

## Risk Reduction and Prevention Information

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#### Introduction

Chapter two described colorectal cancer risk factors, screening options, and treatment of the disease. This chapter expands on information in chapter two by giving further detail on how to reduce individual risk of CRC. Although screening is the number one way to prevent CRC, focusing on promoting health and risk reduction can reduce the number of people who develop CRC as well as reduce impact of CRC for those who are diagnosed. Efforts to reduce CRC risk should focus on modifiable risk factors—those that can be controlled—such as diet, physical activity, alcohol consumption and tobacco use.

This chapter provides background information on modifiable risk factors and simple program ideas to promote health in your community. If risk reduction is a component of your overall program, consider coordinating with existing fitness, nutrition, and tobacco cessation programs. In addition, use information and ideas in this chapter with the next three chapters to develop a strong and comprehensive program. Information in this chapter can be used in any type of community-based program (e.g., media campaign, individual or community education).

#### The Importance of Prevention

Promoting healthy lifestyle choices is incredibly important for improving quality of life and reducing the risk of a number of chronic diseases. In Indian country, too many people are diagnosed with preventable chronic diseases. Our life expectancy is shorter than the general population and our risk of both developing chronic diseases and of dying due to those diseases is much higher. We can prevent these outcomes in our communities through promoting and living healthy lives.



***“The only statistic I was given to bring here is out of the last 40 deaths in Warm Springs, 15 of them [37.5%] were due to cancer...we are catching them too late...our people need to understand that. The way to help them to understand that is to increase awareness....”***

***— Judy Charlie,***

**Warm Springs Tribe**

Courtesy: 2002 President's Cancer

Panel

## Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes

Obesity and diabetes are highly related to developing CRC. Patients with type 2 diabetes are at even higher risk for developing CRC if they do not regulate insulin levels through medication or diet. It is important to collaborate with your diabetes coordinator to ensure community members are frequently screened for diabetes. Both type 2 diabetes and obesity can be addressed through overall health and wellness efforts listed below.

### Diet

Eating well can improve overall health including reducing risk of CRC, type 2 diabetes and other chronic and preventable diseases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends maintaining a healthy weight to reduce CRC risk.

Below are specific dietary recommendations that may lower CRC risk:

- Limit foods high in saturated (animal) fat (e.g., butter, bacon, cheese).
- Eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day.
- Choose whole grains (e.g., whole oats, brown rice, whole wheat, etc.) over refined or processed grains, (e.g., white flour, white rice, refined pastas, etc.)
- Eliminate or at least limit red or processed (e.g. bologna) meats.
- Eliminate or put strict limits on sugary foods, such as candy, cookies, etc.
- Eliminate or put strict limits on sugary beverages, such as soda, Gatorade, etc.
- Increase water intake to eight glasses per day.

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*Traditional native diets offer healthy whole foods that promote health. Traditional foods include: salmon, berries, lean game meat, roots, and nuts. There are 17 Traditional Food Projects in Indian Country funded by five-year grants from the CDC. In the Northwest, Nooksack and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians have received Traditional Food Project grant funds to promote traditional healthy eating.*

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**Check out:**

**For more on  
nutrition and  
eating well.**

**[http://www.  
choosemyplate.  
gov/](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/)**

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**Indian Health  
Services nutrition  
information at :**

**[http://www.  
ihs.gov/  
MedicalPrograms/  
Diabetes/index.cf  
m?module=resou  
rcesInstantDownl  
oads](http://www.ihs.gov/MedicalPrograms/Diabetes/index.cfm?module=resourcesInstantDownloads)**



- Overall, eat or drink (anything besides water) in moderation to maintain a healthy weight.

For more information see tools 3.1 and 3.2, My Native Plate.

As part of your comprehensive CRC prevention program, consider including diet-focused workshops and activities. You can encourage others by showing them that learning about new food is easy, fun and that other people in the community enjoy healthy food

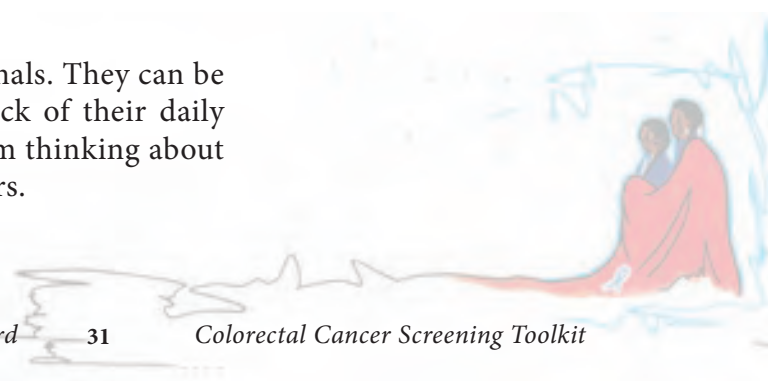
Below are community activities that focus on improving participant's diets:

- Create and publish a weekly/monthly traditional or healthy foods newsletter that spotlights new and healthy recipes. Share healthy eating tips and personal stories of people in the community who are working to maintain a healthy diet.
- Host community cooking classes or workshops where people can see how easy healthy cooking can be. There are multiple resources online for recipes and teaching others how to cook.
- Promote and celebrate traditional foods in your community.
- Host a community potluck (maybe connected with another event) and have a healthy food theme or spotlight ingredient (e.g., kale or broccoli).
- Start a community garden plot and encourage families to grow edible plants.
- Start a group that discusses new recipes, challenges of eating well and supports members to learn how to eat well.
- Start an eating competition. For example, see who can eat the most vegetables in one week. Give prizes to all who participate and to the winners.
- Start an online or in-person forum for sharing healthy and easy recipes.
- Encourage people to keep food journals. They can be private, but having people keep track of their daily food intake is a good way to get them thinking about changing their food-related behaviors.

**Check out:**

*The New Native American Cuisine: Five-Star Recipes from the Chefs of Arizona's Kai Restaurant*  
by Marian Betancourt.

**This cookbook, and many others, include modern recipes with traditional native ingredients.**



## Physical Activity

Physical activity is another controllable risk factor. Regular physical activity greatly reduces the risk of a large number of chronic diseases and is essential to maintaining a healthy weight. Regardless of weight or BMI, physical regular physical activity can decrease CRC risk. <sup>1</sup>Research shows that regular physical activity is associated with a 24% risk reduction as compared with no physical activity among both men and women. <sup>2</sup>There is also evidence that higher energy expenditures (high- intensity physical activity) lead to even greater CRC risk reduction. That means, the more active an individual is, the lower his or her individual risk.

High-intensity or vigorous physical activity is anything that gets a person's heart going and includes running, jumping jacks, or other aerobic activities. Moderate exercise includes brisk walking, water aerobics, or using a push lawn mower. The American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute suggest physical activity ranging from 30-60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity at least five days per week.

Coordinating physical activity workshops or events can be relatively simple to integrate into your community. Remember to consider working with the diabetes coordinator, tribal fitness coordinator or any other community partner who might be interested in encouraging people to get moving. Below are simple ideas for including exercise-focused workshops in your program:

- Start a community walking group. Invite others to go for walks once or twice a week. Pick different walking routes and try to keep it welcoming and comfortable for people of all abilities and ages.
- Facilitate community exercise groups. You can work with someone in the community who is familiar with teaching exercises or you can learn some techniques to get others moving. NPAIHB offers fitness training every year at Nike Native Fitness. Contact [wtdp@npaihb.org](mailto:wtdp@npaihb.org) for more information.
- Start a long-term community fitness challenge. For example, start a pedometer walking challenge. Ask people to wear a pedometer (to keep track of the number of steps they take) and try to increase the number of steps they take in a day. For more



information visit: [www.thewalkingsite.com](http://www.thewalkingsite.com)

- Encourage people to find exercise partners. Your program can help people find their partners and help them set fitness goals.
- Host a community athletic event such as a softball or basketball game, a dance or a hike. Community athletic events could be regular (e.g., annual basketball games) and could be combined with a healthy potluck.
- Promote or teach new sports and physical activities. You can promote new exercises with media and education tools. For example, each month spotlight a new physical activity that people can try (either something they can do on their own or a class that is held nearby).
- Promote family-based exercise. You can use a media campaign or a series of workshops to encourage people to increase the amount of time they spend being active or outside with kids, grandkids, pets or friends.

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*For more ideas and information on physical activity in Indian Country including Physical Activity Kits for all ages go to*

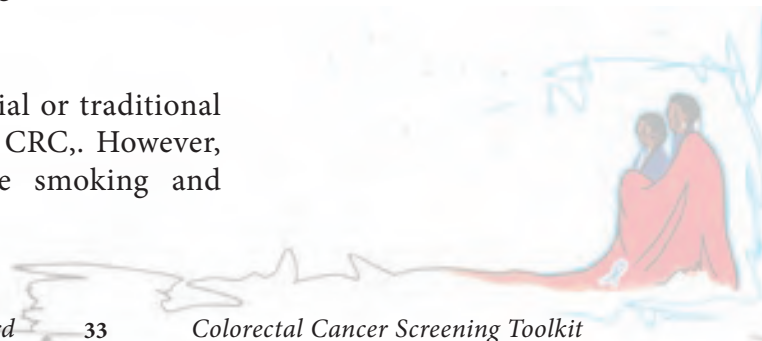
[www.letsmove.gov/indiancountry](http://www.letsmove.gov/indiancountry)

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Integrating overall wellness through physical activity and diet promotion is important in any chronic disease prevention program. There are also a number of other risk factors that can be controlled, but may be outside of the scope of a CRC prevention coordinator. Chapter seven outlines building partnerships with other programs to support risk reduction. Below is background information and recommendations for tobacco, alcohol and other specific lifestyle guidelines.

### **Habitual Tobacco Use**

Infrequent participation or use of ceremonial or traditional tobacco is not a risk factor for developing CRC,. However, habitual tobacco use, including cigarette smoking and





*“I’ve gone back to a lot of native food... I try to include that in my diet, the roots, and fish and deer meat.”*

- Tribal Focus Group, 2011

chewing tobacco, is associated with a long list of negative health impacts. <sup>3</sup>Besides heart disease and lung cancer, long-term tobacco use is associated with an increased risk of CRC. Prior to program implementation, you can work with the tobacco coordinator to decide on a referral process for patients. Refer to Chapter Six: Program Implementation for more information on collaborating with similar programs. Current smokers should be referred to tobacco cessation resources or the tobacco cessation coordinator. If you decide to facilitate tobacco cessation as part of your program, there are numerous materials and resources available. For example, consider attending a Second Wind Tobacco Cessation Training offered by NPAIHB and the Northern California Indian Development Council. For more information, please contact Lou Moerner with Northern California Development Council at: [lou@ncidc.org](mailto:lou@ncidc.org).

### **Alcohol Consumption**

<sup>4</sup>Excessive alcohol consumption is linked to an increase in CRC risk. Limit alcoholic beverages to no more than two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women. If patients who have chronic alcohol or other substance use issues and would like to limit or quit using, refer them to a substance abuse counselor or rehab center. Limiting alcohol consumption can also help maintain a healthy weight by lowering the number of calories consumed.

### **Aspirin**

<sup>5</sup>There is increasing evidence that taking a regular dose (daily or three to five times per week) of aspirin may reduce the risk of CRC. However, the relationship between CRC and aspirin is still being studied. We suggest any CRC program coordinator conduct further research before suggesting aspirin as a preventative measure for patients. All patients should consult a physician before taking regular doses of aspirin.

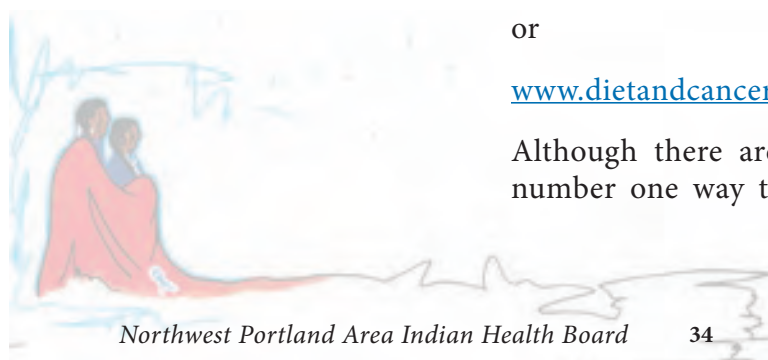
For more information on risk reduction and CRC prevention go to:

[www.cancer.org/Cancer/ColonandRectumCancer/DetailedGuide/colorectal-cancer-prevention](http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/ColonandRectumCancer/DetailedGuide/colorectal-cancer-prevention)

or

[www.dietandcancerreport.org](http://www.dietandcancerreport.org)

Although there are many factors associated with CRC, the number one way to prevent it is to be screened. Promotion



and education of the benefits of CRC screenings should be an emphasis of every CRC prevention program. However, programs that do not have access to clinical services can also focus on promoting protective health behaviors.

### **Risk Reduction Chapter Summary**

The risk reduction and prevention supplement provided useful information on preventing CRC. Protective factors such as healthy diet maintenance, regular physical activity, and moderate use of alcoholic beverages, are explained and described. Program activities and suggestions for diet and exercise are included.

### **Tool Box Description**

#### **3.1 My Native Plate: An Easy Way to Help your Family Know How Much to Eat**

This resource was developed by IHS and is a native adaptation of Choose My Plate. The full size placemat can be used to understand portion sizes.

#### **3.2 More My Native Plates for your Family**

This poster includes native plates for youth and alternative examples of well-rounded meals.

