



Sioux Lookout
First Nations
Health Authority

CORONAVIRUS
COVID-19

PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE

TRADITIONAL GATHERINGS

JUNE 19, 2020

As a result of COVID-19, most Powwows and gatherings have been postponed until next year or moved online, but there may be communities that plan to proceed with events at this time. Unfortunately, these gatherings are high risk and should only be undertaken after careful consideration of the risks. We strongly discourage communities from hosting these events if there has been any cases or contacts of COVID-19 in your community within 14 days. For communities who have not had any COVID-19 cases within 14 days, if you proceed with an event, please consider these infection prevention and control guidelines to help people stay safer and prevent infection transmission. Please note these guidelines only reduce the risk and do not ensure the safety of organizers or participants.



If you plan on hosting a traditional gathering this summer, here are a few things to consider:

LIMIT GATHERINGS TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS

To keep your community safer from COVID-19, any gatherings should not be open to visitors.

HAVE A WELLNESS CHECK BOOTH AT THE ENTRANCE

It is recommended that every person attending have their temperature checked and be asked a few health questions before gaining access to powwow grounds or the event location. Questions might include:

- Have you had a fever (above 37.8°C), cough or difficulty breathing in the last 14 days?
- Have you travelled outside of the community in the past 14 days?
- Have you been in contact with anyone who has COVID-19 in the past 14 days?



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If the response to any of these questions is yes, or the temperature is over 37.8°C, it is recommended that they not attend the traditional gathering and return home to self-isolate and contact their nursing station for further guidance.

HAVE HAND HYGIENE STATIONS PLACED AROUND THE EVENT GROUNDS

Recommended areas to have hand hygiene stations are at the entrance, beside the washrooms, near food service areas, around ceremonial grounds, and activity areas. Have a few more dispersed around the grounds to make sure one is near when needed. Hand hygiene stations should have soap, water and single use hand towels and/or hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

CLEAN WASHROOMS AND HAND HYGIENE STATIONS TWICE A DAY AND AS NEEDED

Washrooms should first be cleaned with soap and water, and then disinfected with a household disinfectant. If household disinfectants are not available, make a bleach solution of 1-part bleach to 99 parts water (10mL of bleach in 990mL of water). Never mix cleaning solutions as this can be very dangerous. While cleaning and disinfecting, start with cleaner areas and move to dirtier areas. Change cloths when they are visibly soiled. If you are unable to launder cleaning cloths, use disposable ones.

HAVE MEDICAL MASKS AVAILABLE FOR PEOPLE WHO WISH TO USE THEM

If people are not able to physically distance by staying 2 metres (6 feet) apart, or if they have a chronic illness, they may choose to wear a surgical or homemade mask. Remind folks not to touch their masks as this contaminates the mask. Masks also need to be changed if they get wet as they are no longer effective.

ENCOURAGE GATHERERS TO BRING THEIR OWN FEAST BUNDLES

Bringing their own feast bundles will help protect Mother Earth and can help reduce the transmission of viruses such as COVID-19 as each person will be using their own plate and utensils.





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HAVE DESIGNATED FOOD SERVERS IF THERE WILL BE POTLUCK STYLE MEALS

If there will be potluck style meals, have designated people to serve specific food dishes. This will help minimize virus transmission. Also, have servers wear masks as they serve food.

CONSIDER MODIFYING CEREMONIAL PRACTICES TO KEEP GATHERERS SAFE.

Keep in mind that folks should practice physical distancing whenever possible to avoid transmitting viruses such as COVID-19. COVID-19 is transmitted through small droplets that come from the mouth and nose. You can get the virus by touching an infected object, then touching your face, or by touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with an infected object. Keeping how viruses get transmitted in mind, these are some modifications that you may want to practice this year during gatherings.

- Encourage folks to bring their own ceremonial objects
- Encourage folks to not share their pipes at this time
- Encourage people to bring their own copper cups and water for water ceremonies, or provide participants with water and small disposable cups
- For drumming, limit the number of drummers, so they can stay physically distanced and ensure each drummer brings their own drumming stick
- Determine if there are ceremonies where hand drums could be used instead of larger drums
- Singing can cause more droplets, so if folks could use hand drums and stay apart while singing, that should be an option to consider
- Have dances and performances in large open spaces so participants and observers are able to stay 2 metres apart
- Think of further ways to maintain physical distance such as modifying certain dances where possible. For instance, for a round dance, 6 feet of rope can be cut and held by dancers, so everyone is still connected while maintaining distance instead of holding hands or being shoulder to shoulder.
- When offering tobacco, use tobacco ties over loose tobacco. Another consideration would be to have the person distributing tobacco wear disposable gloves (which should be removed after the task is complete)

