



**National
Indigenous
Diabetes
Association**

**Association
nationale
autochtone
du diabète**

Spring 2021 Newsletter

**45th ANNUAL ELDERS &
TRADITIONAL PEOPLES
GATHERING**

**15 NATURAL WAYS TO BOOST
YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM**

**VITALITY GARDENING
WITH COLEEN RAJOTTE**

**INTRODUCING THE
FITNATION WORKOUT SERIES**

**TL'KEMTSIN HEALTH:
DIABETES & COVID-19**

**SPIRIT HEALTHCARE GROUP
SPIRIT LOGBOOK**



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NIDA newsletters are distributed on a bi-monthly basis. The next newsletter will be June 2021, with submission deadline of June 11, 2021. We welcome submissions related to all things related to wellness of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.

Dandelion photo by Natalia Luchanko.

Please send submissions to executivedirector@nada.ca

Message from the Executive Director

Happy Spring from the National Indigenous Diabetes Association Board of Directors and staff!

We are so happy to announce we have a new addition to the NIDA family, our new Elder, Margaretta James. Margaretta was given the name Yakup because Yakup was a very sharing woman, and Margaretta lives at Tsaxana near Gold River on Vancouver Island in Mowachaht/Muchalaht territory. We are excited to move forward with Margaretta with us.

This issue of the newsletter has some great contributions, starting with Elder Bob Fenton's report on his attendance at the 45th Annual Elders and Traditional Peoples virtual Gathering. We have a great article on boosting your immune system from LiveLoveFruit's Carly Fraser. Coleen Rajotte and Vitality Gardening have shared some tips about starting a garden and links to her very helpful videos. Jessie Toynbee has shared some new exercise videos courtesy of the Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council (ISPARC). Sydney Verburg from TI'kemsin Health (Lytton First Nations Health) has shared a 2 pager on tips for living with diabetes in relation to COVID-19. SPIRIT Healthcare Group has shared some forms from their SPIRIT Logbook, which helps those living with diabetes keep track of their activity.

We'd like to remind that our children's colouring book on traditional foods, titled "MINO-TE-MAH-TI-ZEE-WIN, A Good Way of Life", which we are partnered with the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, is available through MFNERC at <https://mfnerc.org/product/mino-te-mah-ti-zee-win-a-good-way-of-life-colouring-book/> and a free PDF version on our website at http://nada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/NIDA_MINOTEMAHTIZEEWIN_COLOURING_BOOK.pdf

We would like to sincerely thank all our contributors for sharing the included articles with our readers!

All my relations,
Jeff LaPlante
Executive Director

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45th Annual Elders & Traditional Peoples Gathering

By Robert Fenton



Robert (Bob) Fenton is Anishnaabe from Animki Wa Zhing #37 First Nation, Treaty 3. He has two sons and three grandsons. He has worked for the Ontario Native Women's Association as the Aboriginal Diabetes Education Coordinator for the past sixteen years.

Bob believes in his favourite acronym "TEAM" (Together Everyone Achieves More). Researchers, doctors & nurses, the medical profession, Diabetes Canada, chiefs and councils, teachers, diabetes educators, community members, grandfathers, grandmothers, Elders and youth need to come together to end diabetes.

Chi-Miigwech to the National Indigenous Diabetes Association for the opportunity of attending the 45th Annual Elders & Traditional Peoples Gathering sponsored by Trent University.

The theme for this year's conference was Living the Prophecies: Coming Together in Times of Change. A very appropriate theme when our world has changed due to the Covid pandemic.

The first break out session I attended was 2 Spirit Voices. The presenters spoke of the difficulties of being accepted into Indigenous society but that was changing and were being accepted into the Circle and Ceremonies. It should be noted that when the Elders Panel were asked the word for 2 Spirit was, the answer was 2 Spirit were known as and called The Holy Ones.

The next session was Offering Words of Wisdom Panel: What I know now. . . The panel consisted of 4 Elders. Each Elder spoke of the importance of Ceremony, the Language, and Gratitude. As each Elder related their personal journey, and told their stories and teachings they had received, the importance of ceremony, language, and gratitude became apparent.

On Saturday, I attended the session, Star Teachings by Elder Mary Moose. Elder Mary Moose is Anishnaabe. As an Anishnaabe person, her teachings were fascinating. Actual pictures of the night sky were shown so every thing she talked about could be seen by the participants.

Next was Keynote Address: Without A Whisper by Louise McDonald. Louise McDonald is a clan mother in Haudenosaunee Society. In her society, women are the law (in her words). Without A Whisper is a documentary film about the US womens' suffrage movement which began in her territory.

The next breakout session was a continuation of the Star Teachings by Elder Mary Moose. In this session, Elder Mary said she could tell the legends about her teachings because it was now spring and the frogs were singing. She could only tell

some stories relating to the subject she was talking about.

The day ended with the Elders panel.

Sunday began with Keynote Address by Oren Lyons. What an amazing life, Oren has had. He has been almost to every country in the world, with the exception of India and China, promoting the rights of Indigenous Peoples. He, also, spoke of Prophecies. COVID is only the first pandemic, there are two more to come. He spoke of the end of the world. He said the end of the world will not come but the end of the human race.

Personal Reflections

What an amazing conference. It is difficult to put into words, all the things I learned. I did learn from each workshop and from each Elder that spoke. So I will just jot down things I wrote that had meaning for me.

- * when a person is holding an eagle feather, they are experiencing unconditional love.
- * to answer someone who says "you don't look Indigenous" say "This is what Indigenous looks like in 2021".
- * Dodem (clan) is your bloodline, which includes your family, extended family, and blood relatives.
- * I can never be who I wasn't meant to be.
- * We don't have rights but rather duties and responsibilities.
- * We are responsible for all life (animals, trees, plants, etc.) by law and spirit. All living things are our relatives. We all share DNA with all living things.
- * The decisions and choices we make are for the next 7 generations, not for self, not for family, not for community. We are responsible for the next 7 generations and we are failing.
- * Many talk of the end of the world, but the

world will not end, only the human race will end.

- * We are subject to the laws of nature. Human beings have intellect. A beaver can only be a beaver, and do what a beaver does, bear can only be a bear and do what a bear does. A human being has choices.
- * We all have a past, we all have choices, we are not all innocent, we have a new day to make better choices.
- * Prisons and jail are forms of commerce. Someone is making money because of them.
- * From the Star People presentation I learned so much, most importantly, where I came from and where I will go when I die. I learned more about my Spirit name. Translated in English, my name is "That bright star in the Big Dipper". Ojii is the reason there are 4 seasons. The big Dipper changes its appearance in the sky according to the seasons. At one time there was only one season (known as the Ice Age). Ojii travelled the path of the Big Dipper and as it changed its location in the sky, the one season turned into the 4 season that we now know as spring, summer, fall and winter.
- * be thankful for each day, say your prayers, make peace with the Creator, make peace with Mother Earth. Do good, share, respect all living things because the Creator will ask you this when you die.



15 Natural Ways to Boost Your Immune System

By Carly Fraser
livelovefruit.com
[Article link](#)

The immune system is our body's own way of developing armor to ward off anything that tries to invade.

And just like some armor is better at protecting than others, your immune system can be made weaker or stronger depending on what you eat, your environments, and even your state of mind.

With that being said, there are many natural ways to boost your immune system, perhaps some that you're already been living out in your day-to-day life.

Improving the state and function of the immune system isn't an overnight process, either. These things take time, as your body pushes out the old and welcomes in the new.

By providing your body with the proper lifestyle tips and tricks, and taking certain immune-boosting antimicrobial and antiviral herbs, you can drastically reduce your chances of becoming infected.

But before we get into that, let's delve a little deeper into how the immune system works.

How Does the Immune System Work?

Our immune system plays a vital role in protecting our bodies from harmful things that enter our body externally or harmful changes that happen internally. Its main tasks are to (1):

- * fight disease-causing pathogens like bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites and to remove them from the body,
- * fight disease-causing cellular changes in the body, such as those that might otherwise manifest as cancer, and
- * identify and neutralize harmful chemicals and other substances from our environment

The immune system is comprised of a unique network of organs, white blood cells, and proteins that protect the body from foreign invaders.

Live love fruit was founded, and is currently owned, by **Carly Fraser**. It was created as a way to help spread the word about the benefits of fruit and vegetables and to promote a high raw, plant-based lifestyle. Using accumulated knowledge over her 10 year journey, and own personal experience, Carly has inspired and motivated thousands of individuals to critically think about what they put in their bodies and to move towards a mind-set that helps them increase their consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables.

Carly has taken her life-long passion of helping others and combined it with her passion for eating whole, raw foods, as a means to teach people to become more aware of the foods they eat. Concerned by the high degree of sickness and disease, Carly wanted to combat this by educating the public on how real, whole foods can help heal, and even cure some of the most debilitating diseases.

More specifically, the immune system is comprised of:

- * white blood cells
- * antibodies
- * complement system
- * lymphatic system
- * spleen
- * bone marrow
- * thymus

You can think of **white blood cells** (WBCs) as the fighters for your body. The ones out on the front-line of attack. They're made in your bone marrow, and make up a good portion of the lymphatic system.

WBCs move throughout the body, searching out foreign invaders like bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungi. Once they find them, they initiate an immune attack.

These cells include lymphocytes like T-cells, B-cells, and natural killer cells, and other immune cells not apart of this category.

Our **antibodies** are large Y-shaped proteins that stick to substances called antigens on the surface of bacteria and viruses. Antibodies then mark antigens for destruction.

The **complement system** is comprised of a series of proteins that interact with each other with an end goal of eliminating pathogens that were marked as destruction by antibodies.

The **lymphatic system** consists of a delicate network of vessels throughout the body that help rid the body of toxins, waste and other unwanted materials. This system is made up of lymph nodes, which trap microbes, and lymphatic vessels, which carry white blood cells. The lymphatic system also regulates fluid levels in the body, and absorbs some fats from our diet from the intestine.

The **spleen** acts as a filter for the blood by removing microbes and destroying old or damaged red blood cells. The spleen also stores red blood cells, platelets, and white blood cells.

Bone marrow is the spongy tissue inside our

bones that produces red blood cells, platelets, and white blood cells.

And lastly, the **thymus** filters and monitors your blood content. It produces and "trains" white blood cells called T-lymphocytes to fight infections in the body.

Why Is the Immune System so Important?

The immune system protects our bodies from harmful substances, microbes, and cell changes that could make you ill.

If we didn't have an immune system, we would be incredibly sick and likely die at a very young age.

Keeping this in mind, you can see why it is so important to keep your immune system in check.

A robust and properly functioning immune system lowers your risk of disease and will also reduce your risk of contracting the common cold and flu.

While it can be easy to take the immune system for granted, that doesn't mean you should ignore it completely. If you have a healthy immune system, look after it and it will look after you.

What Are Signs of a Weak Immune System?

Your immune system can become weakened by eating a diet low in nutrients, not getting enough sleep and being inundated with stress.

These things wear you down and make it difficult for the immune system to protect against harmful pathogens.

Other factors like underlying illnesses might be to blame, too. Autoimmune diseases, immunodeficiency (like HIV or cancer), or chronic disease (like diabetes, heart disease or kidney disease) all weaken the immune system.

If you suffer from any of the following, your immune system might need a little TLC:

- * You're always tired
- * You always have a cold
- * Your wounds are slow to heal

- * You have ongoing digestive issues
- * You experience repeated infections like pneumonia, bronchitis, or meningitis
- * You deal with a blood disorder, such as anemia
- * Your eyes are chronically dry
- * You have chronic skin conditions that don't clear (for instance, a rash)
- * Your joints ache every day
- * You are sensitive to the sun
- * You deal with allergies that last all year long

If you have any of these signs, it could indicate that you have a weakened immune system.

The good news is, is that there are a plethora of natural ways to boost your immune system. In addition to utilizing different herbs and supplements, you can take part in some of my favorite immune-boosting practices to take your health to the next level.

And lastly, the thymus filters and monitors your blood content. It produces and "trains" white blood cells called T-lymphocytes to fight infections in the body.

15 Natural Ways to Boost Your Immune System

The best way to protect your body from pathogens and other harmful substances, your immune system needs to be in tip-top shape. The best way to ensure this happens is by investing in some herbs and supplements (which should always be on hand) and taking part in some key daily practices.

Here are 15 ways to keep your natural armor in great shape:

Immune-Boosting Supplements & Herbs

1. Chaga Mushroom

Chaga is a dark, woody fungus that inhabits dead tree trunks or decaying trees as parasites. This mushroom extracts its nutrients from the trees instead of the soil. This is why chaga is highly concentrated with betulinic acid, a compound that

comes from birch trees themselves.

It can take decades for these mushrooms to grow, and because of that, their healing power is out of this world.

One of the most well-known chaga mushroom health benefits is its ability to selectively inhibit and destroy cancer cells (2). It has one of the highest antioxidant ratings, surpassing that of turmeric root, pomegranates, and wild blueberries.

When consumed, chaga promotes the formation of beneficial cytokines, which are essential for fighting off harmful bacteria and viruses (3).

The anti-viral activity of chaga has been studied on the herpes virus, as well as HIV.

A study from Russia published in 2014 showed that chaga mushroom extract protected a cell culture from the cytotoxic effects of a herpes simplex virus (HSV-1) infection (4).



Photo by Bluebird Provisions

Chaga's antiviral effects are likely due to the strong presence of betulinic acid, which possesses both anti-inflammatory and antiretroviral properties (5).

The best chaga on the market, I've found, is by Bear Medicine.

A lot of the companies out there who thermally dry their chaga often create a product that is not immediately soluble in water and comes with a light-brown color (signifying a low level of chromogenes). On the other hand, Bear Medicine's sublimated Multi-Super-Extract chaga is a fine,

dark-brown or black powder with solid glistening black particles (not dusty) that has a pleasant taste, is 100% water-soluble (resembles instant coffee) and is odorless.

I've been using Bear Medicine chaga for months now, and the effect it has on my body is amazing. I love it so much that I've partnered with Bear Medicine to provide you with an exclusive discount: [use the code LiveLoveFruit15 at checkout for 15% off any product!](#)

2. Colloidal Silver

[Colloidal silver](#) is a water solution containing nanometer-sized particles of suspended silver. The silver particles are so small that normal filtering processes cannot remove them.

This supplement has been used for many years to help fight against pathogens. Before the advent of antibiotics, colloidal silver was the go-to treatment for everything from the common cold to tuberculosis.

Colloidal silver has been well-studied for its beneficial effects against viruses and bacteria.

One study used colloidal silver to treat children sick with the common cold and nasal congestion. The control group was treated with a saline solution. While both groups benefited from the treatment, 90% of the children in the silver group completely recovered (6).

Another study explored the ways in which silver nanoparticles inhibit the H1N1 influenza A virus. The researchers stated that the "inhibitory effects of silver nanoparticles on influenza A virus may be a novel clinical strategy for the prevention of influenza virus infection during the early dissemination stage of the virus" (7).

Always make sure your silver is of high quality. Never choose silver products made from silver protein or ionic silver. Colloidal silver or nanoparticle silver products are best. My favorites are Cymbiotika Silver and Sovereign silver.

3. Vitamin D3

While Vitamin D is named a 'vitamin' per se, it is actually a fat-soluble pro-hormone steroid.

This vitamin is essential to the health and functioning of your immune system. It also promotes calcium absorption in the gut, reduces inflammation and is involved in cellular growth.

Studies have found that vitamin D can actually modulate our innate and adaptive immune responses. Deficiency in the vitamin has been associated with increased autoimmunity as well as an increased susceptibility to infection (8).

This is concerning, given the fact that over 42% of people in the United States are vitamin D-deficient (9). Since the symptoms are subtle, not many people are aware of their deficiency.

Supplementing with vitamin D3 in the winter months is necessary if you live in the Northern Hemisphere. If you're getting enough sun year-round, for at least 15 minutes each day, you won't have much to worry about (that is, if you don't block out the sun's rays with sunblock or sunscreen).

4. Elderberry

Elderberry, or *Sambucus*, is a genus of flowering plants in the family Adoxaceae. The most commonly used variety of this plant, *Sambucus nigra*, must be cooked down before eating, as it can cause an upset stomach. Other cultivars, like *Sambucus Canadensis* (a Canadian cultivar), can be consumed fresh, as they do not contain the Sambunigrin toxin.



Photo by Cam James

This medicinal plant has been traditionally used to treat everything from influenza to sciatica, dental

pain, nerve pain, infections, headaches and more ([10](#)).

It is now well-studied for its immunostimulant effects, which can be attributed to its high concentration of chemical compounds called anthocyanidins.

The fruit is particularly great at attacking cold and flu viruses.

A recent study found that the unique phytochemicals present in elderberries immobilize the flu virus almost immediately upon contact ([10](#)). The authors explain that they do so by blocking the virus from entering or even attaching to, our healthy cells when taken preventatively during flu season.

The phytochemicals in elderberry were found to prevent the virus from replicating, even if the flu has already taken hold. Symptoms were found to be eliminated within 48 hours.

Another study showed that elderberry supplementation was able to reduce cold duration and symptoms in air travelers. Those who used the herb 10 days before and then 4-5 days after their arrival experienced a two-day shorter duration of their colds ([11](#)).

While fresh elderberries cannot be consumed unless they are from the specific cultivar, *Sambucus Canadensis*, most supplements are created by cooking the berry down. So this isn't something you need to worry about if you're taking tinctures.

5. Astragalus

Astragalus has been used in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) for thousands of years. It is most widely known for its benefits in protecting and supporting the immune system.

Some studies have shown that astragalus may increase your body's production of white blood cells ([12](#)), which are essential for protecting your body from harmful pathogens.

The herb has also been found to off-set the effects of chemotherapy like nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea ([13](#)).

Astragalus can be made into a tea with dry herb or can be taken in tincture form.

6. Lemon Balm

One of my all-time favorite herbs, lemon balm, also happens to be great at stimulating the immune system.

Lemon balm is a well-known nerve tonic, meaning it calms and soothes the nervous system particularly in times of stress ([14](#)).

When we're stressed, our body releases cortisol. In short spurts, cortisol can actually boost your immunity by lowering levels of inflammation. But if your cortisol levels remain spiked over a long period of time, inflammation levels actually rise ([15](#)).

Higher levels of inflammation in the body lead to an overworked, over-tired immune system that can't properly protect you.

Stress also decreases your white blood cell count, the very same cells that are used to help fight off infection. The lower your white blood cell count, the more you are at risk for contracting viruses.

Using lemon balm to keep your nervous system and stress levels in check just might be enough to ensure a strong immune system.

This herb is great when made into a tea, or it can be taken in tincture form.

7. Licorice Root

When it comes to anti-virals, licorice root is a top contender. It contains more than 20 triterpenoids, and nearly 300 flavonoids, making it an incredible plant to help boost the immune system.

Among these triterpenes, glycyrrhizin (GL) and glycyrrhizic acid (GA) have been reported to have the strongest antiviral effects. They weaken viruses by inhibiting gene expression and replication, reducing adhesion force and stress, and reducing HMGB1 (a type of protein) binding to DNA ([16](#)).

For example, recent studies suggest that GL may inhibit the hepatitis C virus (HCV) by targeting the release step in which hepatitis C viral particles infect cells ([17](#)).

That's not all. The triterpenoids in licorice root also possess anti-inflammatory, anti-tumor, and anti-allergic effects. As previously discussed, by reducing chronic inflammation in the body, you give your immune system a much-needed break so it can focus on protecting the body from invading pathogens.

My favorite way to take licorice root is in tincture form, but it can also be made into a tea from the dried root.

8. Probiotics

Did you know that 70-80% of the body's immune cells are found in the gut?

Under normal conditions, the immune system promotes the growth of beneficial microbes and helps maintain a stable microbial community. In return, a healthy microbiota triggers molecular signals that support the development of immune cells and fine-tune our immune response.



Not having strong gut flora can lead to a host of problems – one of them being a weakened immune system ([18](#)).

One of the best ways to heal a [leaky gut](#) or other digestive complaints? Probiotics!

But not just any probiotic will suffice.

One of my favorite probiotics, SEED probiotics are leading the way in how probiotics are designed and administered. Their probiotics contain a prebiotic outer capsule that withstands the harsh acid in the stomach, and then reveals the probiotic inner capsule, which gets released into the intestine.

The SEED probiotic inner capsule contains strains of probiotics to target and enhance the following:

- * Digestive health / gastrointestinal immunity / gut barrier integrity
- * Dermatological health
- * Cardiovascular health
- * Micronutrient synthesis

I partnered with SEED to offer you a 15% discount off the first month of your Daily Synbiotic subscription. Just [use the code LIVELOVEFRUIT at checkout!](#)

I also love that the company actively reduces the amount of waste they produce. Their welcome kit comes with a compostable mycelium tray and recyclable FSC-certified shipping box. All following monthly refills come in a compostable bio-based pouch protected by soluble corn foam!

9. Zinc Sulfate

Another natural way to boost your immune system is [zinc](#)!

Zinc supplementation has been found to not only boost a weak immune system but prevent damaging inflammation ([19](#)).

According to [ScienceDaily](#), "Scientists determined in human cell culture and animal studies that a protein lures zinc into key cells that are first-responders against infection. The zinc then interacts with a process that is vital to the fight against infection and by doing so helps balance the immune response."

Other research shows that zinc can interrupt the process that

Research shows that zinc may also interfere

with certain strains of rhinovirus by attaching to receptor sites lining the nasal passages. This inhibits bacteria from building up and reduces mucus production in the nose (20).

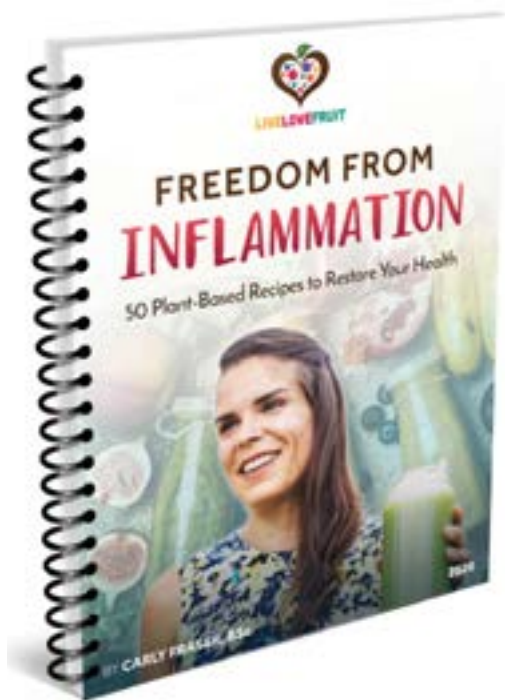
It's always good to keep zinc on hand. Always be sure to choose a brand made from ionic zinc sulfate (like the company Goodstate).

Zinc is best when taken months in advance to protect from the body from pathogens, but it can also be taken at the first signs of illness to reduce the duration of symptoms.

10. Echinacea

Echinacea is one of the most well-known immune system boosters. You might be wondering why it's at the bottom of the list, but I ordered these in no particular reason – echinacea is just as beneficial as all of the previously mentioned herbs and supplements!

Echinacea is loaded with beneficial antioxidants, phytonutrients, and nutraceuticals. This is the main reason why it is often used to prevent and treat the common cold – and there are studies to back it up.



Countless studies have investigated the ways in which echinacea bolsters the immune system to help your body better combat infections and

viruses (21).

One review of 14 studies found that supplementing with echinacea may lower the risk of developing colds by 58% and reduce the duration of colds by 1.4 days (22).

I commonly take this herb in combination with goldenseal, as goldenseal has its own immune-boosting benefits too. Nature's Answer created a supplement that includes both echinacea and goldenseal, and I used it regularly during the winter months to keep colds and other illnesses at bay.

If you're not into taking tinctures, you can also opt for echinacea flower tea.

Immune-Boosting Daily Practices

11. Consume an anti-inflammatory diet

Consuming an anti-inflammatory diet is essential for anyone wanting to naturally boost their immune system. It is actually one of the most important things you could do in turning your health (and your immunity) around for the better.

By swapping out old food choices with healthier ones, you can easily reduce the triggers that set off a negative immune response.

Anti-inflammatory foods heal, nourish and keep the levels of inflammatory markers circulating in our blood at a minimum.

This is also the number one reason why I created my recipe eBook '[Freedom from Inflammation](#)': to help free you from chronic inflammation and restore your health.

These recipes are all meant to turn down the dial on the number one health problem over 90% of the population deals with: chronic inflammation.

Learning to manage it with the foods we eat is essential for helping cleanse, restore, detox and heal the body. Most importantly, it will ensure your immune system remains strong all year long.

All of the recipes in this book are free from animal products, soy, wheat, refined sugar, and other

foods that would otherwise trigger inflammatory cascades in the body.

So if you want to build delicious meals while building your immunity and avoiding common pain triggers, you'll definitely want to grab a copy of this book!

Yes, I want to naturally boost my immunity!

12. Cold Showers

Cold showers are a great way to naturally boost the immune system, and they're free to boot!

Exposure to cold water has been studied for its effects in lowering levels of inflammation in the body while also increasing white blood cell production.

One study found that adults who regularly showered in the cold for 30 days experienced a 29% reduction in sickness and absence from work compared to a control group ([23](#)).

This may be due to the fact that cold water therapy helps to pump the lymphatic system. It forces the lymphatic vessels to contract, allowing built-up waste to be effectively carried via lymph fluid. This triggers a response from the immune system, whereby white blood cells come to attack and destroy foreign invaders that are carried in the dislodged fluid.

To take a cold shower, turn on your shower to a medium-cool temperature to get your body used to the water. Start slowly reducing the temperature until it is in the cold water-only setting.

Stand in the cold water, breathing deeply, for as long as you can (about 30 seconds), and then switch back to a warmer setting.

Continue cycling between warm and cold water for 30-second intervals. Do this for 3-4 minutes. Eventually, you will be able to stand in the water for 5 minutes straight, with cold water only.

13. Rebounding

[Rebounding](#) on a mini-trampoline (also called a rebounder), is another way of stimulating the

lymphatic system to strengthen your immune defenses.

The lymphatic system regulates immune responses by transporting bacteria, foreign antigens, particulate matter, exosomes, and immune cells to our lymph nodes and lymphoid structures. It modulates immune responses both directly, and indirectly ([24](#)).

When the lymphatic system isn't functioning at an optimal level, our immune system can take a hit ([24](#)), along with exacerbating inflammatory disorders ([25](#)), infectious diseases ([26](#)) and more.

Keeping your lymphatic system healthy by rebounding, dancing, doing yoga, or swimming, are all great ways to keep your immune system in check.

14. Reduce stress

Stress plays a major role in determining the strength of your immune system.

The hormone cortisol is released when we're stressed. Under normal circumstances, this isn't much of a problem. But when the stress becomes chronic, cortisol does more damage than good.

Chronic stress boosts levels of inflammation in the body, which makes us susceptible to disease. It also interferes with the infection-fighting ability of your white blood cells, increasing your chances of falling ill ([27](#)).

Normally, inflammatory leukocytes are the body's defense system against infection and disease. However, when stress becomes chronic and triggers the production of too many leukocytes, they contribute to a disease known as atherosclerosis ([28](#)). If not controlled, this condition can lead to heart attack and stroke.

Some great ways to help reduce stress include deep relaxation techniques like yoga, deep breathing, meditation or massage.

You can also manage stress by taking time for hobbies, exercising regularly, supplementing with nervous system-calming herbs like lemon balm and

ashwagandha, and reducing caffeine intake.

15. Get long hours of sleep

Lack of sleep can definitely affect your immune system.

Studies show that people who don't sleep enough or get enough quality sleep are more likely to get sick after being exposed to viruses like the common cold (29).

Poor sleep quality and lack of sleep can also affect how fast you recover if you do get sick.

There are a [few fundamental steps to help improve your sleep](#) if you're not getting enough already. These include things like turning off the lights and electronics 1-2 hours before sleep, reducing

caffeine intake, not eating at least 2-3 hours before bed, and more.

The Bottom Line

Your immune system acts like armor for your body. It protects you from pathogens, cellular changes and harmful substances like chemicals and other toxins.

If your immune system is functioning properly, you won't even notice it. But if it becomes compromised, it won't be able to protect you as well, and you'll increase your chances of falling ill.

Including more immune-boosting supplements in your diet and engaging in some lifestyle changes and shifts can be used to prevent and fight infections.



Vitality Gardening with Coleen Rajotte



By Coleen Rajotte

[VitalityTV on YouTube](#)

[Vitality Gardening on Facebook](#)



It was just over 10 years ago, that I looked at my tiny backyard in downtown Winnipeg and decided to try my hand at growing some veggies. As a television producer, I thought why not pitch an idea to make a show about learning to garden! And that's how the television show Vitality Gardening was born.

I started to research how to grow my own food. As an Indigenous woman, I was very interested to come across information about how our ancestors foraged for wild plant foods/medicines and grew corn, beans and squash. As a 60s scoop survivor, I grew up in the city and it never crossed my mind to garden in any way shape or form! I thought who has time for that? I thought it must require a lot of knowledge, equipment and time. I was so wrong!

I decided I would plant the way our Indigenous ancestors have done for thousands of years. I made mounds of soil and planted the corn on top of the mound the beans were put on the sides. Squash was planted around the mounds. Corn takes nitrogen out of the soil and beans replenish it. Companion planting at it's best! The squash leaves spread and protect the soil from drying out. The squash leaves are also prickly and protect your plants from critters looking for a snack. As I dug around in my backyard, inhaling the fresh aroma of damp soil and handling seeds that originated from the hard work of our ancestors, I felt a connection to the land.

Gardening is a form of meditation. It's healing. Numerous studies have shown that gardening relieves stress and improves our mental health. As my first garden came to life, I was amazed that my once drab backyard was now a lush green garden. I remember pulling up my first carrot and feeling so proud of myself that I had nurtured it to life. I have learned teachings about plants, conducted garden blessings, saved seeds and given talks about indigenous gardening over the years. I could write so much about this but I wanted to briefly introduce myself and let you all know why gardening has become an important part of my life.

Vitality Gardening is a unique How to TV show about organic vegetable gardening, Indigenous plant medicines and simple garden recipes. There is a pandemic going on but we can refresh our souls in the garden!

Newbie Gardening Tips

With so many of us working from home and having more time at home, it's no wonder that so many more people are interested in gardening. If you are a newbie gardener I wanted to share some tips. Easy things to grow from seed are beets, carrots, greens especially kale and lettuce, Chives and herbs such as basil and oregano. I would advise going to get your seeds early as many places are selling record numbers since the pandemic began.

Ok here are my top 10 tips for starting your garden:

1. Plan what you want you to grow. Do you like salsa? Then plan for tomatoes, onions, cilantro and hot peppers. If you hate Kale, don't plant any! It's easy to get overwhelmed and grab whatever you see. Think it out! If you are a pasta lover...grow lots of basil! If you BBQ a lot then fresh rosemary for your steak is awesome! I plant carrots for my dog as they are a nutritious treat! When my cat Duffy was still here, I planted catnip. One of my favourite things to make in the summer is tomato salad.

Simple ingredients: Fresh ripe tomatoes, onions, basil and olive oil. Full recipe available on Facebook: Vitality Gardening.

<https://www.facebook.com/Vitality-Gardening-624762511022867/>



2. If you want to start seeds indoors, then you should start them about 6 weeks before your last frost date. Google when your last frost date is for your area. That's when it's safe to plant. I have planted as late as June 6th in Winnipeg and everything was fine! Also, some things like lettuce grows in about 30 to 40 days so you can put seeds in the ground for lettuce in July! For a full seed starting tutorial there is one on our Facebook page and on our You Tube Channel: Vitalitytv

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtPA5qXvF-9LW-pTnswrmAA>

3. Examine your soil. Dig up a shovel full and it should have some worms. Worms are a sign of healthy soil. Is it dry and dusty? Then you need to add some nutrients. I order a few yards of fresh soil every 4 years or so to freshen up my garden. Add compost to your soil. Veggies like beets and beans do well in poorer soils. If you are container gardening use a good potting soil and make sure you have drainage. Herbs in containers are a great option for a beginner gardener.

4. Planting time. Don't plant if it's pouring rain or your soil is water logged. Wait a few days! Follow seed directions. Corn seeds need to be planted about one inch under the soil. The general rule is twice the size of the seed is the depth you want. If you are buying plants from the nursery...keep a bucket of water to soak the roots before you put in the ground. Gently water after planting. Use a watering can don't blast with a hose or you will disturb your seeds. Traditionally, our Indigenous ancestors planted by the moon cycles. A good time to plant is just before the full moon. I could write a whole article on this! In June 2021, the full moon is in June 5th. So I will plant my tomatoes around June 1st.

5. More on Planting. Pat the soil down



firmly with your hands after planting. Offer a prayer before planting, wear a skirt to honour our ancestors, smudge your seeds as they are living entities and will appreciate the love. Enjoy the process! Be thankful for the soil, the seeds and the experience.

If you plant in rows, they should be about two feet apart. Our ancestors planted corn, beans and squash using mounds of earth.

6. Patience. If your soil starts to look dry then gently water. Put down stones or pieces of cardboard so you know where to step. Label what you planted. (save your seed packages so you know what works and what doesn't!) BTW, I don't like the term weeds as many of our plant relatives were labelled as weeds and they are wonderful plants with many uses. (example: dandelions)

7. Do a bit of research. You are growing Basil? Then read up on their water requirements... (they like a damp soil)...You should pinch off any flowers that appear as this encourages the plant to grow. But all of these things you will learn as you go! I have had gardening disasters over the years: insects that wiped out my cauliflower, mould that killed off my kale and other things that you learn to deal with. It's part of nature's cycle. Don't get too stressed out. Re-plant if birds eat your young plants. Just watch, learn and you will get to know your plants.

8. Thin your veggies after they get about 3

inches high. Leave about one inch of space between carrots. Thinning is always difficult having to take out some of your sprouts! But don't throw them away! Carrot tops are young greens and can be put in a salad. Use nail scissors and just cut at the soil line as you don't want to disturb the roots of nearby plants.

9. Talk to other gardeners. Your neighbours and grandparents are good resources.

10. Save your seeds for next year! I will write more about this in a future article.



Example of a rare corn I grew that is from the Mandan in North Dakota. Mandan Speckled corn. A rare flour corn from the Mandan in North Dakota. The cobs have blue kernels with some kernels speckled. The plants grow about 4-5 feet tall and the cobs are 6-8 inches long. A very beautiful corn! (95 days to maturity) I have grown and the colours are more stunning in person! I was looking on-line to order more and it's sold out at the seed store where I purchased many years ago.

[Vitality Gardening on Vimeo](#)

Introducing the FitNation Workout Series!

By Robynne Edgar

[Indigenous Sport, Physical](#)

[Activity and Recreation Council](#)

[ISPARC](#)

[FitNation Workout Series Teaser](#)



Are you ready to kick start into Spring with FitNation?! The Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council is pleased to present a 5-part workout series brought to the comfort of your home!

FitNation leaders Amanda de Faye, Janice Johnson, and Daniel Young-Mercer guide you through each workout, providing options for each exercise in introductory, intermediate and advanced movements. Whether you're taking your movements from the chair, or jumping for the sky in those burpees, we've got the movement for you.

The Workouts

[FitNation Full Body Workout 1](#) includes 6 different exercises to wake up the body and get the heart rate up. With Janice providing chair modifications, this is a great option for our Elders! Try it out!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLPJQkD1XOA>

[FitNation Full Body Workout 2](#) features 9 different exercises to get the whole body moving. Morning, day or night, this is a great 30-minute movement option! Try it out!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUi9DAOuFBw>

The Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council (I·SPARC), together with the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCA AFC), First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), and Métis Nation BC (MNBC), provides stewardship over the Aboriginal Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Strategy with a unified commitment to use the power of sport, physical activity, and recreation to achieve transformational change. I·SPARC's continued role is to implement and deliver on this new "roadmap," which will advance the kind of meaningful and sustainable impact envisioned by its founders.

[FitNation Full Body Workout 3](#) (Buzzmas!) is a pyramid style workout. No need for holiday spirit, just your mat and some space to move around! Try it out!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ZJXFCcjLwQ>

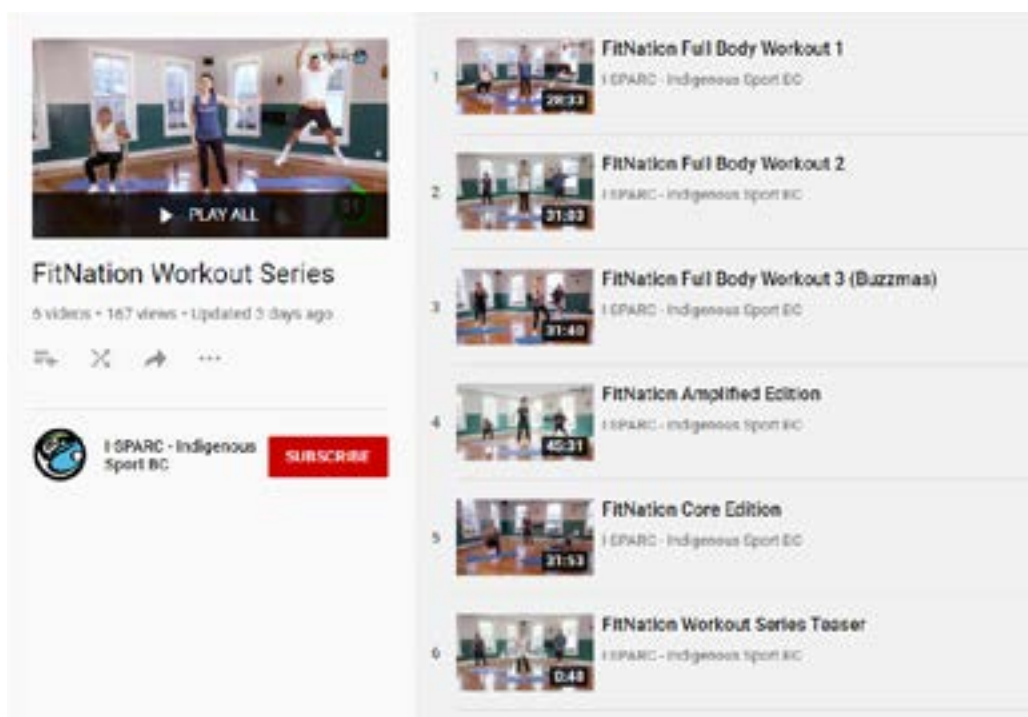
[FitNation Amplified](#) is for those looking to take it to the next level - guaranteed to get you sweating! This is a great option for our performance athletes. Try it out!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RAUS2QxOR4>

[FitNation Core Edition](#) is an all core workout, everyone's "favourite" as Amanda likes to say! This workout is designed to have you feeling strong and stable through your entire trunk. Try it out!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3T4ma1h4k3o>

All 5 workouts are saved to our [YouTube channel](#) (https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLI3c6v0mHMfcG2iatQKxtSW3-lWGOyt4k&mc_cid=8eb0721dd6&mc_eid=UNIQID) for you to access at your convenience. All 5 workouts are truly designed for Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere!!



Only 30 minutes SHORT, our dynamic leader trio will cheerlead you through the entire workout, keeping you moving, smiling and maybe even having a laugh or two! You can even break each workout up, trying out 10 minutes at a time, knowing this is medicine for your body, mind and spirit.

And remember FitNation is more fun with friends! Whether you're working out physically distanced, taking your workout outside, or moving online with a pal, let's get moving together! Move With Us!



ISPARC
Indigenous Sport,
Physical Activity & Recreation Council



Tl'kemsin Health

Diabetes & COVID-19

What is important for people who are diabetic during the pandemic?

Food & Nutrition



Eat a variety of foods that support good health, including traditional foods when possible. Connect with a Dietitian or Health Care Professional to learn how to best support your diabetes through food.

Mental Wellness



Connect with Elders, community, and mental health providers in a safe way. Take time to be outside to connect with the land.

Staying Active



The CSEP recommends 150 minutes per week of moderate to vigorous aerobic exercise. Connect with a Health Care Professional to build an exercise plan that is right for you.

COVID-19 Safety



Follow up to date public health orders and community guidelines. Connect with doctor or nurse if you are feeling sick.

Speak with Health Care Professionals

Speak with your health care providers on how to properly manage your diabetes through diet, exercise, and medication during the COVID-19 pandemic.





Tl'k'emtsin Health

Diabetes & COVID-19

Examples of how to support each topic of health:

Food & Nutrition



- Eat Whole Foods
 - Vegetables, fruits, whole grains, protein foods
- Eat with intention to connect with community and the land
- Learn recipes that support your immune system



Mental Wellness

- Learning about culture and traditions from an Elder
- Phoning a friend
- Scheduling appointments with a mental health provider

Staying Active



- Traditional activities such as harvesting, hunting, fishing
- Outdoor walk, hike, or run
- Strength Exercises
- Fitness Videos (online or DVD)

COVID-19 Safety



- Hand washing
- Wearing a mask
- Physical Distancing
- Staying home when you feel sick

Speak with Health Care Professionals

- Doctors, Nurses, Dietitians, Mental Health Providers, etc.
- Important Topics to Cover: Diet & Nutrition, Exercise, Medication, Mental Health, Understanding Diabetes & Risks



SPIRIT Healthcare Group

SPIRIT Logbook

By Jillian Paulmark RD
[SPIRIT Healthcare](#)

Hi everyone!

It's Jillian, the Dietitian and one of the Diabetes Educators at SPIRIT HEALTHCARE GROUP. I would like to bring you some updates on how we have been helping the communities with their fight against COVID-19.

To help protect our Indigenous communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, Spirit Healthcare Group partnered with Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) to access funding to supply COVID-19 Family Safety Kits to remote communities in Manitoba. The kits include various SPIRIT branded products like nitrile gloves, hand sanitizer, surgical-grade face masks, a digital thermometer, and soap. We have recently sent out another 5,000 kits and to date over 19,000 kits have been distributed.

On another note, we thought we would share with you some of our exciting diabetes resources, such as our new SPIRIT Logbook and our blood sugar Monitoring Sheets.

Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) covers only a fixed amount of blood sugar monitoring test strips each year. If you are not taking pills or are taking pills that do not cause low blood sugar levels, you are allowed 200 strips per year (which results in testing 3-4 times a week). If you are taking pills that can cause low blood sugars (glyburide, gliclazide, gliclazide MR or repaglinide), you are allowed 400 strips a year (which results in testing once daily). If you are taking insulin, you are allowed enough test strips to test 5 times a day.

We have developed the SPIRIT monitoring sheets to take into account these strip restrictions and assist people so that they do not run out of test strips prematurely (if you follow the shaded areas on the sheet when testing, you will be able to easily stay within the strip restriction).

The Spirit Healthcare Group

is owned by the seven Tribal Councils of Manitoba with strong accountability and transparency to our shareholders and the Indigenous communities we serve.

Our purpose is to grow a group of strong and competitive companies in order to invest in the needs of our communities. We follow a new business model, known as Indigenomics, which is the practice of bringing an Indigenous perspective to the way we do business with an eye on both economic growth and social development.

The **SPIRIT Logbook** contains:

- * Information about diabetes
- * Shaded monitoring sheets
- * A page to track your cholesterol, blood sugar, blood pressure and urine results you receive from your healthcare professional
- * Information on when you should seek medical help
- * Information on what to do if you are ill
- * Your blood sugars a week at a glance

We will be posting a PDF of our SPIRIT Logbook and blood sugar Monitoring Sheets on our website shortly so you can print them or click the order button to order the logbooks.

If you have any questions about any of these resources, feel free to reach out to me, Jillian Paulmark RD, CDE, CBE at jpaulmark@spiritmeter.ca

Thank you and please stay safe!

We have six (6) different Monitoring Sheets available:

- * A sheet to be used if someone is newly diagnosed, having issues with their blood sugar control, or if they are taking pills that can cause low blood sugars (if someone is having issues with their blood sugar levels and are not on pills that cause low blood sugars, they should only use this sheet for a short term)
- * A sheet for people who are not taking pills or taking pills that do not cause low sugar levels
- * Three (3) different sheets outlining when it is most appropriate to test if you are taking insulin (whether it be at bedtime, twice a day, or four times a day)
- * A sheet which guides you in testing when you are pregnant





HOME BLOOD SUGAR READINGS

- If you are taking N (cloudy insulin) or 30/70 insulin or Mix25 insulin twice a day, test at 1st meal and 3rd meal
- Shaded area-example of when to test
- REMEMBER- feeling shaky/sweaty/light headed then TEST!!
If below 4-treat with 2/3 cup regular pop or juice
- Target- 4-7 before meals or bedtime
5-10 two hours after a meal

NAME:

Day	First meal		Second meal		Third meal		Bedtime
	Before	2hr After	Before	2hr After	Before	2hr After	
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HOME BLOOD SUGAR READINGS

- If you are taking insulin at bedtime
- Shaded area-example of when to test
- **REMEMBER-** feeling shaky/sweaty/light headed then **TEST!!**
If below 4-treat with 2/3 cup regular pop or juice
- **Target-** 4-7 before meals or bedtime
5-10 two hours after a meal

NAME:

Day	First meal		Second meal		Third meal		Bedtime
	Before	2hr After	Before	2hr After	Before	2hr After	
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HOME BLOOD SUGAR READINGS

- If you are taking rapid insulin with meals and long acting insulin at bedtime
- Shaded area-example of when to test
- **REMEMBER-** feeling shaky/sweaty/light headed then **TEST!!**
If below 4-treat with 2/3 cup regular pop or juice
- **Target- 4-7 before meals**
5-10 two hours after a meal

NAME:

Day	First meal		Second meal		Third meal		Bedtime
	Before	2hr After	Before	2hr After	Before	2hr After	
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HOME BLOOD SUGAR READINGS

- If you just found out you have diabetes, if your blood sugars aren't at target or if you are taking glyburide, repaglinide (Gluconorm), gliclazide or gliclazide MR
- Shaded area-example of when to test
- **REMEMBER-** feeling shaky/sweaty/light headed then **TEST!!**
If below 4-treat with 2/3 cup regular pop or juice
- **Target- 4-7 before meals**
5-10 two hours after a meal

NAME:

Day	First meal		Second meal		Third meal		Bedtime
	Before	2hr After	Before	2hr After	Before	2hr After	
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SPIRIT Meter

Changing the course of diabetes in our community

HOME BLOOD SUGAR READINGS

- No pills/*pills that DON'T cause your blood sugars to go too low*(see below)
- Test 3-4x/wk
- Shaded area-example of when to test
- Target 4-7 before meals
5-10 two hours after a meal

NAME:

Day	First meal		Second meal		Third meal		Bedtime
	Before	2hr After	Before	2hr After	Before	2hr After	
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***The only pills that can cause blood sugars to go too low (below 4) are glyburide, repaglinide (Gluconorm), gliclazide and gliclazide MR**



HOME BLOOD SUGAR READINGS

- If you are pregnant or have gestational diabetes
- Shaded area-example of when to test
- **REMEMBER-** feeling shaky/sweaty/light headed then **TEST!!**
If below 4-treat with 2/3 cup regular pop or juice
- **Target-** not higher then 5.3 when you get up or before a meal
not higher then 6.7 two hours after a meal

NAME:

Day	First meal		Second meal		Third meal		Bedtime
	Before	2hr After	Before	2hr After	Before	2hr After	
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MOBILE FRIENDLY

GAIN INFORMATION ON THE GO

NADA.CA