholesterol such as fried foods, butter or creamy foods.
- ❖ Choose 1% or skim milk and low-fat dairy products.
- ❖ Stay at a healthy weight or lose weight if you are overweight.
- ❖ Read food labels.
- ❖ Have your cholesterol number checked.
- ❖ If your cholesterol number is above 200 you are at risk for heart disease.

CHOLESTEROL

Diabetes:

Native Americans are at extreme risk to develop diabetes.

Almost one in three adult Native Americans has diabetes.

- ❖ Diabetes makes you feel tired.
- ❖ Diabetes makes you lose energy to do things.

The percentage of Native American/Alaskan Native youth aged 15 – 19 years diagnosed with diabetes has greatly increased.

Diabetes is a major cause of health problems and deaths in most Native American populations. Native American/Alaskan Native adults are almost twice as likely to die from diabetes-related complications.

Complications from diabetes have increased in frequency and are major causes of death and health problems among Native Americans. The risk for death from heart disease is two to four times greater for a person with diabetes than for a person without. Heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death among persons with diabetes.

Of major concern are increasing rates of kidney disease, blindness, and amputations.

Staying at a healthy body weight and getting regular physical activity may prevent you from getting diabetes.

To Honor Life and Tradition:

Diabetes

To prevent diabetes:

- ❖ Learn more about diabetes.
- ❖ Be physically active or be more active.
- ❖ Stay at a healthy weight, or if you are overweight lose weight.
- ❖ Make healthier food choices and limit the amount of calories and fat in your diet.
- ❖ Get checked for diabetes every year or as often as your doctor recommends.

If you have diabetes:

- ❖ Be physically active or be more active.
- ❖ If you are on medications, take as prescribed for good blood glucose control.
- ❖ Plan your meals, make healthier food choices and limit the amount of calories and fat in your diet.
- ❖ Stay at a healthy weight, or if you are overweight, lose weight.
- ❖ Check your blood glucose often and keep your blood glucose as close to normal as possible.
- ❖ Do not smoke or use alcohol.
- ❖ Attend clinic as recommended by your doctor.

DIABETES