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First Nations Food, Nutrition, and Environment Study

A national study on the benefits
and risks
of food and water in
First Nation communities



Information for Communities

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First Nations Environmental Health

Environmental changes are impacting the health and lifestyles of First Nations. Issues of particular significance and concern include:

- The conservation of traditional subsistence within sensitive environments.
- Increasing contaminant levels in traditional food due to pollution.
- Nutrient deficiencies in individuals due to decreased availability of traditional foods altered by climate change and environmental degradation.
- Increasing occurrences of chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease.
- Social, economic, and political forces affecting traditional lifestyles and access to traditional harvesting areas.



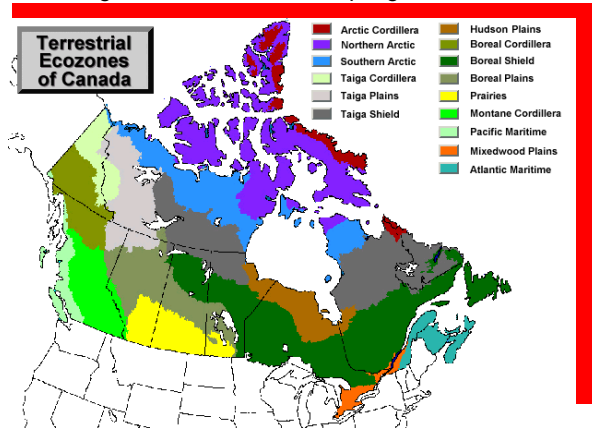
Photo: R.&N. Turner

First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study

Over the past 40 years, Canada has conducted Health and Nutrition Surveys and Total Diet Studies among the general Canadian population to better understand changes in diets and to assess the safety of store-bought foods. To date, First Nations people living on-reserve have not been included in these studies.

Although a number of studies in First Nation communities have helped to understand which foods are commonly eaten, existing research has not succeeded in providing *reliable national and regional information* on First Nations diets and food-related exposures to environmental contaminants.

Using an ecozone sampling framework, the



FNFNES aims to gather information from 100 randomly selected **First Nation communities** across Canada about :

- Current traditional and store bought food use;
- Food security issues;
- Content of traditional foods for nutrient values and environmental contaminants;
- Content of drinking water for trace metals; and,
- The amount and type of pharmaceuticals and their metabolites in surface water.

Information resulting from this study is essential for the development of community-level dietary advice and food guidance for First Nations at the national level.

The information on background exposures to **Persistent Organic Pollutants (POP's), heavy metals and pharmaceutical products** is also essential for First Nations to establish a foundation for future food monitoring programs at the community level.

Project Planning

In 2016, the research team will:

- Consult with First Nations partners and randomly selected communities in Québec;
- Negotiate Community Research Agreements with each participant community;
- Train community research assistants and hire nutritionists to implement the study;
- Start nutrition interviews and food and water sample collection.

In 2017, following the analysis of collected data, community reports will be developed and the results will be explained to each participant community and summarized in a regional report.

