

Magnesium: Building Blocks To A Healthier You

Magnesium is sometimes called the spark plug of the human body because it's involved in more than 300 different chemical reactions that keep us functioning. It works non-stop behind the scenes to ensure everything from our heartbeat to our muscles are working efficiently. It's naturally found in water and the land, but our bodies can't create it. This means we have to rely on a healthy diet to get what we need.

Magnesium helps the nervous system regulate the chemical messengers that send signals throughout your brain and body. It helps your muscles relax after they contract, which is why people who are low in magnesium sometimes experience leg cramps or twitches. Magnesium is crucial for strong bones, and helps convert the food you eat into cellular energy, giving you the stamina to get through

a busy day. When you don't have enough, you may feel tired, foggy or physically weak.

How Much Magnesium Do I Need?

- Children: 240 mg daily
- Teens: 360-410 mg to support rapid growth
- Women: 310 mg; pregnant people need about 350 mg
- Men: 410 mg

**A small handful of pumpkin seeds contains 156 mg of magnesium. Half a cup of cooked spinach provides 78 mgs.*

How Do I Get Enough?

Before reaching for supplements, try to meet your needs through a healthy diet. Eat your greens, like spinach and kale, every day. Veggies including zucchini, green beans and cucumber

are great sources. Nuts and seeds like almonds, chia, flax and hemp hearts are absolute powerhouses. Even a square of dark chocolate (more than 70% cocoa) contains a helpful dose. Yay!

To get enough magnesium, lifestyle choices matter too. Reducing high amounts of processed sugar and caffeine can help, as they can cause your body to lose magnesium faster through your urine.

Managing stress is also important, because the body uses its magnesium more quickly during high-stress periods.

Magnesium Power Bowl

- one cup quinoa
- three cups fresh spinach (or one cup frozen)
- 2 T pumpkin seeds (also called "pepitas")
- salt & pepper, and other seasonings if you prefer
- lemon juice

Cook quinoa in a pot with two cups of water or stock. Bring to a boil and simmer until water is absorbed, about 10 minutes. Fluff up with a fork and then gently stir in spinach and pumpkin seeds. Add a generous squeeze of lemon, salt and pepper, and other seasonings like garlic salt, oregano or thyme. Serve with protein of your choice; consider salmon for a super healthy meal!

Brush Up On Dental Health

We always thought brushing and flossing was just an annoying way to begin and end the day, but science continues to discover how important it is. Who knew dental health could be the key to your entire body's well-being?

When you take care of your teeth and gums, you aren't just preventing cavities. You're also protecting your heart and brain. When you have an unhealthy number of bacteria building up in your mouth, it can enter the bloodstream and create serious issues like heart disease, respiratory infections and damage to organs. People living with diabetes have to make dental health a priority, because gum disease can make it difficult to regulate blood sugars. There is even research showing a link between mouth health and the development of Alzheimer's disease.

To keep your mouth in top shape,

follow these basic steps:

- floss before you brush to reach the tight spaces your brush will miss
- brush your teeth for at least two minutes twice a day
- use fluoride toothpaste
- try an electric toothbrush
- gently brush your gums & your tongue to remove bacteria that cause bad breath
- replace toothbrush every three months

What you eat and drink are important, too. Add crunchy, high-fibre vegetables like carrots, celery and leafy greens to your daily diet to serve as a natural toothbrush, scrubbing the surfaces of your teeth and stimulating blood flow in the gums. Of course, avoiding sugary snacks and acidic sodas prevents the "acid attacks" that dissolve tooth enamel (the white covering of your teeth) over time. If

you do want to indulge in something sweet, eat it with a meal rather than as a standalone snack to minimize the time the sugar will rest on your teeth. Drinking plenty of water helps wash away food particles and keeps your saliva levels high, which naturally protects your enamel.

While the daily work of dental care happens at home, the dentist is your most important teammate. It is very common to feel nervous about the dentist, but procedures and equipment have come a long, long way! If you feel anxious, let the staff know, so they can explain every step and check in with you often. Remember: a consistent dental routine and a quick checkup today can

prevent a painful problem later.

It's especially important to get young children into routine dental care. Try to focus more on the habit of brushing twice a day, as opposed to perfect

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technique, which can come when they're older. Teens also need to double-down on mouth health, as their bodies are changing rapidly with hormonal shifts. And of course, good dental health throughout your life means you can probably enjoy old age with your own teeth!

NCN has visiting dentists who come into the community to provide care. Call 204-484-2341 to learn more and to make appointments for you and your family.

What Are Your Numbers?

Most of us already know the pillars of health, like eating well, staying active and getting enough sleep. But there are certain health numbers that can act as a map to guide us toward a longer, healthier life. Understanding these measurements can help us to see what's happening inside our bodies before problems start.

One of the most important sets of numbers to know is your blood pressure, which measures how hard your heart is working to pump blood. A typical, healthy reading is around 120/80. The top number is systolic, which measures the pressure when your heart beats, and the bottom number is diastolic, which measures

the pressure between beats while your heart is at rest.

Numbers that consistently stay above 140/90 are a sign of high blood pressure, which can strain your heart over time. If you're willing to invest about \$60, you can monitor your blood pressure at home. Take your reading at about the same time every day, after sitting still for five minutes. You may consider taking two or three readings and recording the average. Do this two or three times a week and bring the results to your next medical appointment.

Another key number is your A1C, which is a simple blood test that measures your average blood sugar

levels over the past three months. This test is the best way to identify if you are at risk for or are currently dealing with diabetes. A typical A1C level is below 5.7 per cent. Pre-diabetes is generally considered a reading between 5.7-6.4, and 6.5 per cent or higher usually means diabetes.

Keeping an eye on your weight can

be helpful, too, though it is just one piece of the puzzle. Using a scale once a week at the same time of day provides the most effective reading. While everybody is different, a sudden, unexplained gain or loss can be a sign that something needs attention.

Some health markers, like cholesterol and Body Mass Index (BMI), are more complex and require a professional to interpret. Cholesterol measures the fats in your blood, while BMI

compares your height and weight to estimate body fat. These numbers are important because they help predict your risk for heart disease and stroke.

Monitoring your "health numbers" can be especially important for Indigenous people. The Heart and Stroke Foundation says Indigenous adults are at a significantly

higher risk for heart disease and are twice as likely to experience a stroke compared to the general population. Statistics Canada reports that the rate of diabetes is three to four times higher in Indigenous communities due to systemic factors and barriers to fresh food.

The good news is that these numbers aren't set in stone. They can all be improved through small, steady changes like physical activity, choosing whole foods, managing stress and making sleep a priority. Learning your baseline numbers now will allow you to take a powerful step toward a healthier future.

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Every child is sacred.



Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
Wellness Centre Inc.

204-484-2341 ncnwellness.ca



Kakithaw Awasisak Kistinitakowskiwak

ᓂᓄᓂᓄᓄᓄ **sītoskākēwin** **NCN & FCWC Support Services**



**Noosi Muskwa
WOMEN'S SHELTER**
A safe place where healing begins

The Women's Shelter offers temporary shelter to women and their children who come to us on a voluntary basis because they are in crisis or dealing with domestic violence or abuse at home from a partner or spouse. We combine protection and security with western counseling and Indigenous wisdom to help women make a plan for future security and happiness.

The Women's Shelter is located in Nelson House and is available 24 hours a day to all NCN women and children. There is no financial cost to stay with us.

We'll keep you and your children safe while you make a plan for your future.

Call 204-484-2634 or 204-354-1840



Nelson House
**MEDICINE
LODGE**
Mithwayawin Mitho Tehewinihk Ochi

Offering non-medical, drug and alcohol treatment, prevention and aftercare services that encompasses both Indigenous and Western worldviews. This includes the natural laws of respect and humility that teach us to be open to learning and implementing best practices, to better serve those who have been greatly impacted by substance abuse and/or mental health issues. We work to assist people who have been spiritually and psychologically influenced by life's circumstances. Our unique approach delivers proven results for individuals traveling the "Red Road to Wellness".

Residents of our 8-week know Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program are guided by Medicine Lodge's dedicated staff of professional clinicians, counsellors, and spiritual healers.

Call 204-484-2256



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NCN: 204-679-6386
or 204-679-5544

24/7 SUPPORT

Counselling Services On-Call
NCN: 431-354-1270
(On call hours are from 4:30pm to 8:30am AND 24-hours Saturday/Sunday and Holidays)

NCN Family and Community Wellness Centre provides essential services for Nisichawayasik Cree Nation and surrounding communities for health and child services

South Indian Lake
CFS On Call

Check the NCN Family and Community Wellness Centre's Facebook Page for who's on-call each week.

If at any time you are unable to reach an on-call worker, contact Intake in Thompson @ 1-866-260-9457

Where children are in need of protection from abuse or neglect such as: alcohol around minors, domestic or intimate partner violence around minors, or anything that compromises a child's basic needs of health or safety.

Call: RCMP - Leaf Rapids @ 204-473-2469
RCMP - Winnipeg @ 204-374-2345
RCMP - OCN @ 204-374-2029
Security - OCN @ 204-374-3429

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You Don't Have To Be Lonely

Loneliness often feels like a heavy secret we have to carry alone. It isn't just about being by yourself, because you can feel lonely at a busy dinner table or in a football arena.

Loneliness happens when there is a gap between the social connections we have and the ones we actually need to feel

seen and understood. It can come from big life transitions like moving to a new city, losing a loved one, or feeling like no one shares your interests.

The problem is that loneliness often brings negative thoughts, making you feel like you're invisible or that you don't belong. You may even push people away to protect yourself from an anticipated pain of rejection. You may feel irritability that makes you snap at the people who actually do reach out to you. Headaches, a hollow ache in your chest, and a constant sense of tiredness are all common effects.

Loneliness can take over the choices you make. When you feel disconnected, you might skip events, avoid your hobbies, and turn to social media for hours, which usually makes the isolation feel worse. All of these thoughts and behaviours create a vicious cycle, making it hard to break free.

Loneliness is a physical health risk. Reaching out to create connections isn't just a "nice" thing to do. It's essential for our survival.

Medical professionals have begun to talk about "the loneliness epidemic." According to Statistics Canada, 1 in 10 people aged 15 and older report always or often feeling lonely. Indigenous

youth may face higher risks of social isolation due to a lack of culturally safe spaces and systemic barriers.

The physical impact of loneliness is just as real as the emotional one. Research shows that chronic loneliness can be as harmful to your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. It puts your body in a state of high alert, increasing stress hormones like



cortisol, which can lead to high blood pressure, weakened immune system and an increased risk of heart disease later in life. It also takes a toll on mental health, with a strong connection to higher rates of depression and anxiety.

Understand that a sense of belonging is a critical factor in health and wellbeing. Loneliness is a physical health risk. Reaching out to create connections isn't just a "nice" thing to do. It's essential for our survival.

Why don't you:

- Join a volunteer group or activity evening where the focus is a

shared task. This takes the pressure off making small talk.

- Reach out to someone you haven't talked to in a while. Texting counts!
- Limit your time on social media apps that make you feel like you're watching life instead of living it. Create, don't consume!
- Invite an Elder to share their skills and wisdom with you, to help you navigate the heavy thoughts that loneliness often creates.
- Go to "third places" like the FCWC, the arena, or the skatepark, where you can exist around other people without needing an invitation.



Join Our NCN Family and Community Wellness Centre and Build Your Future!

At the NCN Family and Community Wellness Centre, we believe in more than just providing jobs—we believe in creating opportunities that empower you to shape your future, strengthen our community, and honour the rich traditions of our people.

We're hiring individuals who are eager to grow, learn, and contribute to the well-being of our community. Whether you're interested in health, counseling services, land-based programs, or administration roles like finance, human resources, or IT, there's a place for you.

Embrace Your Traditions:

- We value the knowledge of our Elders and integrate traditional skills and teachings into our work. Learn and grow while staying connected to our cultural roots.

Secure Your Future:

- Competitive wages and benefits provide the foundation for a stable and fulfilling life, allowing you to support those you love.

Make a Difference:

- Whether you're helping others heal, guiding our youth, preserving our lands, or ensuring our operations run smoothly, your contribution is vital.

Join Our Family:

- Experience a supportive environment where we work together, guided by our shared values, to create a brighter future for all.

Working with the Family and Community Wellness Centre isn't just about earning a paycheck—it's about building a life that honours our traditions and contributes to the strength of our community.

Take the leap, invest in your future, and become part of a family that's committed to making a difference.

Current Opportunities: Ready to apply or want to learn more? Call 204-484-2341 or visit www.ncnwellness.ca for more information.

Parenting Program Workshop Strengthens Families Through Culture and Traditional Teachings

The NCN Family and Community Wellness Centre (FCWC) recently hosted a three-day Parenting Program Workshop that brought together FCWC staff and community members to learn, share, and reconnect with traditional parenting knowledge. The workshop was facilitated by Gordie Walker and Madeline Gamblin-Walker and focused on parenting, Cree teachings, and Sweat Lodge traditions.

On the first day, participants gathered to begin their learning journey. For some, the teachings were completely new, while for others they served as a meaningful refresher. The workshop included Cree teachings and Nihithowin language, helping participants understand the values and meanings that have been passed

down through generations. By learning together, everyone was able to better understand the importance of traditional parenting and cultural identity.

The second day focused on traditional knowledge and hands-on activities. Participants worked together to create moss bags and tobacco pouches. Gordie and Madeline explained that moss bags were traditionally used to carry babies, but they also held a deeper cultural meaning connected to care, safety, and love. Tobacco pouches were also discussed, and participants learned about their purpose and spiritual significance. The activities created a strong sense of teamwork and pride. Even people who were just passing through the building

stopped to listen and were interested in what was being shared.

The third day focused on Sweat Lodge teachings and traditional values.

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NIHITHO

Parenting

WORKSHOP

Gordie Walker & Madeline Gamblin-Walker will be facilitating a 2 day workshop on Parenting and 1 day teachings on the Night Lodge

- ✓✓ Conceptions of parenting in Nihitho Language
- ✓✓ Mātotīsan Ceremony
- ✓✓ Kōsopahcīkan

9 TO 11, FEB 2026
AT 10 AM - 3:PM

RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY. CONTACT @ 204-484-2341

Jackie Walker
 jaquew@ncnwellness.ca
 204-679-5277

Calming Spaces

What Are Calming Spaces?

Calming Spaces are a designated space in the home or school that your child can go to when they are starting to feel overwhelmed, frustrated, or could just use some quiet time.

Tips for Calming Spaces

- Calming spaces are not intended as a punishment space (e.g., not used for "time-outs").
- Reduce distractions & clutter in the space.
- May include some calming activities. These activities would depend on the child, but might include:
 - Colouring books or art supplies
 - Calming music
 - Glitter sensory bottles

- Gum to chew
- Fidget toys

- It is helpful to let the child help create the calming space with things they like.
- Clear boundaries for the calming space. Generally the calming space should only be used by 1 person at a time.

Out of The House

Sometimes when you are out in the community, your child's calming space may not be readily available. In these circumstances, you might need to let the child take a break in a quieter area available, such as the family room at a mall, in a bathroom stall, or the back seat of a car. You may want to have one of your child's preferred calming

activities with you to use in this space.

Ideas for Items In A Calming Space

- Soft Pillows & Blankets
- Bean Bag Chair
- Water Bottle
- Play-Doh
- Sensory Glitter Bottles
- Colouring Activities or Art supplies
- Noise Cancelling Headphones
- Chewing Gum
- Fidget Tools
- Books
- Calming Music

EXAMPLES OF CALMING SPACES



Become An FCWC Employee

Meaningful employment is so important to holistic health.

Having a job does much more than fill a bank account. It nourishes the mind and spirit by providing a sense of purpose and a daily routine. It can lead to a healthier body through increased activity and the paycheque to afford nutritious food. A regular job builds confidence and creates a sense of community, helping you feel more connected to the world around you. It allows you to dream of a brighter future with more opportunities. Employment can be a core component of the goal of *mithwâwîwin* (the good life).

The benefits of working ripple out beyond just one person. When you

have stable employment, your family members can flourish because they're living in a calm, stable environment. You become a powerful role model for younger generations, showing them what is possible through dedication and resilience. You can end the trauma of poverty, bringing honour and peace to Elders.

Beyond our own homes, employed people with a sense of purpose create a stronger, more vibrant community. We become better able to support one another and invest in our shared goals when we are collectively thriving.

What are you waiting for? There are many positions available at the NCN Family and Community Wellness

Centre right now! From working with kids in care to leading construction projects, reception to finance, there are jobs available in our community that will benefit from your skill set and help you to grow.

Many people are reluctant to apply for jobs because they think they don't have the appropriate qualifications or education. Don't let that stop you! Remember, you have knowledge, skills and a unique lived experience that you might not consider valuable, but would be helpful in serving other people.

Most workplaces are happy to provide training for the right person. Showing up with a willingness to learn is often

the most important qualification of all.

Why don't you:

- Write down all the things you're good at & ask for friends' and family's opinions, too.
- Create a one-page resume that outlines your strengths, achievements, volunteer work & paid positions.
- Reach out to someone working a job you're curious about & ask how they got started.
- Check out the FCWC page on Facebook to see what employment & training is available. Or give us a call at 204-484-2341 and we'll figure out what opportunities we have for you!

Do you have a suggestion or a *mithwâwîwin* story idea?

We would like your comments, feedback or news stories. Please contact ncnwellness@gmail.com



Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
Wellness Centre Inc.

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T (204) 484-2341
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FCWC on Facebook!

Stay current with FCWC's latest news, events and updates on your computer, smartphone or device from our official NCN Facebook page @ncnwellness

