



Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic
is proud to announce a new initiative

AIVCC HEALTH TIPS

The tips presented have been researched by our own
AIVCC doctors and partners.

This series will be focused on
cancer prevention.

CANCER

Everyday choices you make
can help reduce the risk of cancer.





Smoking is responsible for nearly 1 in 5 deaths in Canada each year.



**SAY
NO
TO SMOKING**



Here are some statistics that may help you consider quitting smoking

- An Ontario study showed that twice as many Indigenous people smoke in comparison to non-Indigenous people. Exposure to cigarette smoke is a huge risk factor for developing cancer among other chronic illnesses.
- The Canadian Paediatric Society has reported that smoking rates among Indigenous youth are three times higher than their non-Indigenous peers.
- The Canadian Paediatric Society has also reported that Canadian Inuit people have the highest rates of lung cancer in the world.
- A US study stated that the exposure to the carcinogens in cigarette smoke damages one's DNA and causes mutations, leading to lung cancer.

What should I be aware of before trying to quit?

Being aware of the withdrawal symptoms may make it easier as you know what to expect. Symptoms may include:

- Irritability
- Low energy/sleepiness
- Lack of focus
- Cold symptoms
- Dizziness



However... there is a bright side to all of this!

After being smoke-free for 2-3 months lung functioning can increase by 30 percent!



We have resources available to make quitting a little easier for you.

Talk to your local or AIVCC doctor, or nurse practitioner. There are prescriptions for nicotine replacement (patches, gum, inhalers) and pills (Champix and Zyban) that have helped many people quit smoking.



One important thing to remember is that it takes most people **more than one try** to quit smoking for good.



REDUCE YOUR ALCOHOL INTAKE

There is a Canadian low risk drinking guide, which says you can **reduce** your long-term health risks by drinking no more than:



10 drinks a week for women, with no more than 2 drinks a day most days.



15 drinks a week for men, with no more than 3 drinks a day most days.

Plan non-drinking days every week to avoid developing a habit!

ABSTINENCE

or staying completely away from alcohol, is another great choice – and something that more Indigenous than non-Indigenous Canadians have chosen.



Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada

A 2012 Statistics Canada survey showed that 31% of First Nations people (off reserve), 38% of Inuit people, and 25% of Metis people have abstained from alcohol in the previous year.

That compares to a rate of 24% for the non-Indigenous population.

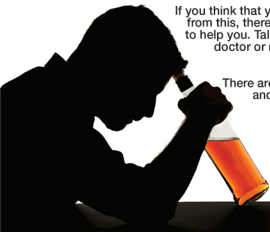
This means that more Indigenous people are staying away from alcohol than other groups in Alberta.

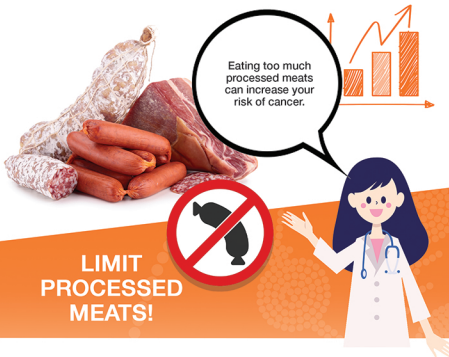
Alcohol Addiction (Alcohol Use Disorder) is another issue entirely

If you think that you or a loved one suffer from this, there are resources available to help you. Talk to your local or AIVCC doctor or nurse practitioner about advice to help you quit.

There are also links to resources and phone numbers on the AIVCC website.

Cutting down on alcohol is possible, and we are here to help you!





LIMIT PROCESSED MEATS!

Eating red and processed meat increases cancer risk



Processed meat includes ham, bacon, salami, hot dogs and sausages. Processed meat is any meat preserved by smoking, curing or salting, or by adding preservatives. When meat is preserved in these ways, cancer-causing substances can be formed.

The Canadian Cancer Society says:

We recommend limiting red meat to 3 servings* each week.

*A serving is 85 grams (3 ounces) when cooked – smaller than a deck of cards.

Eating well is an **important** part of reducing your cancer risk. It is possible to improve on what you eat and we are here to help you!

GOOD NEWS for traditional Indigenous hunters!

The World Health Organization about wild game (including deer, elk, moose and caribou) when trying to reduce the risk of cancer.

If you're interested in cutting down on red and processed meat, the AIVCC website has a link to the Canadian Cancer Society article.

You can also talk to your local or AIVCC doctor, or nurse practitioner. We can refer you to a dietician for help in changing your diet.





More than half of all Canadians have extra weight. The rate for Indigenous people is likely even higher than that!



MAINTAIN A HEALTHY BODY WEIGHT!

What can cause obesity?

There are many causes of obesity: personal, societal, and historical factors play a part.

For Indigenous people, that includes colonization and residential school experiences.

The treatment of obesity must take all these factors into account. Some of the things we typically offer are counselling with a dietician, mental health counselling, group support, medications, and surgery.

The AIVCC website includes a link to Obesity Canada's website, which has great general information on obesity but also key messages to Indigenous Peoples living with obesity. And as always, feel free to talk to your local or AIVCC doctor or nurse practitioner, about advice or if you have questions or concerns about body weight.



What is extra weight or obesity?

Doctors often measure people's body mass index (BMI) which is calculated by dividing a person's weight in kilograms by his or her height in metres squared (kg/m^2):

BODY MASS INDEX FORMULA (Metric)

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{Weight (kgs)}}{[\text{Height (m)}]^2}$$



The number is then charted as underweight, normal weight, overweight or obese.

The composition (make-up) and the distribution (location) of body fat in individuals with similar BMIs can vary widely. For this reason, doctors often measure abdomen width as well.


Dr. Regehr recalls calculating a very high BMI on a young Jr A hockey player. He was not obese, just heavy with bone and muscle!



A high BMI does not always mean obesity!



MAKE
AN
APPOINTMENT



Cancer screening is important to get ahead and detect cancer at early, more easily treatable stages.



GET
SCREENED
FOR CANCER

There are different age recommendations for when to begin screening for each type of cancer.

If you feel like something is wrong or you are unsure when you should start screening measures, please consult your local or AIVCC doctor or nurse practitioner.

If you are considered a high risk for developing cancer or have family history, doctors may suggest earlier screening measures.

Remember, we are here to help!

The Canadian Cancer Society and the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care have very informative resources available on their websites.



Canadian
Cancer
Society



Canadian Task Force
on Preventive Health Care



There are many different types of cancer screening tests available for men and women.

Cancer screening tests available for women:

- Mammogram (breast cancer)
- Pap smear (cervical cancer)

Cancer screening tests available for men:

- Prostate antigen specific (PSA) blood test (prostate cancer)
- Testicular self-exam involves looking for any unusual bumps on your testes

Cancer screening tests available for both sexes:

- Colon or rectal screening (colonoscopy, FIT)
- Lung cancer screening (low dose CT scan)

Please visit our website
for more resources:

<https://aivcc.ca/resources/>



COMING SOON

SEXUAL HEALTH

Stay tuned for our next series
regarding sexual health and the
reproductive system.

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