

Healthy Native Youth and Diabetes Prevention

The colonization of American Indian and Alaska Natives caused widespread disruptions to traditional lifestyles.

This led to poor access to healthy foods and decreases in physical activity and contributed to an epidemic of type 2 diabetes in people of all ages.

"As our ancestors looked out for us, we must look out for our children and grandchildren. Together, let's build a diabetes-free future for our children."

*- Lorelei De Cora,
Winnebago*



Know Your Child's Growth Pattern

Being overweight is one of the main predictors of type 2 diabetes in children. Children's height and weight are tracked at clinic visits and determine if a child is underweight, healthy weight, overweight, or obese.

Screening for Diabetes

All Native youth, age 10 and older, who are overweight or obese should be screened for diabetes.

Support Lifestyle Changes

Establishing healthy habits early helps prevent diabetes. Adults can help by providing access to nutritious foods, daily physical activity, and support for weight loss for overweight or obese youth.

Stay Active

Support youth in being physically active for one or more hours per day. Monitor screen time and set age appropriate limits.

walking to school	15 minutes
biking or skateboarding	15 minutes
playing sports	30 minutes
TOTAL	1 hour



Aerobic activities use the body's large muscles to strengthen the heart and lungs, such as brisk walking, skateboarding, biking, or any activity that raises the heart rate.

Strengthening activities can help the:

Muscles - Climbing, doing push-ups, sit-ups, or pull-ups, or using resistance bands, free weights, and/or machine weights.

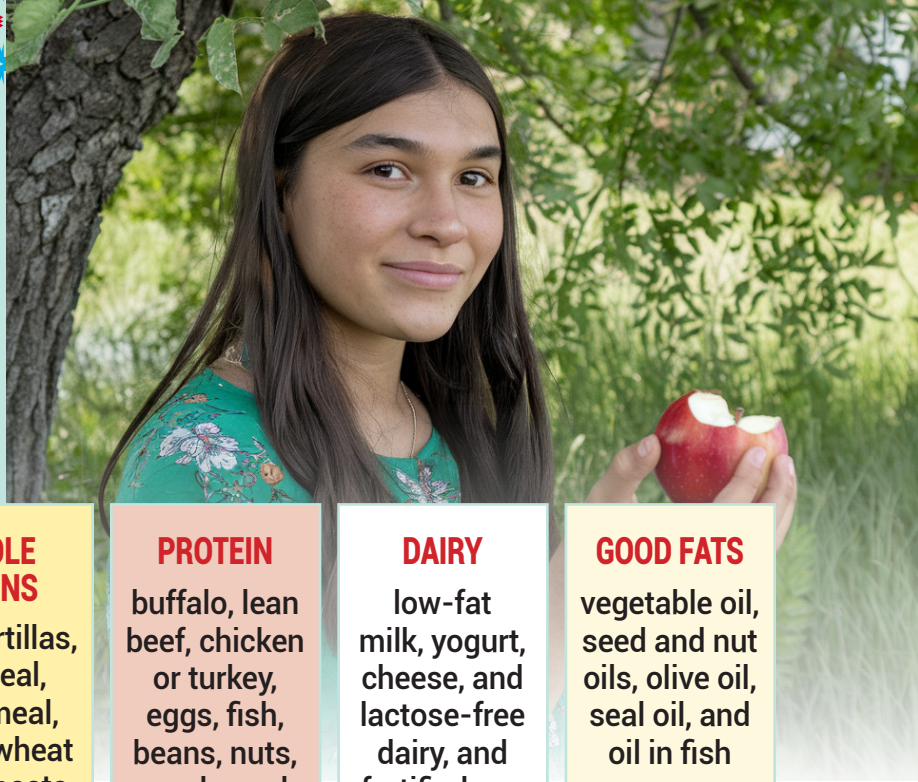
Bones - Jumping or running, including while playing basketball, lacrosse, and soccer.



Produced by the IHS Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention. For more diabetes information and materials, visit www.ihs.gov/diabetes. 07/2024

Free Diabetes Education Materials
Scan Now!





Eat a Variety of Foods

Native youth need a variety of whole foods like traditionally grown and prepared foods. Help youth try new foods and find ones they enjoy, such as:

FRUITS

berries, melons, oranges, apples, peaches, pears, and dried cranberries

VEGETABLES

corn, beans, and squash, baby carrots, celery, cucumber, lettuce, and tomatoes

WHOLE GRAINS

corn tortillas, oatmeal, corn meal, whole wheat bread, pasta, wild rice, and quinoa

PROTEIN

buffalo, lean beef, chicken or turkey, eggs, fish, beans, nuts, seeds, and tofu

DAIRY

low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese, and lactose-free dairy, and fortified soy milk

GOOD FATS

vegetable oil, seed and nut oils, olive oil, seal oil, and oil in fish

Increase Water Intake

- Water first – offer a reusable water bottle to use daily.
- Drink water with meals. Try water infused with fresh fruit, or cucumber and mint.

Limit Sugary Drinks

Avoid drinks high in added sugar. Sugary drinks make it hard for youth to get the nutrients they need without extra calories. Limit 100% fruit juice to 8 ounces daily.

Prepare Meals as a Family

- Prepare meals using whole foods and encourage tasting new and traditional foods.
- Get youth cooking! Help them learn skills like following a basic recipe, baking in the oven, and chopping vegetables. Visit, [Teaching Kids to Cook](#)
- Invite youth to participate in traditional harvesting, preservation, preparation, and story time about foods from our plant and animal relatives. Find [Native Cooking Resources at ihs.gov](#)

If you need help providing nutritious food for your family, consider looking into these food assistance resources [USA.gov/food-help](#)

Traditional Foods

Visit "[Diabetes is Not Our Destiny](#)" for traditional foods, finding recipes, and more.

We all can do a lot to help Native youth prevent type 2 diabetes. The changes you make as a family today can help them achieve a healthier future.

