



National  
Indigenous  
Diabetes  
Association

Association  
nationale  
autochtone  
du diabète

Spring 2022 Newsletter

## **RECLAIMING ANCESTRAL HARVESTING PRACTICES**

ANISHINAABE TRADITIONAL  
GRANDMOTHER KIM WHEATLEY

## **INDIGENOUS AND DIABETIC HOLISTIC FOOT CARE HEALTH MATTERS**

MEGHAN MCRAE, FOOT CARE NURSE

## **FOOD IS MEDICINE: THE COOKING SHOW**

JESSIE TOYNBEE, INDIGENOUS SPORT,  
RECREATION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY  
COUNCIL

## **HELP YOUR COMMUNITY UP THEIR GAME WITH URBAN POLING: MIND & BODY BENEFITS**

DIANA OLIVER, URBAN POLING





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NIDA newsletters are distributed on a bi-monthly basis. The next newsletter will be June 2022, with submission deadline of June 10, 2022. We welcome submissions related to all things related to wellness of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples.

Cover photo by Jeremy Thomas.

Please send submissions to  
[executivedirector@nada.ca](mailto:executivedirector@nada.ca)

## Message from the Executive Director

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

We are getting ready for our new fiscal year and new projects under works. We are excited to be working on a children's colouring book on physical activity, with some of our colleagues at Indigenous Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity Council and Elder Gerry Oleman from the Teachings in the Air podcast (<https://www.teachingsintheair.ca/>).

On that note, we are also beginning production of the NIDA podcast, with our host Marisa Cardinal, NIDA Board Treasurer. We are looking forward to producing a podcast episode every month on a variety of topics.

We are also finishing up work on an Inuit Foods book, with Knowledge Keeper Martha Peet and artist Megan K Monteith. The artwork is stunning and Martha has shared so much of her knowledge about plants and animals in Inuit lands that this book promises to be something beautiful and informative.

We have recently completed a multi-year project in updating the **Pathways to Wellness** booklet, a comprehensive diabetes management guide developed in partnership with the Spirit Healthcare Group. This will be available for free on our website (link coming soon) and hard copies available for purchase.

We would like to sincerely thank our contributors Grandmother Kim Wheatley, Foot Care Nurse Meghan McRae, Jessie Toynbee at ISPARC, and Diana Oliver at Urban Poling for the articles in this newsletter.

All my relations,  
Jeff LaPlante  
Executive Director

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# Reclaiming Ancestral Harvesting Practices

Submitted by Anishinaabe Traditional Grandmother Kim Wheatley



Greetings I wanted to share a year long project I have been working on with Indigenous women from various backgrounds who are interested in re-acquainting themselves with the natural world through traditional Indigenous harvesting practices.

This project became a reality when I received an Indigenous Innovation Initiative Grant from the Government of Canada in 2021. While the competition was intense my project claimed a unique space based on the rebuilding of meaningful relationships to the land.

It is well known that the Earth is our Mother and provides all that we human beings and other beings need for a good life. There are rules that have been passed down for generations to ensure that there is always enough left for those that come after us ... just as those that came before us prepared for our needs.

In traditional teachings we are taught to harvest from the land with seasonal availability through ceremony, preparation and wisdoms of Elders and Knowledge Keepers. In this project I utilized all of this support to encourage women from mostly cityscapes to participate in learning either for the first time or just to revisit how to harvest in a good way. With the guidance of Elders, knowledge keepers, traditional knowledge practices and ceremonies we have been on a journey to reclaim this wisdom of our ancestors.

It was hard to locate female leadership in this project but I found excellent supports in three First Nation communities in southern Ontario. The communities of Shawanaga First Nation, Dokis First Nation and Georgina Island supplied strong, knowledgeable female leads who were very experienced with harvesting from the waters of both Georgian Bay and

the French River.

The women were introduced to basics of water harvesting including fish and plant life, tools of the trade, seasonal awareness, boating licensing, rod, spear, net and ice fishing, how to tan fish skins, cleaning fish and the list goes on. The outcome was one of immense gratitude to be led and guided by Indigenous knowledge keepers who combined hold over 100 years of lived experience! The emotional impacts cannot be underestimated and the longterm mentorship potential is growing with over 20 women who have participated to date in various capacities even through the COVID shutdowns. These women ranged in age from 21-68 years of age and were of various First Nation & Metis backgrounds.

The women were surveyed and all stated that this was something that contributed to better health and wellness overall but specifically

gave them the encouragement to continue harvesting and teaching others too! Many said they felt healthier knowing that the food they harvested was nutritious and obtained in true traditional respectful ways.

Health and wellness through land based immersive activities cannot be underestimated and in this project we have clearly shown there is a strong desire to develop and reclaim a matriarchal cohort of women who can harvest from the lands and waters of our traditional territories providing ancestral food sources and honouring sovereign Treaty harvesting practices. Congratulations to all the women who have and will continue to hold and pass on the teachings! So much gratitude to all the wisdom keepers, knowledge holders, Elders and relatives who still take time to connect to the lands and waters we call home! G'chi miigwech Earth Mother for all that you do and continue to do!





# Indigenous and Diabetic Holistic Foot Care Health Matters

Submitted by Meghan McRae, Registered Practical Nurse,  
Foot Care Nurse and Founder of Mindful Feet

"Hi Meghan, this is Dawn. I just wanted to let you know again the positive manner you have allows your clients to feel they can be themselves! You talk to us like we matter! Like we deserve to be treated the same as everyone else! You listen, you teach us and anything you learn you tell us and then we really know we matter. Thank you from the bottom of my heart! I also have one more thing I wanted to say... You matter! You help our spirits!"

Meghan is a non-Indigenous foot care nurse who cares about treating Indigenous and diabetic patients like Dawn safely. Meghan learned how to do that by living close to Indigenous people since a child who witnessed racism and stereotyping that decreased for

people who got to know each other and compassionately understand why trust must be earned.

Non-Indigenous foot care providers are responsible for distinguishing ways to accommodate Indigenous patients individually so that they feel more comfortable accepting safe foot care solutions that don't sacrifice their wellness. Non-Indigenous foot care providers are encouraged to take the San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training to promote a conscious practice.

Indigenous people living with diabetes who receive foot care are expected to live a longer and healthier life because they've decreased the risk for avoidable infection(s), non-healing wound(s), amputation(s)

and mortality. Foot care providers help do that by performing assessments, using sterile critical foot care devices and making appropriate referrals to multidisciplinary team members when a need is indicated and consent is obtained from the patient. Foot care providers receive the best results when the patient specifies what treatment measures are preferred to initiate first which may include use of traditional food and



medicine sources and pharmaceutical therapy as a last resort or vice versa.

Basic and preventative diabetic foot care is recommended every 4-8 weeks and as needed. Most government funded programs cover Indigenous and diabetic foot care every 6 weeks and as needed with approval. Advanced and preventative foot care product procedures such as nail bracing (treatment for most involuted and ingrown toenails) and photodisinfection (treatment for toenail fungus) not included.

"Hi Dawn, it's Meghan. Is it ok that I use your message in an article? I can remove your name in order to conceal your identity."

"Sure, you can use it and if you want to leave Dawn that's fine. I hope you remember all we talked about. How your foot care helps our spirit as well as our feet because when our feet are doing well so is our confidence in ourselves. And our overall mental and physical health. My worry about fungal infections on our toenails not being funded in reality can cause medical

implications, if it isn't treated it can grow into the toe causing ingrown toenails and infection which if not treated especially in diabetic people can lead to gangrene, then the next step may be amputation. Funding is an issue. Sorry if I wrote too much and gave you too much opinions just tell me to stop lol I will!"

"I'll never tell you to stop because this is how we show that Indigenous and diabetic holistic foot care health matters."

Meghan came to the National Indigenous Diabetes Association in search to find an Indigenous foot care leader to build on developing safe foot care solutions that Indigenous people deserve and expect. The National Indigenous Diabetes Association gave recommendation to Lindsey Cosh, Foot Care Program Coordinator at the Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle. Lindsey accepted the invitation to be a guest speaker for the Canadian Association of Foot Care Nurses at their next virtual conference coming up on Friday, May 27 - Saturday, May 28, 2022.

A promotional poster for the CAFNCN Conference. The background is split vertically into blue and orange sections. The top half features the text "CAFNCN Conference" in large, semi-transparent letters, with "Canadian Association of Foot Care Nurses" in smaller text below it. The left side (blue) contains the text "Discover ways to reduce healthcare inequities faced amongst Indigenous people by learning from an Indigenous foot care leader." followed by "Breaking the Barriers and Building Relations for Allies in Care" and a circular logo with a feather. The right side (orange) features a circular portrait of Lindsey Cosh, B.A., BC, with her name written below it. At the bottom, the text "Join us" is in large letters, with "cafcn.ca" below it. A circular logo for the "CAFNCN CONFERENCE" is also present, with the text "MAY 27-28, 2022" and "TOGETHER" inside it.

CAFNCN Conference

Canadian Association of Foot Care Nurses

Discover ways to reduce healthcare inequities faced amongst Indigenous people by learning from an Indigenous foot care leader.

Breaking the Barriers and Building Relations for Allies in Care

Join us

cafcn.ca

Lindsey Cosh, B.A., BC

CAFNCN CONFERENCE

MAY 27-28, 2022



# Food is Medicine: The Cooking Show

Submitted by Jessie Toynbee, Provincial Coordinator, Healthy Living, Indigenous Sport, Recreation & Physical Activity Council

The Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation Council (I-SPARC) presents the Food is Medicine cooking show! Set across Vancouver Island, Food is Medicine, takes us on a cooking journey that celebrates the people and foods of these lands, showcasing meals that are accessible and nutritious.



Food is Medicine is a four episode YouTube series featuring registered dietitians Rachel Dickens and Fiona Devereaux as hosts. Rachel is originally from Prince Rupert, from the Lax Kw'alaams band, while Fiona is a white settler of Irish ancestry. Both have extensive backgrounds working with Indigenous communities and are passionate about nurturing our bodies through mindful nutrition and connection to land, water and each other.

In partnership with the First Nations Health Authority, all the recipes from the cooking show have been collected into a [free online cookbook](#). Grab yourself a cup of tea or get ready in the kitchen to follow along with Fiona and Rachel as they explore how food is medicine to our bodies, minds, and spirits.

## Episodes Overview

In episode one, **The Gifts of Water**, you'll find recipes for salmon cakes, a surprise ingredient aioli, an everyday salad dressing, and Rachel's special twist Kwakmis (herring roe). Learn how salmon is protective for your heart, how omega-3s support youth's brain development, and what pro-biotics feed on! Set on the beautiful territory of the Ahousaht and Tla-A-Qui-Aht Nations, Fiona and Rachel explore the waterways that are life in this territory and create nourishing meals that celebrate the bounty of the land and waters.



Watch Episode 1:  
[Food is Medicine: The Gift of Water](#)



In episode two, **Camp Style Cooking**, you'll find recipes for a hearty elk chilli, a cast iron corn bread with a couple surprise gifts from the land, and a stove top fruit crisp. Learn how much sodium might be hiding in your canned tomatoes, how to always have buttermilk at the ready, and how colour in our diets helps protect against disease. Set on the beautiful **W̱SÁNEĆ** territory, Fiona and Rachel invite four special guests to share a meal together and reflect on how food and nature are medicine.



Photo Credit: Rachel Dickens

Watch Episode 3:

[Food is Medicine: Wild About Snacks](#)

In episode four, **Protein Power**, Rachel and Fiona are joined by two young Métis athletes, eager to learn how our bodies use protein, why protein is important for muscle recovery, and when's best to refuel. Set on Quw'utsun territory, in this episode, you'll find recipes for overnight oats, new ways to flavour your roasted vegetables, and take a front seat for the battle of air fryer vs oven for how to get the perfect fish and chips.

Watch Episode 2:

[Food is Medicine: Camp Style Cooking](#)

In episode three, we're **Wild About Snacks!** Rachel and Fiona travel to Yuułuᑦᐱᐱᐱ (Ucluelet First Nation) to share some wild food snack favourites that can also serve as quick and easy family meals. In this episode, you'll find recipes for nettle pesto, smoked salmon dip, nori salmon rolls, and our very own party plate. Rachel and Fiona will also let us in on some wild food secrets; have you ever wondered how to get the sting out of stinging nettle? Are you looking to get seaweed into your kid's lunchbox? All this and more in episode three!



Watch Episode 4:

[Food is Medicine: Protein Power](#)

Look out for two more episodes of Food is Medicine coming this summer and for more I-SPARC resources including workouts, mental wellness webinars, and more cooking resources, check out the [I-SPARC YouTube channel](#).

I-SPARC is a BC provincial organization established for the purpose of improving the health outcomes of Indigenous people by supporting and encouraging physically active individuals, families, and communities. Learn more about I-SPARC at [www.isparc.ca](http://www.isparc.ca)



# ISPARC

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Indigenous Sport,  
Physical Activity  
& Recreation Council





# Help Your Community UP Their Game with Urban Poling: Mind & Body Benefits

Submitted by Diana Oliver, Urban Poling

Engaging in physical activity has not only been proven to result in better physical health but also in improved quality of life, functional capacity, and mood. The association between exercise and mental wellbeing has been well established and backed by research. Walking represents one of the easiest, safest, accessible, and most popular forms of exercise among those both with and without chronic illnesses. Nordic walking aka Urban Poling, with the use of specialized poles (such as Urban poles), is an evidence-based activity that provides both aerobic and strength training simultaneously. A variety of physiological (e.g., sleep regulation), psychological (e.g., improved self-efficacy, the interruption of negative thought), and social factors (e.g. increased social interaction and decreased isolation) have been hypothesized to account for the mental health benefits of physical activity.

Physical activities performed outdoors, or "green exercises" (like Nordic walking) have

also been shown to result in increased feelings of revitalization, positive engagement, energy, enjoyment, satisfaction, desire to repeat the activity and decreased tension, confusion, anger and depression when compared with exercising indoors. Research also supports a higher level of adherence to a Nordic Walking (aka Urban Poling) programs versus a standard walking program.

Urban poling is a fun and easy way to combine exercise with natural environments and boost your mental health benefits. An excellent form of aerobic exercise, poling engages up to 90% of your muscles and burns up to 46% more calories than walking alone! As nearly all your body's muscles are engaging simultaneously, and glucose is absorbed in exercising muscles, this form of fitness and rehabilitation is also excellent in the prevention and management of Type 2 Diabetes and has been a highly effective program for many communities over the past 15 years here in Canada and now the USA.



"I have type 2 diabetes and have found it very difficult to lose weight and control my blood sugar levels. Now I am finally having some success. Purchasing the Urban poles is one of the best decisions I have made recently. I used to really dislike walking but using the poles has added a whole new dimension to it and they motivate me to walk more often". - Janet





walking with specialized poles also reduces load from hip and knee joints which allows participants to walk further and with less pain.

"Now he will not go walking without his Activator® poles, both outside on pathways and inside the hallways of his retirement residence, where the staff encourage residents to do "laps" on rainy days. The poles make a world of difference and keep my father more mobile and safer than he would ever be without them!" - Jill Korstrom

Another key benefit of Nordic Walking most especially as it pertains to Elders health, is related to supporting balance and mitigating the risk of falls. As research supports, "Falls are the leading cause of injury among older Canadians with 20-30% seniors experiencing one or more falls each year." In fact, they account for a whopping 85% of injury-related hospitalizations for seniors, and 95% of hip fractures for all patients. Walking with the use of specialized poles such as Activator® Poles, which were specifically designed for those requiring additional support, can help keep the elders in your community upright, balanced and mobile! Research supports that

Support your community by engaging in an Urban Poling program which will provide numerous evidence based benefits including improved metabolic health, better balance and gait most especially for Elders, as well as importantly improved mental health through a truly social, engaging and fun program! To learn more please contact the Urban Poling team about education for community leaders and professional pricing.





# Pathway to Wellness

A Handbook for  
Indigenous Peoples  
Living with Diabetes



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GAIN INFORMATION ON THE GO

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