



Alaska Native Dietary and Subsistence Food Assessment Project Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

This project aims to improve future studies about Alaska Natives' food and their health. We will develop a tested survey form that accurately measures intakes of Alaska Natives over time. To do this, we will first gather information about what people eat in two regions. This will be immediately useful in telling us more about what people are eating now. Second, we will collect commonly eaten Native foods and analyze them for their nutrients. This is a four year project, funded as one of seven studies by the Native American Research Center for Health (Alaska NARCH). It began in October 2001. The Center for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment (CINE) of McGill University, Canada, is partnering with us.

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This project is important because:

- Diet is a fundamental factor in many chronic health problems, including heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and dental caries.
- The diets of Alaskan Natives have changed in recent years. Previous studies indicate that more processed foods are being eaten, and less subsistence or traditional foods.
- We do not have information about the nutrients in many Native foods.
- Current diet survey forms now in use in Alaska that measure intake over time have not been tested to measure their accuracy.
- With a greater understanding of diet of Alaska Natives, we can all apply the knowledge generated and help to reduce health disparities.

Participants:

- The goal is six villages from each region with local interviewers from each region.
- The Yup'ik Eskimos of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region. We are still meeting with Traditional Councils and offering them the opportunity to participate in the study. To date we have met with Council members in Emmonak, Chevak, Kwigillingok, and Mountain Village. We also plan to talk with Native representatives in Bethel, Chuathbaluk, and Napaskiak.

- The Inupiaq of the Kotzebue region. We have resolutions from the IRA councils to work with Shungnak, Buckland, Noatak, and Pt. Hope. We anticipate receiving resolutions with Kivalina and Kotzebue.

Methods

- A local person will be hired in each region to collect 24-hour diet recalls from a total of 120 people in each region, ages 13 and up.
- Diet recalls will be collected in each of the four regions over one year, to account for dietary variation between the seasons.
- The data will be analyzed for nutritional content, and used to identify the foods most commonly consumed.
- This information will be used to develop a food frequency questionnaire.
- The food frequency questionnaire will be tested and validated.
- Native foods that are commonly eaten but have not previously been adequately analyzed will be collected and sent to the USDA labs for analysis.