



First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study

Individual Consent Form

Please take as much time as you want to read this form and accompanied pamphlet for the project, ask questions, and talk about this project with family or friends.

What is this project about?

Canada has been conducting health and total diet studies of the general Canadian population to understand more about food safety and how changes in diet relates to chronic conditions like heart disease and diabetes but First Nations people living on-reserve have not been included in these studies. This joint research venture is a 10-year study on the benefits and risks of food and water consumed by 100 First Nations communities across Canada. This study will gather information on current traditional and store-bought food use practices, as well as test many traditional foods for nutrient content and hazardous environmental chemicals, such as mercury. The study will also test samples of drinking water for trace metals, and surface water for pharmaceuticals. In order to determine if these foods increase exposure to contaminants and contribute to health risks, samples of hair will be analysed for the presence of mercury.

Who is conducting this project?

This study is being done in collaboration with the Assembly of First Nations, Health Canada, the University of Northern British Columbia and the Université de Montréal. Funding is provided through Health Canada. All aspects of this project have been discussed with your community leaders and they have agreed to include your community in the study.

Why are we interested in this project?

It is important to gather information specific to First Nations in order to develop intervention strategies that are appropriate to the situation, including the development of plans to protect traditional food systems, and to promote well-being and healthy lifestyles in communities.

How will the survey results be used?

Results may be used by your community for resources and health promotion planning purposes. Regional results will be used to identify pollution and food safety problems and will be used to develop guidelines for health promotion and disease prevention.

What will happen if I agree to participate in this project?

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate, it will require about one to two hours of your time, mainly to answer questions about the food you eat.

You only answer questions that you feel comfortable with and you can end your participation

at any time. You may withdraw from the project at any time and any information you have provided will be destroyed. We would also like to measure your height and weight and take a small sample of hair for mercury analysis. In some randomly selected households, we also propose to collect a water sample from the kitchen sink. These samples will be collected by the householder and the community researcher and sent for analysis at an independent laboratory selected by joint venture.

What will happen if I don't agree to let hair samples be used in this project?

You will not lose any benefits if you choose not to let your hair sample be used. If you don't agree to us taking a sample of your hair, this will not be done. If you have submitted a sample and change your mind about allowing it to be used in the study, it will be withdrawn from the study and will be returned to you.

Will there be any compensation or expenses for participating in this study?

There is no compensation or expense to you.

How will you protect my privacy?

All information you provide in this interview will be treated with respect and held in confidence. Information shared between you and the interviewer will be maintained in confidence. All hardcopies of the questionnaires collected will be protected by the Principal Investigator, Laurie Chan, or his research associate, Judy Mitchell. All records will be kept in a secured room in Dr. Chan's data lab at UNBC until the final report of this project is complete or a maximum of 5 years. Data will be entered into a computer without your names and the computerized dataset will be co-shared by the participating communities, the Assembly of First Nations, Health Canada, and the academic researchers.

All information derived from the study will be kept strictly confidential and your name will not be associated with the samples or data we collect except for the hair mercury data. The hair mercury data set will be kept at Health Canada as part of the ongoing database. Nobody can access these data without your written consent.

Your identity will remain confidential in all publications and public presentations related to this research.

What are the benefits of having my sample and survey results used in this project?

By participating in this study you will have a chance to provide input into the benefits and risks of traditional and commercial food use. Benefits to each community include development of baseline of exposure to contaminants through food, improved knowledge of levels of exposure of mercury in the environment and state of knowledge of regional risks associated with food such as the reliance on traditional foods and the importance of maintaining traditional foods in the daily diet.

Is there any chance of harm if I participate in this study?

There is no physical harm anticipated for participating in the project but inconveniences may include time taken away from other responsibilities (home and/or work), sharing of food for analysis, inconvenience for water and information collection, or possible laceration from collection of hair sample.

The study may pose the following risks to yourself and your community: fear/stress, concerns over collective privacy, misperception of traditional foods as negative, disruption of other First Nation projects or issues. The Researchers shall provide the community with information that can be taken to minimize these risks.

Can I change my mind after I agree to let my sample or questionnaire results be used?

At any time during this study you can choose to drop out or refuse to answer any questions you feel may be too personal. You can also ask that the data collected by questionnaire or laboratory analysis not be used in the study. In such cases the questionnaire and/or samples with associated test results will be destroyed or returned to you on request. No samples of hair, water or food will be collected without your permission.

How will I find out what happens with this project?

You will be informed of the results of the research through the community. The community will also receive a copy of the final report of the results of the community along with any recommendations they may have. The results of the hair analysis will be communicated directly to the individuals. If high levels of mercury are detected, a specialist in Environmental Medicine will oversee the deliverance of required treatment if needed. If high levels of metals are found in drinking water, the individual will also be contacted directly.

Who can I talk to if I have questions or problems?

The local community interviewer will answer any questions you may have about this study or you may want to contact the following project staff at any time in the future:

Collect calls will be accepted.

Research Supervisor:

Dr. Laurie Chan
BC Leadership Chair in Aboriginal Environmental Health
University of Northern BC
Ph: (250)960-5237
Email: lchan@unbc.ca

Research Coordinator:

Judy Mitchell
Ph: (250)960-6708
Email: mitchj@unbc.ca

AFN:

Dr. Donald Sharp
Ph: (613)241-6789, ext. 330
Email: dsharp@afn.ca

Consent and Signature

By signing this form, I agree that:

- The study has been explained to me.....Yes No
- All my questions were answered.....Yes No
- The possible harms and discomforts and the possible benefits (if any), of this study have been explained to me.....Yes No
- I understand that I have the right not to participate and the right to stop at any time.....Yes No
- I have the choice of not answering any specific questions.....Yes No
- I am free now, and in the future, to ask any questions.....Yes No
- I agree to give hair sample and have them tested.....Yes No
- I agree to collect drinking water samples from my household and have them testedYes No
- I have been told that my personal information will be kept confidential.....Yes No
- I agree that in case of excess trace metals in drinking water the results will be communicated to the Regional Environment Health Manager.....Yes No
- I hereby consent to participate in the study.....Yes No

Signature

Date

Name of participant : _____
Telephone number: _____

Mailing address (for returning results of hair mercury analysis):

Name of person who obtained consent _____

Signature

Date

ID _____

(The Community research assistant keeps this page and gives the other 3, together with a flyer to the participant)