

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE ACTIONS TO

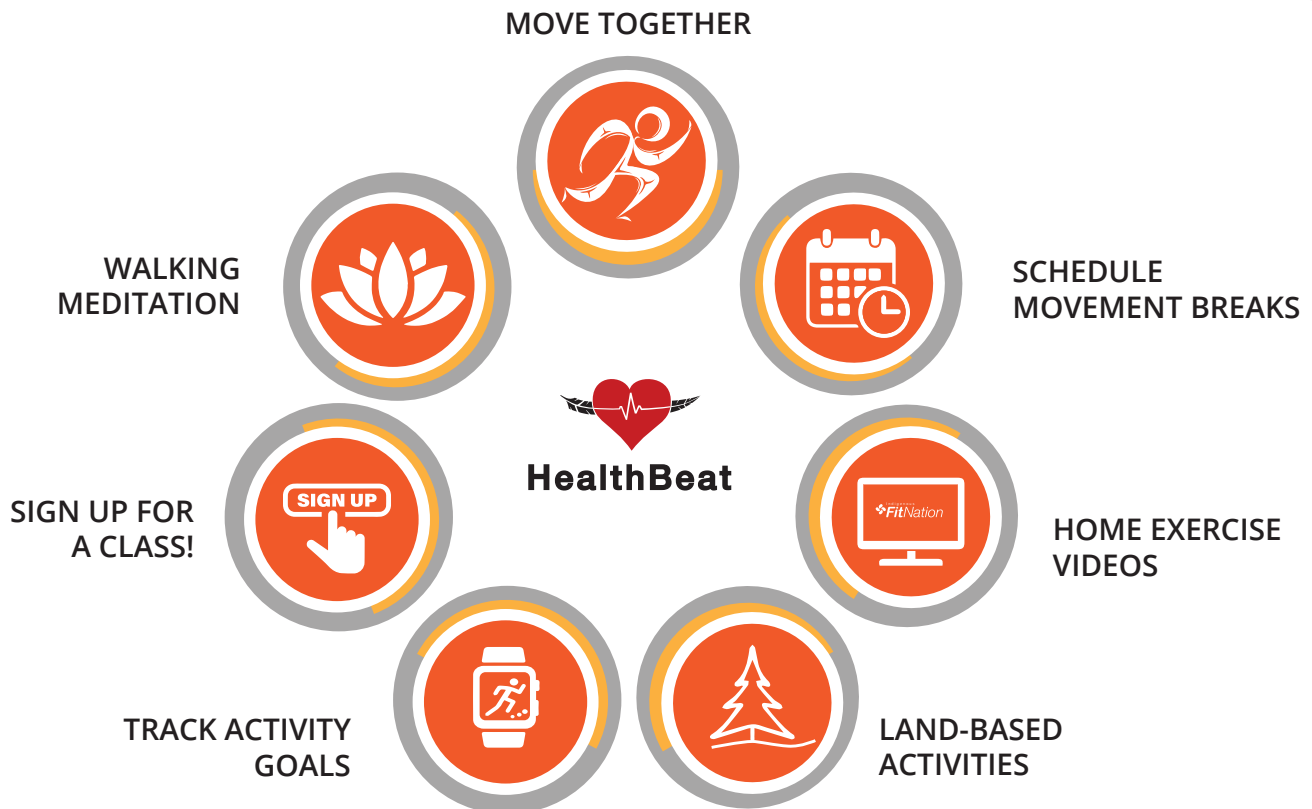
INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

What are the benefits of Physical Activity?

1. Physical Health – more energy, less pain and stiffness. Movement can help prevent and manage diseases like type 2 diabetes, heart disease, dementia, and some types of cancers.
2. Mental Health – less stress and worry, better concentration, and improved self-esteem.
3. Emotional Health – more energy, better sleep, boosts mood/spirit.

How can I increase my Physical Activity?

Make small changes. In some cases, as little as 10 minutes a day is a great start for positive changes! You can park further away, take the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator, get off the bus earlier or walk/bike to where you need to go one or more times a week.



There are many parts of our society that affect our health and lives that are beyond an individual's level of control. We want to acknowledge the social, political, economic, and environmental impacts to the health of the lands, waters, and forests, which in turn affects our health. We want you to know we are here to support you with your wellness goals and will meet you wherever you are at in your wellness journey.



MOVE TOGETHER

Find an activity buddy to move together! Start an everyone-welcome walk or activity, invite community members where people can share stories and drum or sing during the walk/activity.



LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES

Choose activities that you enjoy - fishing, gardening, dancing, snow-shoeing, harvesting, hunting, walking your dog, playing outside with your kids, walk while listening to a podcast or talking to a friend, walking meetings or walking lunches!



SIGN-UP FOR A CLASS

Check your local rec or community centre, Facebook groups, or ask active champions in your community about programs you might like. Sign-up for a yoga, dance, or fitness class, you're invested now!



SCHEDULE MOVEMENT BREAKS

If you're having trouble finding the time for physical activity, try scheduling movement breaks into your calendar.



HOME EXERCISE VIDEOS

Try an exercise video at home - like our I-SPARC FitNation channel on YouTube! Providing the opportunity to try a new exercise from the comfort of your home.



SET & TRACK ACTIVITY GOALS

Set and track your activity goals with a step counter, which can support motivation and build connection with others!



WALKING MEDITATION

Walk the same path each day and watch the seasons change and track what you see, hear, feel, and smell.

GRIP STRENGTH

Grip strength is a simple test to measure your overall body strength. As we age, we need to put in some conscious effort to move our whole body. Find ways to work your whole body, especially your upper body, such as carrying and playing with our children and grandchildren, berry picking, hunting, fishing, gardening, harvesting, and preserving foods. To build upper body strength, try lifting small weights (cans work too!) and body weight exercises like push-ups and planks against the wall.

Where you can find more information and support



Connect with your doctor or community health nurse if you have any health concerns before you start to get more active.



Watch on Youtube: 23 and 1/2 hours: What is the single best thing we can do for our health
FitNation on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLPJQkD1X0A&list=PLI3c6v0mHMfcG2iat-QKxtSW3-IWGOyt4k>



Call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 to speak with a qualified exercise professional to receive general and condition-specific information on how you can add more physical activity to your life.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE ACTIONS TO

IMPROVE SLEEP

Why is Sleep important for your wellness?

Sleep is medicine for our mind, body, and spirit, just like the medicine we receive from food, activity, and our friends and family. It can often be overlooked or sacrificed when we try to find balance with our health and wellness. For adults, when we sleep 7-9 hours/night, we are giving our body a chance to restore, repair, and recharge - getting us ready for the next day. Getting enough sleep supports a stronger immune system, better heart health, more brain power, and better coping ability!

How can I improve my Sleep?

Our ability to get enough sleep can be challenged through different phases of our life i.e. childbearing years, stressful times, and Elder years. Be gentle and kind with yourself during these times. Below are some ways to support a good night's sleep: Sleep Schedules, Nightly Routines, Sleep Environment, and Daily Habits.

SET YOUR SLEEP SCHEDULE



CREATE A CALMING SLEEP ENVIRONMENT



HealthBeat



FOLLOW A NIGHTLY ROUTINE



PLANT MEDICINE FOR SLEEP



DAILY HABITS MATTER



I-SPARC
Move | Play | Compete



First Nations Health Authority



BRITISH COLUMBIA

Canada

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FOLLOW A NIGHTLY ROUTINE

Create and follow a pre-bedtime routine that signals your body it is time for sleep - putting on pajamas, brushing your teeth. Budget 30 minutes for winding down with relaxing activities like soft music, light stretching, reading, prayer and/or relaxation exercises as part of your routine. Avoid electronics 30 mins. to one hour before bed. The blue light they give off can affect your sleep. If you feel tempted by your electronics during the night, go for a "no phones in the bedroom" policy. Go old school and get an alarm clock! Give yourself 30 mins. to one hour at most to fall asleep. If you are still awake, get up and go to another room to read or some activity that will not wake you up further. This is to prevent your brain from associating your bed with feelings of anxiousness and restlessness. As you begin to feel tired/sleepy, go back to bed.



DAILY HABITS MATTER FOR SLEEP TOO!

Move more - physical activity makes it easier to sleep at night! Find ways to move that you enjoy and start with small changes, as little as 10 minutes. Go for a short walk on your lunch break, do some chair exercises, try a short exercise video at home. Schedule time to relax, time for self-care, and time for activities that you love (taking a bath, art, reading, beading, writing). Caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, heavy meals, and exercise late in the day can negatively affect your sleep. Don't climb into bed during the day except to sleep (sex being the only exception) so your brain associates your bed with sleeping.



CREATE A CALMING SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

Our body is very sensitive to light. Black-out blinds or an eye mask may help you stay asleep. Aim for a cool, comfortable temperature - open a window or turn on a fan. Drown out noise with earplugs, a fan, or a white noise machine. Use a lavender sleep pillow.



SET A SLEEP SCHEDULE

Nurture your body's internal clock with structure. Pick a bedtime and wake-up time and try to stick with them every day, including days off, as much as possible! If you want to shift your sleep times, go for 15-minute gradual adjustments. Keep naps short (10-30 mins.) and take them in the early afternoon.



PLANT MEDICINE FOR SLEEP

Connect with an Elder, traditional knowledge and medicine keeper, or herbalist to learn more about plants that can support your sleep like lavender, labrador tea, chamomile, mint, rose, and lemon balm.

**Consult with a medical professional to ensure there are no contraindications with medicine you are currently taking.*

Where you can find more information and support



Try the 9-0 meditation practice: Breathe in deeply and breathe out slowly, saying in your mind the number 9. On the next breath out say 8, then say 7, and so on until you breathe out saying 0. Then start over, but this time start with 8 (instead of 9) followed by 7 and so on until you reach 0. Repeat until you have gone all the way down to starting with 1. Continue until you fall asleep.



Learn more about breathing & meditation:
<https://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-hygiene/relaxation-exercises-to-help-fall-asleep>
Try a relaxation app: Calm or Headspace

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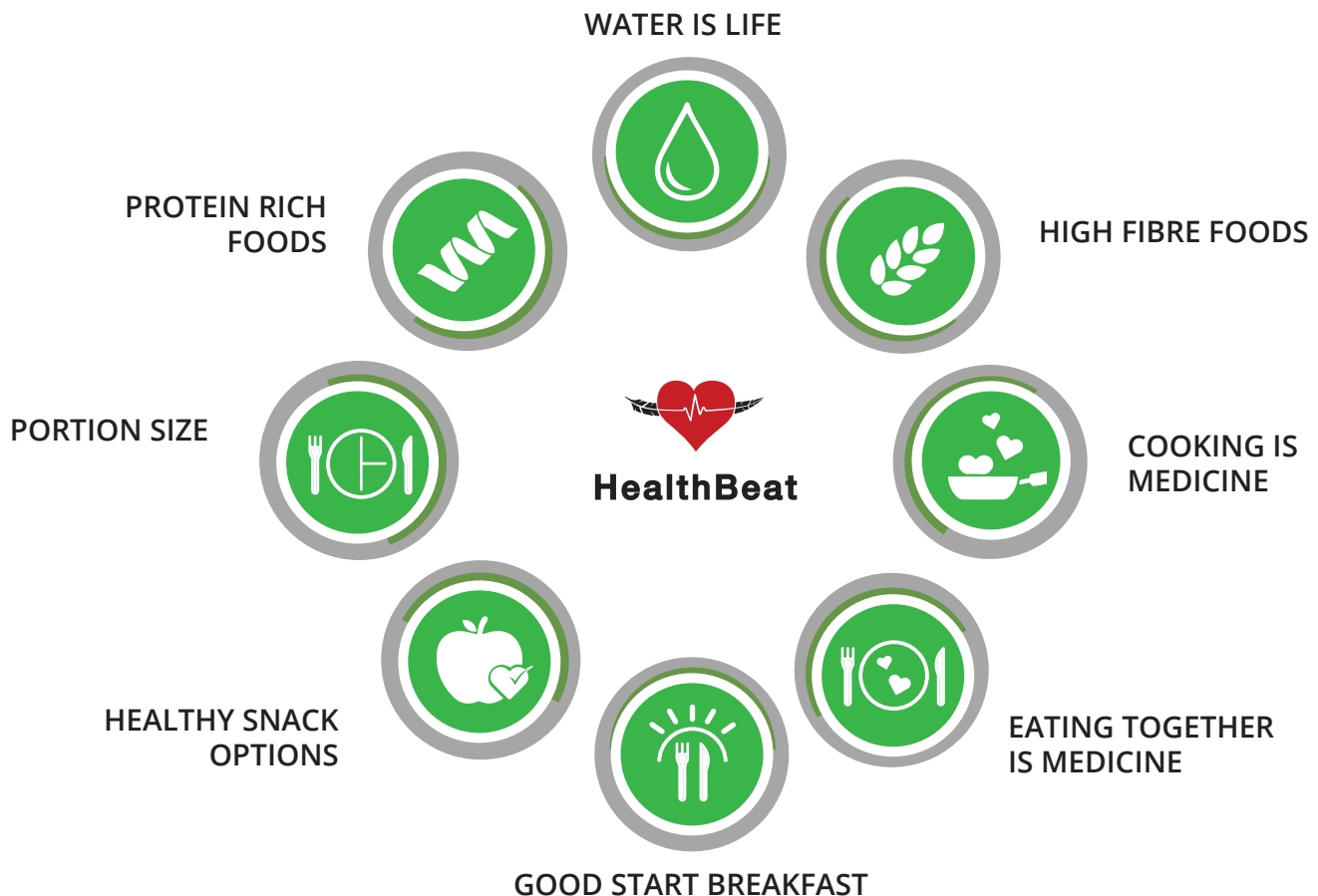
NUTRITION & HEALTHY EATING

Food is Medicine

Food is medicine to our body, mind, and spirit. The food we eat nourishes our bodies - physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Food is delicious and it brings us together. Many traditions, customs, and relationships are connected through harvesting, processing, cooking, and eating food. Cooking and eating together is a powerful connector to those we love.

How can I give my body the nourishment it needs?

Whole foods provide for our wellness. Mindfully connect to foods that make your body, mind, and spirit strong. Be mindful, eat slowly, and enjoy!



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WATER IS LIFE

Nourish your body. Try jazzing water up with fresh citrus (lemon, orange, lime), cucumber, herbs, berries, etc. See our Re-Think Your Drink handout for recipe ideas! Limit high sugar drinks (specialty coffees, soda, juice, energy drinks, iced tea, and sports drinks).



HIGH FIBRE FOODS

Fibre helps support blood sugar & high cholesterol levels, manages weight, and keeps digestion strong. Choose traditional foods when you can; whole-grains (whole-grain bread, brown rice, old-fashioned or steel cut oatmeal); fruits including berries, apples, pears, plums, peaches, and cherries; vegetables especially non-starchy ones (wild greens, spring shoots, nettle, broccoli, cauliflower, salads, onion, tomato, peppers, celery, cucumber, spinach, carrots, beets, ginger, cabbage, garlic); nuts and seeds (peanut butter, sunflower seeds, walnuts); beans and lentils (includes rinsed canned or dried beans and lentils).



PORTION SIZES

On your dinner plate aim for 1/2 plate of vegetables and fruits, 1/4 plate starch such as grains (rice, bread, pasta), or root vegetable (potato, sweet potato), and 1/4 plate protein (fish, meat, eggs, legumes like beans and lentils) and ENJOY!



EATING TOGETHER IS MEDICINE

Try to find one time each day to eat a meal or snack together.



GOOD START BREAKFAST

Breakfast is a good start for your mind, body, and spirit. We need the nourishment to begin our day. If you like oatmeal, try old-fashioned or steel cut oats with berries and sprinkled with chopped nuts or seeds. If you like smoothies, try a combo of milk (or milk alternative), banana, peanut butter, and cocoa. If you are a toast person, try whole-grain toast with peanut butter and sliced berries, bonus for adding a sprinkle of cinnamon. Most breakfast cereals are high in refined carbohydrates and low in fibre.



PROTEIN RICH FOODS

Fish, seafood, eggs, nuts, seeds, meat, dairy, legumes (beans, lentils) are important for our immune system, help keep us strong, help keep us full, and maintain our blood sugar levels. Try to include protein food at every meal and mid-afternoon snack!



HEALTHY SNACK OPTIONS

Feeling snacky? Try canned fish and crackers, berries and nuts, apple and peanut butter, hardboiled eggs and crackers, veggies and hummus, orange and almonds, fruit and Greek yogurt smoothie, unsalted trail mix.



COOKING IS MEDICINE

Invite your family to get involved, turn on some music and have fun cooking your dinner, putting good feelings into your food! Planning a few meals each week can help make cooking easier and enjoyable.

Where you can find more information and support



Grab a copy of I-SPARC's Re-Think Your Drink handout or visit Canada's food guide: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-eating-habits/>



Try new recipes: <http://nada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/NTC-Diabetes-Cookbook.pdf>
Learn about traditional foods: <https://www.fnha.ca/wellness/wellness-for-first-nations/traditional-wellness/traditional-foods>



Call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 to speak with a Registered Dietitian to receive information about foods that can support your overall health and wellness.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE ACTIONS TO

SUPPORT MENTAL WELLNESS

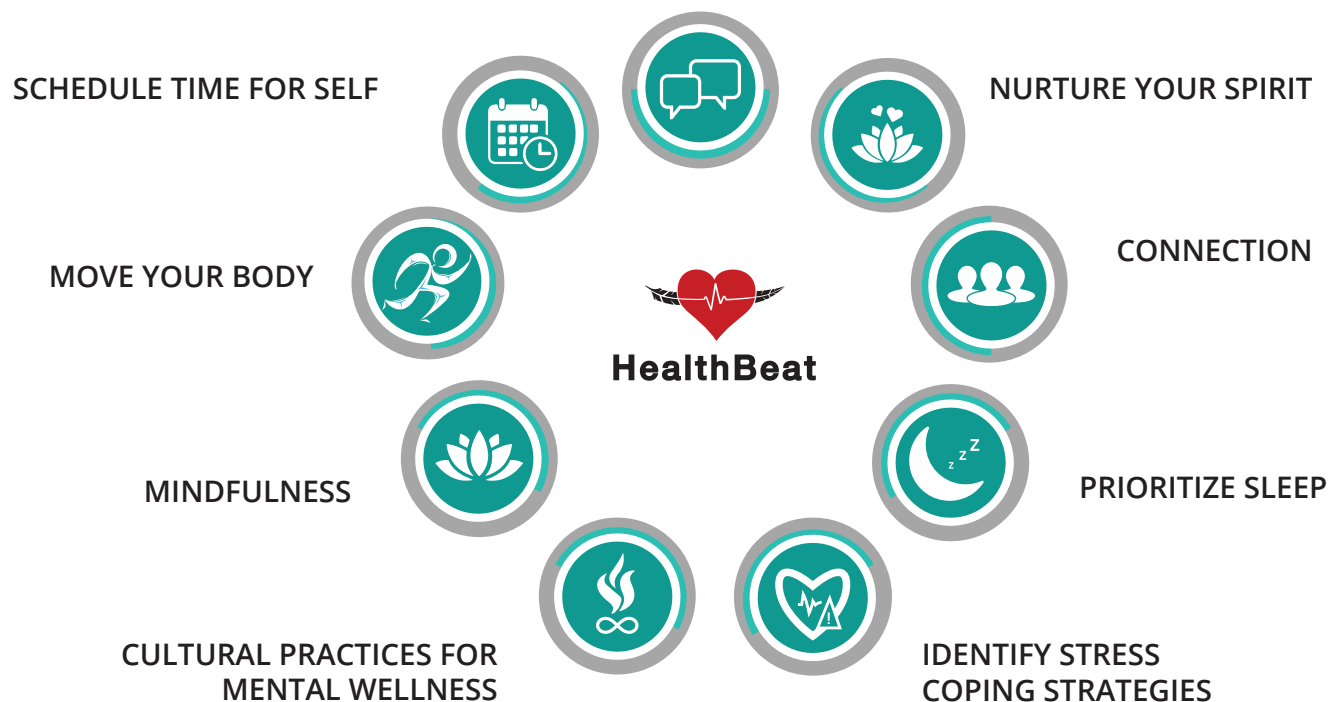
What is Mental Wellness?

Mental Wellness is about finding balance with your mental, social, physical, and spiritual well-being. One way to support wellness is to nurture yourself. Life can throw a lot at us, and finding strategies to support the way you feel, think, and react to stressors is key. Creating supports and strategies for mental wellness not only impacts the individual, but families, communities, and society as a whole. We must not talk about wellness without acknowledging the broader social factors that impact many Indigenous people's wellness. Longstanding harms of colonization have devastating impacts on individuals, families, and communities. I·SPARC is committed to providing supports, events, and building relationships to create community supports for wellness.

How can I build up and support my Mental Wellness?

While many causes are out of our control, we can focus on building mental wellness in three key areas - Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Physical Activity, and Social Support.

SEEK SUPPORT



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NURTURE YOUR SPIRIT

Make time to do activities that make you feel connected, whether it be to the land, your family, ancestors, or Creator. This could be getting out on the land, waters, drumming, dancing, or spending time with family or friends.



IDENTIFY STRESS & COPING STRATEGIES

Identify stressors - can you eliminate or minimize it? Some stress is beyond an individual's level of control. It can help to break down potential solutions into small, manageable steps. Watch your coping strategies that may not reduce stress. Limit alcohol, drugs, and caffeine which can reduce coping skills and affect sleep.



CONNECTION

Make connections. Connect with someone who makes you laugh. Connect with an Elder, traditional knowledge and medicine keeper, or herbalist to learn about plants that can support your journey in boosting your mental wellness like lavender, mint, rose, chamomile, sage, sweetgrass, and water.*



MINDFULNESS

Mindset is important - embrace positivity, practice gratitude through prayer or journaling as well as mindfulness exercises. Be mindful of overextending yourself. It is ok to set boundaries and say no!



SEEK SUPPORT

Who can you reach out to? A friend, an Elder, a family member, or a wellness health professional - you are never alone!



CULTURAL PRACTICES FOR MENTAL WELLNESS

Our nations and communities have culturally relevant practices for mental health. Engage in ceremony and other healing practices and protocols that are relevant to your community.



SCHEDULE TIME FOR YOURSELF

Schedule time to relax, time for self-care, and time for activities that you love (taking a bath, art, reading, beading, writing, etc.)



PRIORITIZE SLEEP

Try researching sleep hygiene and create a nighttime routine that works for you.



MOVE YOUR BODY

Physical activity boosts your mood! Find ways that you enjoy and start small - even 10 minutes a day! Go for a short walk at lunch, try chair exercises or a short home exercise video.

**Consult with a medical professional to ensure there are no contraindications with medicine you are currently taking.*

Where you can find more information and support



If in crisis, call: KUU-US Crisis Line at 1-800-588-8717 or 1-833-METISBC for culturally safe help 24 hrs/day.



Learn about mental wellness: <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-illness-and-addiction-index>
<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-COVID-19-Mental-Health-and-Cultural-Supports.pdf>
<https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/traditional-healing>



Call FNHA Benefits: 1-955-550-5454 or your benefits provider. Find a therapist here <https://bc-counsellors.org/> or <https://healingincolour.com/directory>

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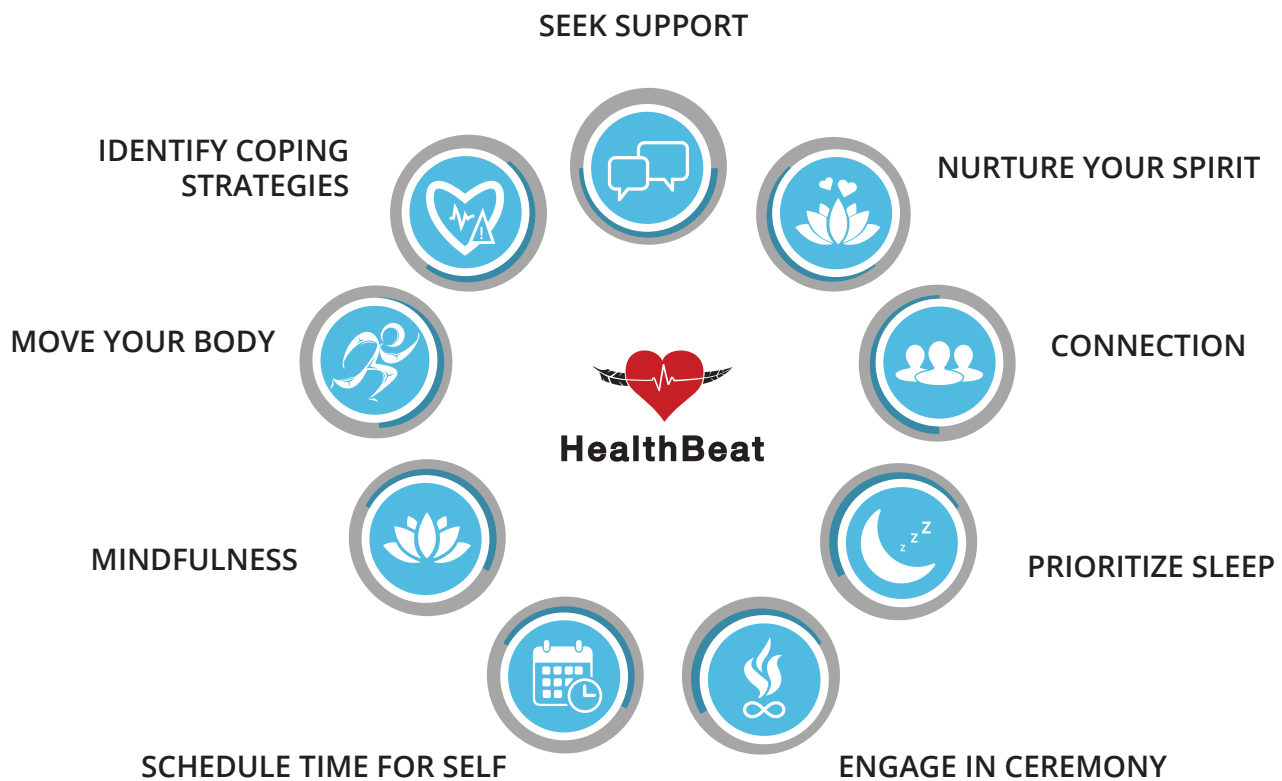
MANAGE STRESS

How is Stress helpful and harmful?

Stress is a normal reaction to dealing with changes and challenges of everyday life. Stress is the result of brain chemicals, called hormones, that trigger your “fight or flight” response - making you sweat, breathe faster, tense your muscles, and prepare to take action. A little bit of stress can be helpful - help you meet deadlines, be productive, and arrive on time. However, experiencing long-term stress is very hard on your mental, physical, and emotional well-being. Some stress is out of our control and this can feel overwhelming.

What can I do to support myself when experiencing Stress?

Below are a few teachings and techniques to support you when stress is taking over you and your life.



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NURTURE YOUR SPIRIT

Make time to do activities that make you feel connected, whether it be to the land, your family, ancestors, or Creator. This could be getting out on the land, waters, drumming, dancing, or spending time with family or friends.



IDENTIFY STRESS & COPING STRATEGIES

Identify stressors - can you eliminate or minimize it? Some stress is beyond an individual's level of control. It can help to break down potential solutions into small, manageable steps. Be mindful of your coping strategies that may not reduce stress. Alcohol, drugs, and caffeine can reduce your coping skills and affect your sleep.



CONNECTION

Make connections. Connect with someone who makes you laugh. Connect with an Elder, traditional knowledge and medicine keeper, or herbalist to learn about plants that can support your journey in taking control of stress like lavender, mint, rose, chamomile, sage, and sweetgrass.*



MOVE YOUR BODY

Physical activity reduces the feeling of stress! Find activities that you enjoy and start small - even 10 minutes a day! Go for a short walk at lunch, try chair exercises or a short home exercise video.



SEEK SUPPORT

Who can you reach out to? A friend, an Elder, a family member, or a wellness health professional - you are never alone!



ENGAGE IN CEREMONY

Smudging and cedar brushing are used for healing, cleansing, and purifying negative energy. Try and set some time aside to connect with (or to) whatever ceremony means to you.



MINDFULNESS

Mindset is important - embrace positivity, practice gratitude through prayer or journaling as well as mindfulness exercises. Be mindful of overextending yourself. It is ok to set boundaries and say no!



PRIORITIZE SLEEP

Try researching "sleep hygiene" and create a nighttime routine that works for you.



SCHEDULE TIME FOR YOURSELF

Schedule time to relax, time for self-care, and time for activities that you love (taking a bath, art, reading, beading, writing, etc.)

**Consult with a medical professional to ensure there are no contraindications with medicine you are currently taking.*

Where you can find more information and support



If in crisis, call: KUU-US Crisis Line at 1-800-588-8717 or 1-833-METISBC for culturally safe help 24 hrs/day.



Watch on YouTube: 90:10 The Single Most Important Thing You Can Do For Your Stress and How To Make Stress Your Friend

Try practicing mindfulness: <https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-exercises-techniques-activities/>



Call FNHA Benefits: 1-955-550-5454 or your work benefits provider about counselling services.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE ACTIONS TO

MANAGE DIABETES

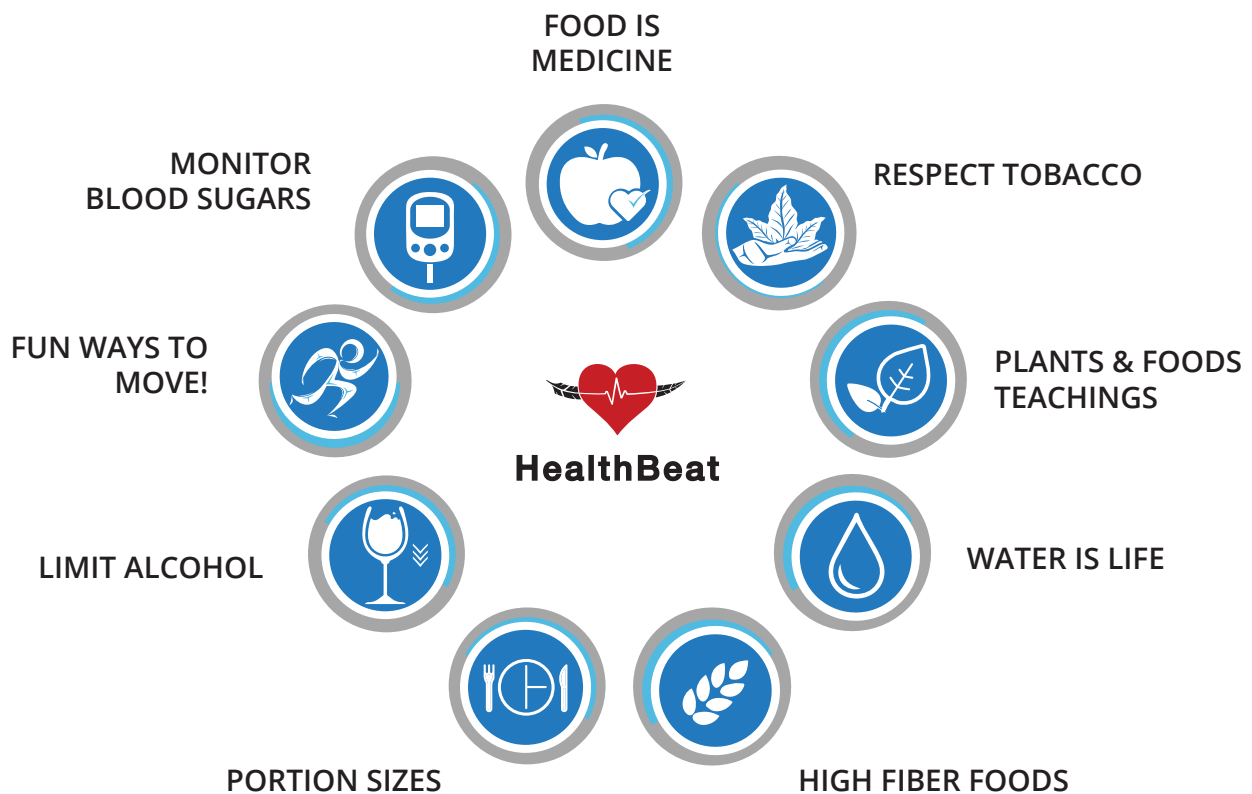
What is Diabetes?

Type 2 Diabetes is a condition in which the body is unable to make enough insulin, or the body is unable to properly use the insulin it makes. Type 2 Diabetes is the most common form of diabetes.

A note on pre-diabetes: If you have your blood sugars checked regularly, your health care team might identify that your blood sugars are slightly high, or at the pre-diabetes level. If slightly high blood sugar levels are identified early and you are able to make some lifestyle change, you have a good chance of not progressing to type 2 diabetes.

How can I support my Wellness when I have Diabetes?

There are many ways to support diabetes wellness with healthy eating, physical activity, and medications to help keep blood sugars in a healthy range.



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MONITOR BLOOD SUGARS

Type 2 Diabetes: your doctor will request a lab blood test every 3 months (or 6 months for pre-diabetes) and you may not have to check your blood sugars very often at home (note: if you are only on Metformin, checking your blood sugars at home a few times per week can help make sure you are staying on track). If your blood sugars are high, you have a new diabetes diagnosis, you are on diabetes medications (other than Metformin), or are on insulin, you should check your blood sugars at home more regularly.



HIGH FIBRE FOODS

Enjoy whole foods with fibre. Fibre helps grab extra cholesterol in your bowels and gets it out of your body through healthy bowel movements. Choose: whole-grains (whole-grain bread, brown rice, old-fashioned or steel cut oatmeal); all fruit including berries, apples, bananas, oranges; all vegetables especially non-starchy ones like wild greens, spring shoots, nettle, cauliflower, broccoli, salads, onion, tomato, peppers, celery, cucumber, spinach, carrots, beets, cabbage, garlic, ginger; nuts and seeds (peanut butter, sunflower seeds, walnuts); beans and lentils including rinsed canned or dried beans and lentils.



RESPECT TOBACCO

Even if you have been using commercial tobacco for many years, you can improve your health by quitting. Many people find success if they make a quit plan and gather supports. The First Nations Health Authority's (FNHA) website also has resources available, including a tobacco podcast series!



LIMIT ALCOHOL

If you drink, consider limiting your consumption to lower your health risk, as reducing your alcohol intake by any amount can improve your health. For healthy adults, 0-2 drinks per week is considered low-risk, 3-6 moderate risk, and 7+ per week is high-risk.



FOOD IS MEDICINE

Enjoy lots of fresh foods like veggies, fruit, berries, fish, game, and wild foods. Most fruits, sweets, pastries, and drinks contain carbohydrates which breaks down into sugar in your body. Spread out carbohydrates (rice, potatoes, pasta, bread) throughout the day. Estimate about a 'fist size' per meal. Look for carbohydrate foods with fibre: choose old-fashioned or steel cut oatmeal over cereal, brown rice over white rice, and whole-grain bread over white bread. These foods have more fibre and will break down into sugar more slowly.



WATER IS LIFE

Nourish your body with water. Jazz up water with fresh citrus (lemon, orange, lime), cucumber, herbs, berries, etc. Grab our Re-Think Your Drink handout for recipes! Limit high sugar drinks (specialty coffees, soda, juice, energy drinks, iced tea, sports drinks).



PLANTS & FOODS TEACHINGS

Connect with a health care provider, an Elder, traditional knowledge and medicine keeper, or herbalist to learn about plants and foods that can support your journey to take control of diabetes like dandelion leaf and root, devil's club, blueberry and huckleberry, blackberry leaf, omega-3s or oolichan grease.*



PORTION SIZES

On your dinner plate aim for 1/2 plate of vegetables and fruits, 1/4 plate starch such as grains (rice, bread, pasta), or root vegetable (potato, sweet potato), and 1/4 plate protein (fish, meat, eggs, legumes like beans and lentils) and ENJOY!



FUN WAYS TO MOVE!

Choose activities that you enjoy - fishing, gardening, dancing, hunting, snow-shoeing, harvesting, walking your dog, playing outside with your kids, walk while listening to a podcast or talking to a friend, walking meetings or walking lunches!

**Consult with a medical professional to ensure there are no contraindications with medicine you are currently taking.*

Where you can find more information and support



Connect with your doctor, diabetes educator, dietitian, or community health nurse for ongoing support to take control of your diabetes.



Learn about diabetes from
National Indigenous Diabetes Association: nada.ca
Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle: idhc.life/resources



Call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 to speak with a registered nurse, a Registered Dietitian, a qualified exercise professional, or a pharmacist to discuss your blood sugar.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE ACTIONS TO

MANAGE CHOLESTEROL

Your Heart, Body, and Cholesterol?

You may have wondered “what is cholesterol?” and it’s a great question! Cholesterol is a type of fat that we need in our bodies. We often hear of two kinds of cholesterol:

1. “Good” Cholesterol (aka HDL-High Density Lipoprotein): Removes other forms of cholesterol from your blood vessels, supporting blood to move more freely, and may reduce risk for heart attack and stroke.
2. “Bad” Cholesterol (aka LDL-Low Density Lipoprotein): Can block blood vessels, increasing our risk of heart attack or stroke by limiting blood flow.

How can I lower my Cholesterol?

Make small changes, in some cases as little as 10 minutes of physical activity a day is a great start for positive changes! Consider plant-based options, choose healthy fat foods, and acknowledging stress are a few ways to lower cholesterol.



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MOVE YOUR BODY

Physical activity is medicine! Find ways to move that you enjoy or in places you enjoy like a park, trail, lakeside, or in your neighbourhood. Start with small changes, as little as 10 minutes and add to it. Go for a short walk on your lunch break, try chair exercises or a short exercise video at home. Take a walking call with a friend, a walking meeting, or find an activity buddy.



ACKNOWLEDGE STRESS

Acknowledge stress and its impact on cholesterol and your wellness! Connect to nature, water, culture, art, and family and friends. Sleep and eat well. Tap into your creativity, try meditation, breathing exercises, and ensure self-care with boundaries.



LIMIT ALCOHOL

If you drink, consider limiting your consumption to lower your health risk, as reducing your alcohol intake by any amount can improve your health. For healthy adults, 0-2 drinks per week is considered low-risk, 3-6 moderate risk, and 7+ per week is high-risk.



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FOOD IS MEDICINE

Enjoy whole foods with fibre. Fibre helps grab extra cholesterol in your bowels and gets it out of your body through healthy bowel movements. Choose: whole-grains (whole-grain bread, brown rice, old-fashioned or steel cut oatmeal); all fruit including berries, apples, bananas, oranges; all vegetables especially non-starchy ones like wild greens, spring shoots, nettle, cauliflower, broccoli, salads, onion, tomato, peppers, celery, cucumber, spinach, carrots, beets, cabbage, garlic, ginger; nuts and seeds (peanut butter, sunflower seeds, walnuts); beans and lentils including rinsed canned or dried beans and lentils.



HEALTHY FAT FOODS

Choose foods with healthy fats: oolichan oil, olive oil, fish, nuts, seeds, avocado, and eggs.



PLANT-BASED OPTIONS

Choose more plant-based meals per week. Swap out the red meat for lentils, or the turkey soup for a bean soup or vegetarian chili.



LIMIT PROCESSED FOODS

Limit processed foods that are high in saturated fat, including: hot dogs, fast-food burgers, deli meats (ham, bologna, bacon), cookies, donuts, cakes, chips, french fries. Reduce butter and full-fat dairy (cheese, milk, ice cream, cream).

Where you can find more information and support



Connect with your doctor or community health nurse to receive ongoing support to take control of your cholesterol.



Learn more about nutrition for high cholesterol:
<http://nada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Healthy-Eating-For-High-Cholesterol.pdf>



Call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 to speak with a registered nurse, a Registered Dietitian, a qualified exercise professional or a pharmacist to discuss your cholesterol.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE ACTIONS TO

REDUCE BLOOD PRESSURE

What is Blood Pressure?

The force of your blood moving against the walls of your artery blood vessels. It is measured with two numbers:

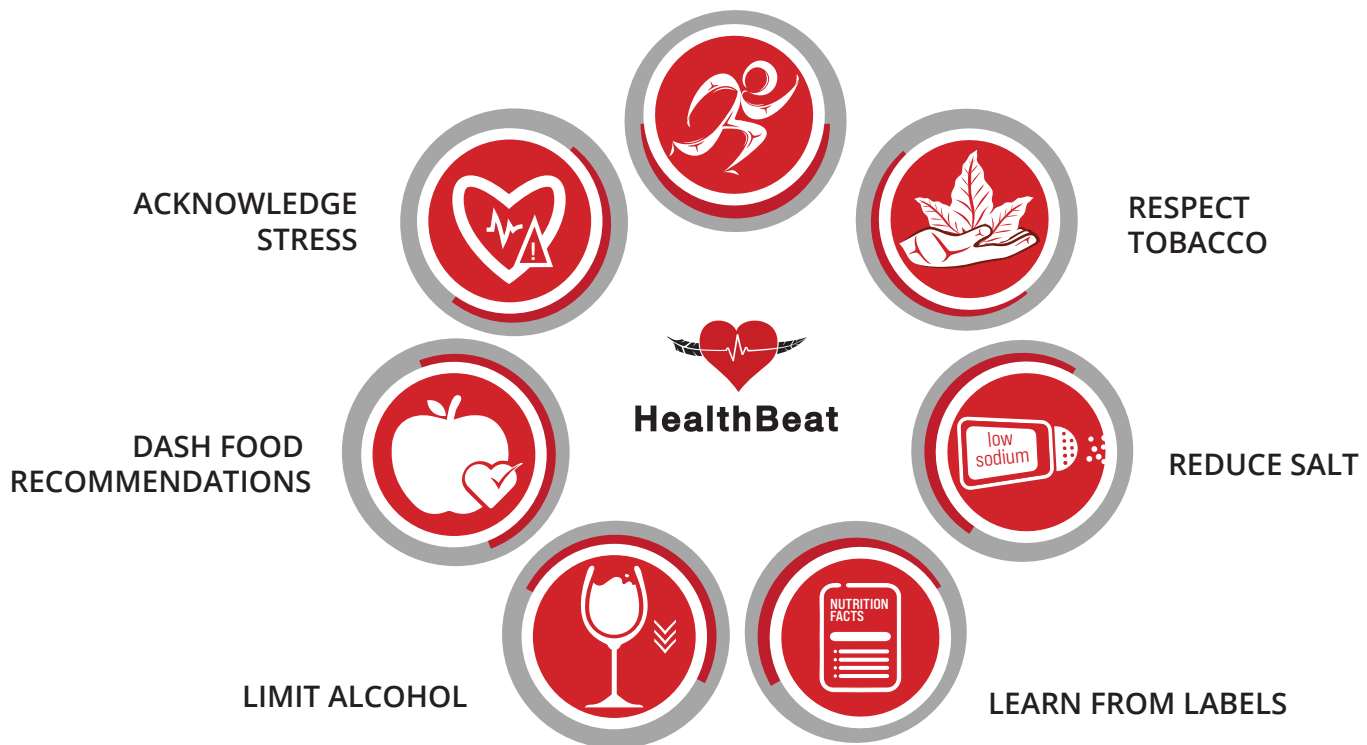
Systolic Blood Pressure: the force in your arteries when your heart **beats**

Diastolic Blood Pressure: the force in your arteries when your heart **relaxes**

How can I lower my Blood Pressure?

Check and write down your blood pressure at the same time everyday. Check it while sitting down, feet on the ground for at least 10 minutes before you test. This will help you see the benefits of the lifestyles changes you are making. Connect with a health care provider, Elder, traditional knowledge and medicine keeper, or herbalist to learn more about plants that can support your journey in taking control of your blood pressure such as hawthorn.

MOVE YOUR BODY



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MOVE YOUR BODY

Physical activity is medicine! Find ways to move that you enjoy or in places you enjoy like a park, trail, lakeside, or in your neighbourhood. Start with small changes, even as little as 10 minutes a day and add to it. Go for a short walk on your lunch break, do chair exercises, try a short exercise video at home. Take a walking phone call with a friend or a walking meeting. Find an activity buddy!



LEARN FROM LABELS

Check out food labels! Aim for foods that have less than 5% DV (daily value) sodium (salt) and avoid foods with more than 15% DV sodium.



RESPECT TOBACCO

Even if you have been using commercial tobacco for many years, you can improve your health by quitting. Many people find success if they make a quit plan and gather supports. The First Nations Health Authority's (FNHA) website also has resources available, including a tobacco podcast series!



LIMIT ALCOHOL

If you drink, consider limiting your consumption to lower your health risk, as reducing your alcohol intake by any amount can improve your health. For healthy adults, 0-2 drinks per week is considered low-risk, 3-6 moderate risk, and 7+ per week is high-risk.



REDUCE SALT

Choose lower salt foods. Most of the salt (sodium) in our diet comes from processed foods such as canned and packaged foods (soups, sauces, soya sauce, premade dinners, instant noodles, boxed pastas, canned foods) and processed meats (ham, bologna, bacon). Restaurant and take-away meals are often high in salt. Food is medicine, we encourage you to cook with and enjoy lots of fresh foods like veggies, fruit, berries, fish, game, and wild foods - they have very little salt in their fresh form and are high in potassium which is good for your heart!



ACKNOWLEDGE STRESS

Acknowledge stress and its impact on blood pressure and your wellness! Connect to nature, water, culture, art, and family and friends. Sleep and eat well. Tap into your creativity, try meditation, breathing exercises, and ensure self-care with boundaries.



DASH FOOD RECOMMENDATIONS

Check out the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) food recommendations! DASH has been shown to reduce blood pressure and is packed full of high potassium foods including berries, fruits, vegetables, nuts (including peanut butter), seeds, legumes (lentils and beans) and includes fish and lean meats.* If you have kidney issues, speak to your doctor or health care professional to ask if a high potassium diet is OK for you.

**Consult with a medical professional to ensure there are no contraindications with medicine you are currently taking.*

Where you can find more information and support



Connect with your doctor, community health nurse, or pharmacist to receive support to take control of your blood pressure.



Visit for more information about:
Blood Pressure: heartandstroke.ca/bloodpressure
DASH Recommendations: <http://nada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Nutrition-for-High-Blood-Pressure.pdf>



Call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 to speak with a registered nurse, a Registered Dietitian, a qualified exercise professional, or a pharmacist.