

# Unit 6

## Food, Health, and Wellness

### Overview

Food is fundamental to everyone's lives and experiences. It supplies fuel and nutrition for our bodies. Some foods can maintain health while others can harm it.

First Peoples' traditional relationship with food has always been interconnected with the land, with family and community, with governance and with culture. The diversity of First Peoples is reflected in the diverse types of foods harvested from different local ecosystems.

Traditional knowledge of foods and medicines rooted in the specific territory of a community was built up over many generations. Before contact, Indigenous societies had well-developed systems of health care based on spiritual practice and holistic knowledge of medicines derived from the land.

Contact and colonization had devastating impacts on health and wellness. These include the sudden onslaught of diseases which decimated First Nations populations, specific impacts of diets in Indian Residential Schools, and the incipient effects of Western diets on those of First Peoples.

Traditional foods and medical practices helped to sustain First Peoples' physical, mental and spiritual health and wellbeing in the past, and First Peoples believe that by reclaiming and restoring them can have similar results today.

### *Essential Understandings*

- For First Peoples, traditional foods from the land are like medicine, providing nutrition, health and identity.
- First Peoples have always used their traditional knowledge of traditional medicines and health practices to maintain wellness in their communities.
- The impacts of colonialism have had a significant negative impact on the health and wellness of First Peoples.
- First Nations in BC are leading the way in Canada to improve the health and wellness of First Peoples.

### *Guiding Questions*

- What benefits are there from using traditional foods and medicines today?
- How did contact and colonization disrupt traditional food and health systems?
- How are First Peoples advancing significant issues of food and health today?

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### Focus on Learning Goals

While many or all the First Peoples Principles of Learning and BC Learning Standards may be relevant, the following are suggested as a focus in this Theme Unit.

#### ***First Peoples Principles of Learning***

*Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.*

Understanding the interconnectedness of all things helps us learn about the importance of the land – the place we live – to our sense of well-being and identity.

#### ***BC Learning Standards***

Content Learning Standards

##### **BC First Peoples 12**

- Impact of historical exchanges of ideas, practices, and materials among local B.C. First Peoples and with non-indigenous peoples
- Provincial and federal government policies and practices that have affected, and continue to affect, the responses of B.C. First Peoples to colonialism
- Resistance of B.C. First Peoples to colonialism
- Contemporary challenges facing B.C. First Peoples, including legacies of colonialism

##### **Food Studies 12**

- Perspectives in Indigenous food sovereignty

##### **Anatomy and Physiology 12**

- Lifestyle differences and their effects on human health
- Holistic approaches to health

### Resources

This is an overview of the required resources for the activities in each Investigation. Additional optional sources are mentioned in the activities.

#### **Investigation 1**

- Bannock resources
  - *Aboriginal Health - Myth Busting Bannock*. Provincial Health Services Authority, 2014. 4:41 in. <https://youtu.be/dIZytE0zGgo>
  - *Bannock: A Brief History*. Unreserved, CBC, 2016. Audio and Text. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/bannock-wild-meat-and-indigenous-food-sovereignty-1.3424436/bannock-a-brief-history-1.3425549>
  - *Baking Bread on a Rock?* New Brunswick Community College. <https://nbcc.ca/indigenous/did-you-know/bannock>

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

- Frybread, by Jen Miller. Smithsonian Magazine, 2008. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/frybread-79191/>

### Investigation 2

- Line Master 6-1, page 226, *Word Sort: Our Food Is Our Medicine*
- Line Master 6-2, page 227, *Cultural Significance of First Peoples Traditional Foods*
- “‘Eating Healthy’: Traditional Foods Are Good Medicine For Both Body And Soul.” Dr. Sean Wachtel, 2018. First Nations Health Authority. <https://bit.ly/2ExJIKk>

### Investigation 3

- First Nations Health Authority. *Traditional Food Fact Sheets*. [https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/Traditional\\_Food\\_Fact\\_Sheets.pdf](https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/Traditional_Food_Fact_Sheets.pdf)

### Investigation 4

- Science First Peoples 5-9. FNESC/FNSA. <http://www.fnesc.ca/science-first-peoples/>
- *STA - Sharing mela'hma*. Crystal Dawn Moris, Stopover Splatsin 2019. <https://vimeo.com/362421892>
- Elsie Paul: *As I Remember It, Teachings from the Life of a Sliammon Elder*. <http://publications.ravenspacepublishing.org/as-i-remember-it>

### Investigation 5

- Our History, Our Health. <https://www.fnha.ca/wellness/our-history-our-health>
- Resources about smallpox epidemics such as:
  - The Impact of Smallpox on First Nations on the West Coast. Indigenous Corporate Training, 2017. <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/the-impact-of-smallpox-on-first-nations-on-the-west-coast>
  - Canadian Encyclopedia article. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/smallpox>
- *Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation*, Grade 5. Activity 3.4, School Food.

### Investigation 6

- Line Master 6-3, page 228, *Pillars of Food Security*
- Line Master 6-4, page 229, *Food Security*
- Line Master 6-5, page 230, *Traditional Diet Project*
- Carlson, Keith Thor. *You Are Asked to Witness: The Stó:lo in Canada's Pacific Coast History*. Stó:lo Heritage Trust, 1997.
- First Nations Health Authority. *Planning Your Journey to Wellness: A Road Map*. [https://www.fnha.ca/WellnessSite/WellnessDocuments/FNHA\\_Wellness\\_Map.pdf](https://www.fnha.ca/WellnessSite/WellnessDocuments/FNHA_Wellness_Map.pdf)
- Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation. FNESC/FNSA. <http://www.fnesc.ca/grade5irsr/>
- Secondary Science First Peoples. FNESC/FNSA. <http://www.fnesc.ca/sciencetrq/>
- Ts'msyen Nation. *Persistence and Change: A History of the Ts'msyen Nation*. First Nations Education Services, SD 52, Prince Rupert, 2005.

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### ***Overview of Investigations***

These Investigations have more activities than most teachers will incorporate into their units. It is not expected that you will use all of the activities, or follow the sequence as it is described. The activities are intended to be adapted to fit the needs of your students and classroom.

The activities are intended to inspire ways that you can respectfully include relevant First Peoples' knowledge and perspectives in your course.

For more information, see Using The BC First Peoples 12 Teacher Resource Guide, page 6.

1. How Traditional Are Traditional Foods?
  - a. Experiencing “Traditional” Foods
  - b. Is Bannock a Traditional Food?
2. Our Food is Our Medicine
  - a. Cultural Significance of Traditional Foods
  - b. Body and Soul
  - c. What Food is Your Medicine?
3. Traditional Foods and Nutrition
  - a. How Well Do You Know Traditional Food Resources?
  - b. Benefits of Eating Traditional Foods
  - c. Stories of Traditional Food
4. Traditional Health and Medicine
  - a. Sharing Tea
  - b. Traditional Medicines
  - c. Systems of Wellness
5. Disrupting Food and Health Systems
  - a. Impacts of Colonization
  - b. Germs on Contact
  - c. Nutrition in Indian Residential Schools
6. Wellness for BC First Nations Today
  - a. Personal Wellness
  - b. BC First Nations Health Authority
  - c. Support for Traditional Medicines and Practices
  - d. Contemporary Epidemic Responses
7. Food Security and Food Sovereignty
  - a. What is Food Security?
  - b. Traditional Foods and Food Security
  - c. Barriers to Food Security
  - d. Food Security and Climate Change
  - e. Assessing Local Food Security
  - f. Indigenous Food Sovereignty
8. Is a Traditional Diet Possible Today?
9. Give Back, Carry Forward
  - a. What Did You Learn?
  - b. Documenting Learning

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### Investigation 1 How Traditional are Traditional Foods?

Begin the unit by engaging students in an experiential activity that leads to a discussion about what makes something a traditional food.

#### *Questions for Inquiry*

- What makes a food traditional?
- How are traditional food sources prepared in new ways?

#### a. Experiencing “Traditional” Foods

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Plan an activity in which students have an opportunity to engage in some way with traditional Indigenous foods that continue to be eaten today. The types of activities you choose will vary depending on your location. Here are some suggested experiential activities.

- Students can work together to make bannock.
  - If possible, find one or more recipes used locally. Students could bring recipes from home and try cooking from the different recipes.
  - Follow this up with the activity below, Is Bannock a Traditional Food?
  - Note: See the next activity for distinctions between bannock and fried or fry bread.
- Students can make jam. If possible, use locally available berries, but if not, use frozen berries such as blueberries. The jam can be served with the bannock.
- Make a class or group stew or soup. Students can each bring one ingredient.
  - Commonly, stews and soups eaten in an Indigenous diet have foods from the land and from the grocery store, such as carrots and onions. Usually the main protein is venison, moose, rabbit or duck, or, from the water, fish or clams. You may need to substitute with beef, chicken or other proteins.
  - For a vegetarian option, students could use an Indigenous recipe from the First Nations of Eastern North America by making a Three Sisters soup. The Three Sisters vegetables are beans, corn and squash. For more information, see *Science First Peoples 10–12* (FNESC/FNSA 2019), Activity 7.11, Companion Planting: An Indigenous Model, pages 199–200.
- Make a contemporary dish that incorporates one or more locally sourced foods. For example, some First Peoples adapt other cuisines to make dishes like clam chow mein or venison curry.
  - Indigenous students may be able to suggest dishes that are commonly served at community gatherings.
  - Students can find recipes in cookbooks by Indigenous chefs.
- Ask students to choose a locally available food and use a traditional preparation technique to prepare and cook the food. Try to use traditional tools, materials, and cooking facilities.

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### b. Is Bannock a Traditional Food?

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Bannock and fried bread or frybread are staples of many Indigenous cultural celebrations. But are they traditional foods?

Note: Bannock is usually a non-yeast bread cooked on a griddle, over a fire, or baked in an oven. Frybread or fried bread is usually a yeast bread cooked in oil. However in some communities the terms may be used differently. Check to find out local usage of the terms.

- Students can investigate whether or not they think bannock and fried bread are traditional foods. Students can record their initial responses and revisit them at the end of the investigation.
- Students can learn the names for bannock and fry/fried bread in local First Nations languages. They can add the words to their student dictionary. (See “Student dictionary. As an on-going activity, students can create their own dictionary of words in the language of the local First Nation as they encounter them in different units. They may not want to record every word they find, but can decide on what key words to learn and record.” on page 57.)
- Students can investigate the origins of these cultural staples. Here are some resources to begin their investigations:
  - *Aboriginal Health - Myth Busting Bannock*. Provincial Health Services Authority, 2014. 4:41 in. <https://youtu.be/dIZytE0zGgo>
  - Bannock: A Brief History. Unreserved, CBC, 2016. Audio and Text. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/bannock-wild-meat-and-indigenous-food-sovereignty-1.3424436/bannock-a-brief-history-1.3425549>
  - Baking Bread on a Rock? New Brunswick Community College. <https://nbcc.ca/indigenous/did-you-know/bannock>
  - Frybread, by Jen Miller. Smithsonian Magazine, 2008. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/frybread-79191/>
- Students may be interested to read and comment on the picture book *Fry Bread* by Kevin Noble Maillard. (Roaring Brook Press, 2019.)
- Ask students to evaluate the positive and negative nutritional aspects of bannock and fried bread. Ask the question: Is it possible to balance the cultural and nutritional aspects of bannock and fried bread?
- Have students revisit the question: Is Bannock a traditional food? Discuss some of the reasons that students changed their opinion, or kept their original opinion.

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### Investigation 2 Our Food is Our Medicine

Students consider the cultural significance of traditional foods to First Peoples.

#### *Questions for Inquiry*

- What traditional foods are significant for local First Nations?
- How can you interpret “Our Food Is Our Medicine”?

#### a. Cultural Significance of Traditional Foods

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- Ask students to reflect on the statement “Our Food is Our Medicine.” Explain that Indigenous people often use this statement when referring to the cultural importance of traditional foods.
  - Students can respond in a journal entry, or discuss it with a partner or small group.
- Discuss different ways this sentence could be interpreted. (For example, traditional foods are excellent sources of nutrition; harvesting, preparing and eating traditional foods provide a sense of identity and connection with the land; choosing traditional foods over many grocery store foods can improve health.)
- Students find out more about different perspectives on traditional foods and medicines. View one or more of these videos:
  - *Okanagan Women Elders’ Stories: Part 5 – Plants & Medicines*. Westbank First Nation, 2016. <https://youtu.be/-sfhfFIOqsw>
  - *Indigenous Plant Healing*. Island Health, 2014. Two First Nations Elders discuss the healing properties of plants on Vancouver island. 3:24 min. <https://youtu.be/RANcnIOtR1o>
  - *S’olh Temexw – Food Plant Medicine Knowledge*. Access to Media, 2014. A Knowledge Keeper takes Stó:lo youth on a traditional food and medicines plant identification tour. 7:13 min. <https://vimeo.com/132749448>
  - *Wisdom Harvest*. Elders from Penelakut and Galiano Islands share knowledge of wild food foraging and ways in which harvesting practices are being impacted by changes in both the climate and the social landscape. Vimeo. 12 min. <https://vimeo.com/96510119>
  - *A Passion for Huckleberries!* Indigenous Tourism BC, 2014. A First Nations ethnobotanist discusses the many healthful aspects of huckleberries. [https://youtu.be/\\_mCgi3NyuN0](https://youtu.be/_mCgi3NyuN0)
- Ask students to record:
  - important things they know about traditional foods.
  - questions they would like to find out about traditional foods.


#### b. Body and Soul

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Students can explore ideas around food as medicine in the article “‘Eating Healthy’: Traditional Foods Are Good Medicine For Both Body And Soul” by Dr. Sean Wachtel, 2018. It is found on the First Nations Health Authority website: <https://bit.ly/2ExJIKk>


- Prior to reading the article, provide the following prompt from the

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

 Line Master 6-1, page 226, *Word Sort: Our Food Is Our Medicine*

previous activity: Our Food is our Medicine. Briefly discuss some of the ideas the students shared in the previous activities and concepts from the videos above that can support the statement.

- Use the word sort activity on Line Master 6-1, page 226, *Word Sort: Our Food Is Our Medicine* to begin thinking about some of the concepts in the article. Students can work individually or in groups to cut out and sort the words. Place the four empty pieces aside to use later in the activity.
  - Students can sort the words in a way that supports their ideas and knowledge of the prompt, Our Food is Our Medicine. The words can be sorted, grouped, or paired in any way the students prefer. Have the students share the reasoning behind some of their word groups.
- Read the “Eating Healthy: Traditional Foods Are Good Medicine For Both Body And Soul” article together.
- After reading, pause and give time for students and groups to adjust their word sort groupings to reflect ideas they learned from the article.
- Discuss the author’s perception of traditional foods and the causes and impacts of First Peoples’ disconnection from traditional foods.
- Students can share and discuss new word groupings that are connected to the ideas in the text and from the class discussion.
- Can the students make connections to prior learning? Ask the students to give keywords from their prior learning (i.e., videos or discussion from previous activities), write them on the four blank pieces, and add them to their word sort. Students can share their additional keywords with the class.
- Once the students feel their word sort is complete, they can glue the words on a large 11x17 paper under the title, Our Food is Our Medicine.
  - Encourage the students to clarify and add to their word sort. For example: add titles and headings to the word groups; connect words similar to that of a mind map or web; add short notes explaining the reasoning for word groupings and connections.
- Set up a gallery walk to allow the students to view each other’s word sorts. Provide Post-It’s and students can write one of the following about each word sort:
  - An insightful idea
  - A creative grouping or connection of words
  - “This reminds me of...”
  - A question
- Share and briefly discuss the following question: How do First Peoples’ perspectives of, and relationships with, traditional foods influence their well-being?
  - Students can respond to the question using Line Master 6-2, page 227, *Cultural Significance of First Peoples Traditional Foods*.
    - Students write 4 to 5 keywords from their own, or others, word sort that will support their answer.
    - Then students write 2 to 3 ideas or phrases generated from their word sort, the gallery walk, and/or discussions that support their answer.
  - Using the keywords and ideas as a foundation, the students will write a 1 to 2 paragraph answer for the question: How do First Peoples perspectives of, and relationships with, traditional foods influence their well-being?

 Line Master 6-2, page 227, *Cultural Significance of First Peoples Traditional Foods*

### Formative Assessment Strategy

Use student responses to this question to assess their understanding of the connections between traditional foods and wellness.



## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### c. What Food is Your Medicine?

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Students can consider what makes a food also a medicine.

- Brainstorm ideas of foods the students eat today that can be considered as medicine.
  - What are the criteria for food to be considered a medicine?
- As a class, use the information provided in the videos and article above to develop criteria for food to be labelled as medicine (for example, not processed or low processed; nutritious; must exert physical energy to harvest it – like hunting; low environmental impacts – not poisoning the land in its production).
- Post the criteria and make it accessible for students.
- Which food is your medicine? The students will choose a food item they believe meets the ‘food as medicine’ criteria and research Internet sites, articles, and other information sources to find evidence that supports their food as medicine. The students will record their evidence and sources.
- Students can present their evidence for their food as medicine in a multimedia format such as PowerPoint or with an online platform such as Glogster.

### Investigation 3 Traditional Foods and Nutrition

Students can assess their understanding of foods traditionally used by First Peoples in your locality, and investigate how specific foods contribute to a person’s health.

If possible, incorporate opportunities for students to engage with the land in some way. This could involve going on a nature walk with an Elder or Knowledge Keeper to observe some common food plants. For students in a First Nations community, this could mean helping out with harvesting activities.

It is best if this activity is specific to your location but if local resources are not available, you can focus on the broader region where you live. In urban settings with students from a variety of Indigenous communities, a comparative study of different ecosystems might make sense.

In First Nations schools, work with the school principal and community members to identify ways you can connect with traditional foods. In public schools, connect with your school or district Indigenous department, or local First Nations leaders to find out about local foods.

#### *Questions for Inquiry*

- How do traditional foods provide nutritional needs for First Peoples?
- How are geography and food resources connected?

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### Formative Assessment Strategy

The class can work together to develop a self-assessment scale for their knowledge of traditional food resources in the region.

### a. How Well Do You Know Traditional Food Resources?

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- Work with students to show their knowledge of traditional food resources that are important for the First Nations of your region. You could approach this in a number of ways:
  - Students can do a self-assessment of their knowledge of traditional foods. The class could develop a scale they could all use for the assessment.
  - Students can work in small groups to brainstorm as many food sources as they can in a given amount of time. Then they can share their results and make a class list of items.
  - Using a stations approach, set out pictures and/or samples of major food resources and have students identify them.
- Students can work individually or in groups to create a poster or digital presentation of important local food sources. Groups could each focus on one type of resource category, such as fish, mammal, bird, berries, root plants, seaweeds, or other types found in your region.
- If possible, display images of local food sources around the classroom. Have books available that describe local food sources, particularly books that deal with First Peoples foods.

### b. Benefits of Eating Traditional Foods

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- Discuss what benefits there are to eating traditional foods. Students can recall or review some of the ideas from Investigation 2 above.
- Have students investigate the nutritional properties of specific traditional foods. They can refer to the First Nations Health Authority publication *Traditional Food Facts Sheets* for some of the important foods in BC. Online at [https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/Traditional\\_Food\\_Fact\\_Sheets.pdf](https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/Traditional_Food_Fact_Sheets.pdf)
- Students can create an infographic or booklet that could be used to teach someone about the benefits of eating traditional foods.

### c. Stories of Traditional Foods

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Students can trace a traditional food source from source to table.

- Individually or in small groups, students can choose a plant or animal that is traditionally harvested in your region. They can research and present the life story of the organism, and detail the harvesting, processing, cooking and storing of the food.
- This could culminate with the student creation of a recipe that is authentic to a BC First Nations community.

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### Investigation 4 Traditional Health and Medicine

Students can examine some aspects of traditional medicine and health practices.

Note that for First Peoples this knowledge may be sacred or held by specially-trained people. It is important to understand and follow local Protocols. It may be best to keep to general practices and concepts without delving too deeply into Traditional Indigenous Knowledges.

#### *Questions for inquiry*

- How is traditional knowledge embedded in the understandings of medicine and health?
- What practices were in place in traditional societies to promote and maintain wellness?

#### a. Sharing Tea

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You may want to introduce this activity by brewing and sharing tea from a locally-sourced plant. Many traditional medicines involve brewing a tea or preparing an infusion from a plant that has specific qualities that are known to impact health and wellness. For suggestions of activities, see the FNESC/FNSA resource *Science First Peoples Grades 5-9, Unit 2, Activities 7 and 8*, pages 67 to 68.

#### b. Traditional Medicines

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Students can investigate local traditional medicines that were important in the past and are still important today.

- You may want to introduce the topic with a video that demonstrates preparing traditional medicines, and passing on the teachings to the next generation. *STA - Sharing mela'hma*. Crystal Dawn Moris, Stopover Splatsin 2019. 4:13 min. <https://vimeo.com/362421892>. Discuss what responsibilities people who gain knowledge about traditional medicines are expected to take on. (For example, pass on the knowledge to the next generation.)
- Assist students in finding resources that document traditional medicines. Depending on your locality, you may be able to locate published resources that identify traditional medicinal plants.
- If appropriate, students could work with an Elder or Knowledge Keeper to develop experiences with traditional medicinal plants.
- For additional ideas, see the unit Making Spruce Gum Tea, developed in Yellowknife NWT. The National Centre for Collaboration Indigenous Education. <https://www.nccie.ca/lessonplan/making-spruce-gum-tea/>
- Remind students that knowledge about traditional medicinal plants may sometimes be protected. Discuss why this might be the case. (For example, some plants are potentially toxic, and only trained experts should handle them and prepare medicines from them.)
  - If possible, give examples of medicinal plants that are considered to be too powerful to be shared. See, for example, devil's club. Information

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

can be found in *Senior Secondary Science First Peoples*, Unit 5, Activity 5.3, Devil's Club Case Study (pages 142 to 144).

### c. Systems of Wellness

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Students investigate aspects of traditional health systems.

- Have students work together to develop a list of some of the important attributes of traditional health systems. They can begin by listing features of traditional health systems they know about. They can then add to their list of attributes based on research using a variety of sources. Some suggested sources are:
  - The interactive website by Elsie Paul: *As I Remember It, Teachings from the Life of a Sliammon Elder*. <http://publications.ravenspacepublishing.org/as-i-remember-it>. It is based on the book *Written As I Remember It, Teachings from the Life of a Sliammon Elder*. UBC Press, 2014. Students can explore the section of the website called Wellness. Elsie Paul discuss a variety of aspects of wellness from the Sliammon cultural perspective.
  - View a video that gives some examples of traditional health and wellness systems. See *Implementing the Vision: Chapter 1 – System of Wellness*. First Nations Health Council, 2010. 7:39 min. <https://youtu.be/xNhOqjMh8V0>
  - For an overview of Traditional Wellness, students can look at a web page of the BC First Nations Health authority. It has background information and also many links for further research. On the FNHA site <https://www.fnha.ca> and search for "traditional healing". This page from the same website focusses on the circles of wellness <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc713>
  - "Traditional Views on Illness and Healing." *Niwhts'ide'ni Hibi'it'en, The Ways of Our Ancestors: Witsuwit'en History & Culture Throughout the Millennia*. Melanie Morin, pages 144 – 149.
- Groups can share their results and compile a class list of attributes of traditional health systems.
- Discuss the relevance of these features for health and wellness today. Are there features that are not relevant today?

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### Medicine Wheel

Before discussing the topic of a Medicine Wheel, find out what variations of the Medicine Wheel apply locally, if at all. The Medicine Wheel is used in various ways in many, but not all, cultures of First Peoples in BC.

The term Medicine Wheel is usually applied in two different ways.

#### **Ancient monuments**

First Nations of the prairies built large stone wheels with radiating lines like spokes of a wheel. Most are in Canada and others are in nearby US states. They align with the moon, sun, and stars, and predict phenomena such as solstices or the rising of certain stars. The largest and oldest known example is in Alberta, and is at least 5000 years old.

#### **Four-quadrant symbol**

The four divisions of the circle are connected with the four directions, and usually have a colour associated with each quadrant. They are also associated with important stages of life and aspects of mind. Different cultures can have different values, but this is one example:

North – White, Elders, winter, intellectual

East – Yellow, children, spring, physical

South – Red, youth, summer, emotional

West – Black, adults, fall, spiritual

Many First Peoples recognize and have come to incorporate the medicine wheel into their practices and teachings. It aligns well with widely held understandings in First Peoples' worldviews, including the importance of the circle and the importance of the number four.

An example of the adaptation of the medicine wheel concept is found in the FNHA Wellness Wheel, part of the "Planning Your Journey to Wellness" document. It illustrates a wellness wheel divided into the quadrants Physical, Spiritual, Emotional and Mental.

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### Investigation 5 Disrupting Food and Health Systems

Traditional food and health systems were greatly impacted by colonization. Students can examine some of the key forces impacting them.

#### *Questions for Inquiry*

- How did colonization impact First Peoples' long-standing food and health systems?
- How can food be considered as a colonizing force?

#### a. Impacts of Colonization

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- Ask students to suggest some ways that colonization has impacted the food and health systems of First Peoples.
- Share this article on the BC First Nations Health Authority website which gives an overview of the impacts.
  - Our History, Our Health. <https://www.fnha.ca/wellness/our-history-our-health>
- Have students reflect on the article. Ask them to share:
  - Something interesting they learned.
  - Something that surprised them.
  - Something that troubled them.

#### b. Germs on Contact

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One of the first and most devastating impacts of colonization was the effect of new diseases for which Indigenous people had no immunity. Students can examine the impacts of disease, particularly the smallpox epidemics, from a number of points of view:

- Social impacts of depopulation. How did it affect families, Oral Traditions and the transmission of knowledge?
- Impacts on governance. How did communities cope with the loss of leadership?
- Impacts on resource harvesting. How did the impacts of disease impact a community's ability to harvest food?
- Connections between smallpox-caused epidemics and colonial politics and policies. How did government policies impact the control of disease?

Resources. There are many sources about smallpox online and in books. These are some suggested places to begin:

#### *Websites:*

- The Impact of Smallpox on First Nations on the West Coast. Indigenous Corporate Training, 2017. <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/the-impact-of-smallpox-on-first-nations-on-the-west-coast>
- B.C. First Nations mourn small pox epidemic that devastated colony a century ago. Dene Moore, Canadian Press, 2012. <https://infotel.ca/newsitem/small-pox/cp19679921>
- Canadian Encyclopedia article. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/smallpox>

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### *Publications:*

- *You Are Asked to Witness*, Chapter 2, pages 27 to 40.
- *Persistence and Change*, “The Smallpox Epidemic of 1862, pages 94-96.

### c. Nutrition in Indian Residential Schools

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Students can look at the quality of food served at Indian Residential schools, and investigate the short term and long term consequences on the lives of First Peoples.

- Students can find evidence of the quality of food that was served in Indian Residential Schools. Many resources about the schools will mention the food. Here are some resources to start with:
  - *Indian Residential Schools and Reconciliation*, Grade 5. Activity 3.4, School Food. This activity includes primary source documents relating to the quality of food in Indian Residential Schools.
  - “Hunger was never absent”: How Residential School Diets Shaped Current Patterns of Diabetes Among Indigenous Peoples in Canada.” CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association) <https://www.cmaj.ca/content/cmaj/189/32/E1043.full.pdf>
    - Connect the notion of responsibility and reconciliation to the closing paragraphs of the article Hunger Was Never Absent. For example, why is it important for people like nurses, social workers, and doctors to know about Indigenous histories to best serve their patients?
- Discuss questions such as:
  - How do you think that the type and amount of food students received at Indian Residential School may have affected them in areas such as nutrition, growth, physical and mental health?
  - What were some long-term effects of Indian Residential Schools on health and wellness?

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### Investigation 6 Wellness for BC First Nations Today

Students can explore the continuity of traditional health and wellness practices in contemporary societies.

#### *Question for Inquiry*

- How are traditional medicines and practices supported in your local region and throughout the province?
- How is the continuity of traditional Indigenous health and wellness demonstrated today?

#### a. Personal Wellness

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The First Nations Health Authority has a brochure to guide people to develop habits and practices that can improve general wellness: “Planning Your Journey to Wellness: A Road Map.” It is a 12 page document and can be downloaded at: [https://www.fnha.ca/WellnessSite/WellnessDocuments/FNHA\\_Wellness\\_Map.pdf](https://www.fnha.ca/WellnessSite/WellnessDocuments/FNHA_Wellness_Map.pdf)

Students could use this document in two ways:

- Monitor and track their own wellness journey.
- Analyze the factors that the First Nations Health Authority considers to be significant for the wellness of First Nations people.

#### b. BC First Nations Health Authority

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Background: Health and medical care in First Nations communities is delivered by the federal government, through Health Canada. Many communities, especially in remote areas, have a medical clinic staffed by nurses from Indigenous Services Canada.

Since 2013, however, this has not been the case in BC. That year the First Nations Health Authority took over the responsibility of delivering health care in BC First Nations communities. This includes all aspects of governance, funding, staff and delivery of services that was once handled by the federal government. To date, BC is the only province to have a First Nations Health Authority.

- Students in First Nations communities can discuss the role of the Clinic in your community. How has it changed over time?
- Students can explore the role of the BC First Nations Health Authority for First Nations communities. Have them find out what services the FNHA provides. Students can visit the FNHA website at <https://www.fnha.ca/>.
- Students can investigate how the First Nations Health Authority works on the provincial level. How does it coordinate services with provincial health authorities?
  - For example, find out the part that the First Nations Health Authority played in the response to the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020-2022.



## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### c. Support for Traditional Medicines and Practices

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Students can explore the question, “How are First Peoples’ traditional medicines and practices supported in the local community and in health institutions?”

- Students can investigate examples of health institutions that have protocols or practices that acknowledge and respect traditional practices for First Peoples. Some examples that students can look at:
  - The Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria has an All Nations Healing Room, which allows patients to gather with their families to conduct ceremonies that may involve burning sage or sweetgrass, singing, and other cultural practices. See <https://www.islandhealth.ca/sites/default/files/2018-04/all-nations-healing-room-pamphlet.pdf>
  - Aboriginal Cultural Practices: A Guide For Physicians And Allied Health Care Professionals working at Vancouver Coastal Health. Vancouver Coastal Health provides this guide for health professionals to help support Indigenous patients. <http://www.vch.ca/Documents/AH-cultural-practices.pdf>
- Students can find if and what supports exist for Indigenous health and wellness in local hospitals and other medical facilities.
- Ask students to find examples of First Nations people working to support health and wellness with traditional and contemporary practices.
  - For an example, see this article at the FNHA site: “BC First Nations Wellness Champion: Jessie Newman from Skidegate, Haida Gwaii” linked at <https://tinyurl.com/fnesc714>
  - If possible, find local Indigenous Wellness Champions.
- Students could identify areas where such policies are lacking in local health facilities, and advocate for their implementation.

### d. Contemporary Epidemic Responses

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First Nations have experienced a number of epidemics since colonization. Student can investigate how past experiences may inform responses to contemporary epidemics or pandemics.

- As a class discuss the impacts of epidemics on Indigenous people in the past. See Investigation 5 above.
- Students can read an article that puts COVID-19 into the context of past epidemics. See “Indigenous Peoples and COVID-19.” Indigenous Corporate Training website. <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/indigenous-peoples-and-covid-19>
- Another article highlights concerns of the long-term effects of COVID-19 on First Peoples’ cultures. Students can read it to find out what the author’s concerns are for the continuity of cultures.
  - Indigenous Corporate Training. The Impact of COVID-19 On Indigenous Cultural Continuity. <https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-indigenous-cultural-continuity>.
- Students can work in small groups to discuss how past epidemics have affected First Nations decisions towards the health and safety during the COVID-19 beginning in 2020.

## Investigation 7

### Food Security and Food Sovereignty

NOTE: Some activities dealing with food security could trigger strong emotions in some students who may have experienced poverty, whose families may rely on food banks, or are otherwise food insecure. Be sensitive to how your students may receive some of the videos and discussions around these topics.

#### *Questions for Inquiry*


- How can a reconnection to the land lead to food security?
- How can First Peoples practice food sovereignty to have control of their own food sources?

#### a. What is Food Security?

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Ask students what they know about the term *food security*. If they are not familiar with it, ask them to predict what it might mean.

- Have students find out some definitions of food security from online sources. They could work in groups and share their findings with the rest of the class. As a class, compile a list of the key attributes of food security they have found.
- Students can consider four factors or pillars of food security to build their understanding of important features of food security. Use the graphic organizer on Line Master 6-3, page 228, *Pillars of Food Security*, to record notes, examples or questions about each of the pillars. The four pillars of food security are:
  - Availability
  - Access
  - Utilization
  - Stability

 Line Master 6-3, page 228, *Pillars of Food Security*

#### b. Traditional Foods and Food Security

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Students consider the four pillars of food security in terms of traditional foods that First Peoples harvest from the land.

- Ask, how do each of these pillars affect the ability of First Peoples to harvest food from their traditional territories? Students could use Line Master 6-3, page 228 again to record their responses.  
Sample responses:
  - Availability: There needs to be food to harvest. In some places that have not been harvested in years, the land is overgrown and plants are unproductive. Habitat loss can mean animals are not available to hunt. Some sources such as salmon have declined for a variety of reasons.
  - Access: People need to be able to get to the food. In some areas they may not be able to afford the equipment necessary to access the resources. People may be restricted from accessing private property that is on their traditional territories. Are there laws governing access to the resource?
  - Utilization: Are people able to process and store traditional foods using traditional or modern technologies? In some places the

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

quality of the food resource may be affected by other sources such as pollution.


- Stability: What outside forces could affect the supply of traditional foods from the land? For example, construction projects such as pipelines or dams; climate change; transportation such as tankers, ferries, trucks or railways.

### c. Barriers to Food Security

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Students consider what barriers face Indigenous communities to increasing their use of traditional foods and medicines.

- Have students study Chart 1 of Line Master 6-4, page 229, *Food Security Data*. It shows several barriers to using traditional foods observed by First Nations volunteers from across Canada, including from a number of BC communities. The source of the chart is *First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study, Final Report, 2019*. [http://www.fnfnes.ca/docs/FNFNES\\_draft\\_technical\\_report\\_Nov\\_2\\_2019.pdf](http://www.fnfnes.ca/docs/FNFNES_draft_technical_report_Nov_2_2019.pdf)
- Have students work in groups to expand on the sections of the pie chart. Describe what the labels mean and how they affect the issues of accessing traditional foods. Possible responses:
  - Health: A person is not well enough to harvest traditional foods.
  - No hunter: There are no people trained to be hunters in the family.
  - Insufficient resources: A person or family does not have, or cannot afford, the necessary equipment (guns, boats, snowmobiles) to access the resources.
  - Time: The person or family does not have the time necessary to harvest traditional foods.
  - Availability: There aren't enough resources available to harvest because of factors such as logging, development or pollution.
  - Regulations: Some form of government regulation restricts access to the lands where resources were traditionally harvested.
  - Knowledge gap: A person or family has lost the Traditional Knowledge to be able to harvest certain traditional foods.
  - Access: For a variety of reasons a person or family cannot get to the site of the food resources. (For example, they may live in a city away from their Traditional Territories.)
- Role play: Students select one of the barriers described in the chart and develop a scenario to demonstrate it. The rest of the class guesses which barrier they acted out. This could be done in mime, in a tableau, or in an improvised scene.

 Line Master 6-4, page 229, *Food Security Data*.

### d. Food Security and Climate Change

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Students can make connections between food security and climate change.

- Ask students to predict ways that climate change has affected the harvest of traditional foods for First Nations in your region.
- Have students study and respond to Chart 2 of Line Master 6-4, page 229, *Food Security*. This chart shows the top 5 ways that First Nations volunteers observed that climate change was affecting their traditional food harvests.
- Have students compare their predictions about the effects of climate change with the information in Chart 2.

**Cross-Curricular Connections**  
Science: Food Security and Climate Change. Unit 7, Connecting Food Security and Climate Change, *Secondary Science First Peoples*

 Line Master 6-4, page 229, *Food Security*

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### e. Assessing Local Food Security.

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Students determine how secure local traditional food sources are as a food supply for First Peoples in the future. They can use the four pillars to guide their study.

- Have students research one or more traditional foods to find out about the current status as a food source, and how secure a food supply it is.
  - For example, is the food readily available for the First Nations community to access? Can it be harvested sustainably? Is it impacted by factors such as climate change, habitat loss, or other industrial pressures?

### f. Indigenous Food Sovereignty

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Students investigate the concept of food sovereignty for First Peoples.

- Discuss the concept of food sovereignty. Ask students to suggest what they think food sovereignty means.
- Students can work in groups to develop a poster or video that explains Indigenous Food Sovereignty. Suggest they find answers to questions such as:
  - What is food sovereignty?
  - How is food sovereignty different from food security?
  - Is food sovereignty important to local First Peoples?
  - How can food sovereignty be put into practice?

Suggested Resources:

- *B.C. Food Systems Network Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty, Final Activity Report*. 2008. 22 pages. This report provides background information and highlights the ways that Indigenous food systems are different than colonial ones.  
[https://www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/sites/default/files/resources/WGIFS\\_Final\\_Report\\_March\\_08.pdf](https://www.indigenousfoodsystems.org/sites/default/files/resources/WGIFS_Final_Report_March_08.pdf)
- *Indigenous Food Security*. Food Secure Canada. 10 pages. This discussion paper gives a general overview of Indigenous Food Security issues, and lists three recommendations.  
[https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/DP1\\_Indigenous\\_Food\\_Sovereignty.pdf](https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/DP1_Indigenous_Food_Sovereignty.pdf)

## Unit 6 Food, Health, and Wellness

### Investigation 8 Is a Traditional Diet Possible Today?

Student undertake an independent project to investigate and promote traditional Indigenous cooking and diets.

#### *Question for Inquiry*


- How do First Peoples reconnect with traditional foods?

Explain the project to students. They will be asked to create a diet that is as close as possible to a traditional diet, and to create a campaign to convince people to follow the traditional diet.

Students can use Line Master 6-5, page 230, *Traditional Diet Project* to guide their planning.

Students can consult cook books and other sources by Indigenous cooks and chefs. Here are some video examples:

- *Living Legends: Stone, Smoke, and Clay*. Indigenous Tourism BC. 1:34 min. <https://youtu.be/o9xcdGuvRE>
- Inez Cook: Profile of Inez Cook, co-founder of Salmon n' Bannock Bistro. 1:38 min. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMgcYx5J07Q>
- Tradition with a Side of Bannock-Kekuli Café. (2:55). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnpgIUNCdsU>
- Kekuli Café Bannock. 3:34 min. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HNEBu6SMnM0>

 Line Master 6-5, page 230, *Traditional Diet Project*

### Investigation 9 Give Back, Carry Forward

Students reflect on the important things they have learned in this unit, and consider how they can give back and carry their learning forward.

Refer to the Major Project outline, “Major Project” on page 51.

#### a. What Did You Learn?

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Students can consider these questions:

- What is one new thing you learned in this unit that you would consider a gift?
- What is one thing growing out of your learning that you can take action on?
- What are some new things you learned about where you live?
- What did you learn about yourself?

#### b. Documenting Learning

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- Students can discuss or share ideas for documenting their learning.
  - Students can begin to come up with ways that they can showcase their learning in this course, while connecting to both “giving back” and “carry forward” what they have learned.

# Word Sort: Our Food is Our Medicine

traditional foods	powerful	fuel	medicine
poison	land	unhealthy	healthy
ceremony	culture	physical activity	disease
water	wilderness	relationship	processed food

## Cultural Significance of First Peoples Traditional Foods

How do First Peoples' perspectives of and relationships with traditional foods influence their well-being?

Provide keywords and ideas from the word sorts that support your answer.

5-6 Keywords	2-3 Ideas

Write a 1 or 2 paragraphs to answer the question:  
How do First Peoples perspectives of and relationships with traditional foods influence their well-being?

# Pillars of Food Security

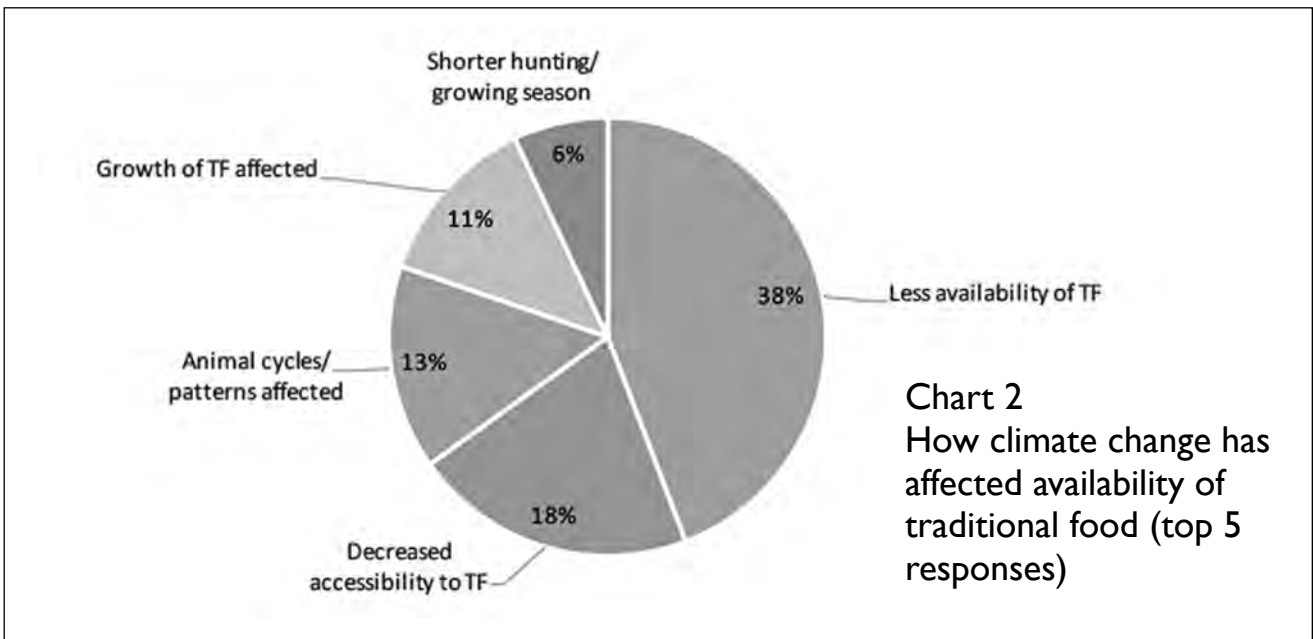
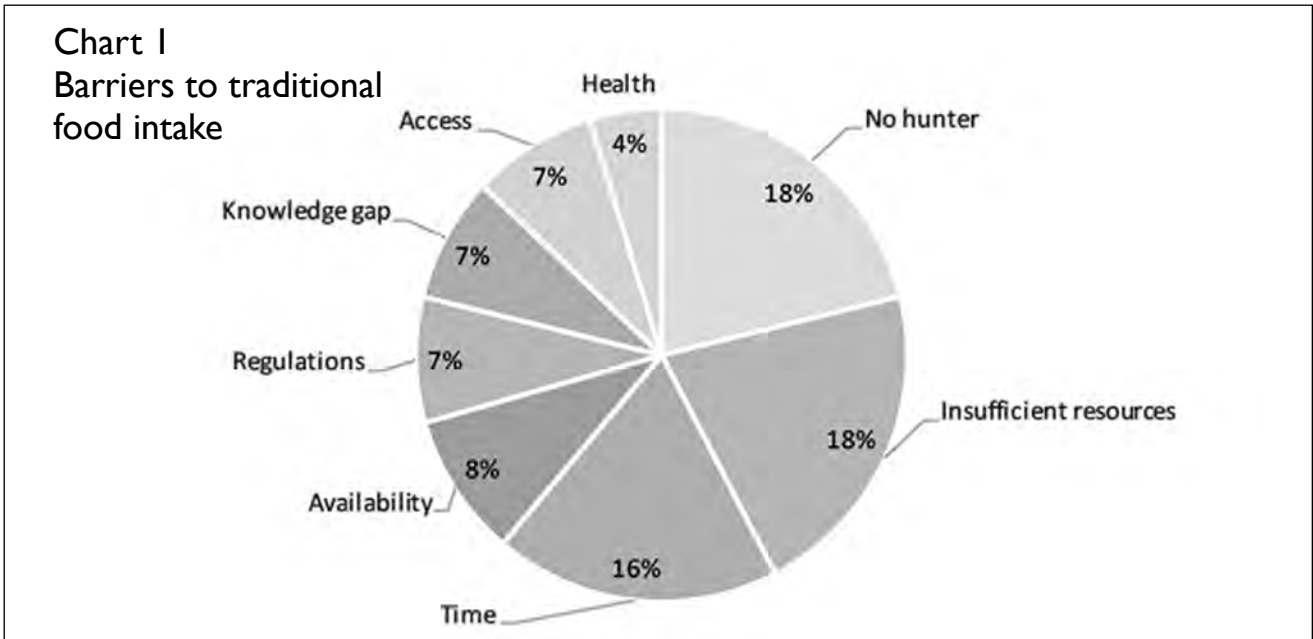
Food security is the condition in which all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.  
(United Nations' Committee on World Food Security)

<p><b>AVAILABILITY</b> Is there enough food available? Is there a sufficient supply for the future?</p>	<p><b>ACCESS</b> Can people access the food? Can they get to it, or afford to buy it?</p>
<p><b>UTILIZATION</b> Can people make good use of the food? Is it good quality and nutritious?</p>	<p><b>STABILITY</b> How susceptible to local and global forces is the food supply?</p>



# Food Security Data

In a study for the Assembly of First Nations, First Nations volunteers were asked questions about Food Security and Traditional Foods. Some of their responses are shown in these two pie graphs.



Source: *First Nations Food, Nutrition & Environment Study Final Report*, 2019, pages 44 and 45.

## Traditional Diet Project

### **Project Goal:**

You have been asked by an Indigenous Health organization to develop a project to encourage the use of traditional foods from your region.

There are two parts to the project:

1. Create a diet that is as close as possible to a Traditional First Nations Diet.
2. Create a campaign to convince people to follow your Traditional Diet.

### **Questions to think about:**

What will you define as a “Traditional Diet”?

Will you only include food sources that grow naturally in your region? Or will be foods that are traded or bought from other areas be permitted?

What are the health benefits to a traditional diet?

Are the traditional foods that were eaten long ago still healthy today? For example, with a diet heavy in seafood, we might need to think about things like mercury levels in them today.

Are the foods in a traditional diet ecologically sustainable?

Do we have access to traditional foods?

Would a traditional diet today have the same benefits as it did in the past? Would our lifestyle also have to change?