

Changes in Health Indicators of Communities with Alaska Native and Local Food Promotion Initiatives

National Indian Health Board
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SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium

- **PL 93-638 tribal organization**
- **Established 1975 by Tlingit, Haida, & Tsimshian tribes.**
- **15 member Board of Directors**
- **~1,000 employees**
- **Nine HRSA 330 clinics**
- **Services in 20 communities**



SEARHC Health Services Map



MAP LEGEND

- * Referrals to Sitka MEH only
- Shared Services
- Onsite Medical, Dental & Behavioral Health Services
- Itinerant Health Services
- H Regional Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital (MEH)
- ⊕ Tertiary Care Hospital



The SouthEast Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) is a non-profit tribal health consortium founded in 1975 under the provisions of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. The SEARHC strategic plan has expanded recently, providing vital healthcare services to all members of the communities in the SEARHC service area.

Rev.12/08/2015



Health Promotion in southeast Alaska

For millennia, Native people have thrived by living off the land and sea.



Photo: UAF archive

Common subsistence foods in southeast Alaska

- Salmon
- Halibut
- Other fish
- Clams
- Herring and eggs
- Hooligan (oil)
- Seal
- Berries
- Beach asparagus
- Seaweed
- Gardens
- Moose
- Deer







Food is medicine

- Numerous studies show that supporting traditional foods is now a promising best practice for public health in American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) and First Nations peoples in North America. Increasing evidence is showing that traditional food is medicine.





SEARHC's role

- SouthEast Alaska Health Consortium (SEARHC) has worked for over 40 years to affect behavioral change and policy that improves health
- **Our Mission**
Alaska Native People working in partnership to provide the best healthcare for our communities.
- **Our Vision**
Partnering with our communities to promote a healthy balance of mind, body, and spirit.



SEARHC Traditional Foods Project

The SEARHC Traditional Foods Project seeks to promote healthy lifestyles by increasing the use of our traditional foods and wisdom

Winter Calendar

November

Unity Dinner, Nov 21st—5pm At the SNO Building

Native Heritage Month School Assembly

December

ANB ANS Christmas Party, Dec 20th at SNO Building

February

Paddle Making Workshop

March

Seal Camp

April

Elder's Dinner-- Fish Eggs, Hooligans, Seaweed

May

Wolf Party

Raven Party

Weekly Events

Sewing Circle—Tuesdays at Salvation Army

Drum Circle—Wednesdays

Language Class—TBA

Carving and Drawing Class—TBA

To get involved with any of these events and activities or for more information, please contact Ken Hoyt at 874.2712 or box 1411



HAA TAAYÍ: OUR GARDEN

WORK DAY

HELP US WITH OUR RAISED
BEDS AND GREENHOUSES

Saturday, June 1st

Meet at SNO Building at 10 am

PRESENTATION TLINGIT GARDENING HERITAGE

Presented by Ken Hoyt
Monday, June 3rd
SNO Building 7pm



AA TLEIN GUNALCHEESH!
On behalf of the People of Wrangell, and the Shakes Dedication
Committee, The SEARHC Traditional Foods Project would
like to send a message of deep gratitude to the following:

Lee Byrd and the Jessie Girl
Renee Claggett and Trident Seafoods
Carl Stevens and the Miss Susan
All of our Berry Picking friends

Thank you for your generous contributions
of time, effort and food!
Thank you for helping to feed the community!

Food Donations Welcome

WCA and SEARHC

Traditional Foods Project

are seeking
donations of
seafood for
the upcoming
festivities.

Gas Money
Compensation
Available

Tlingit Formline
Art Class
with
Master Carver
Steve Brown

2-5pm

Sunday April 7th
at the SNO Building

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
WCA and SEARHC
Traditional Foods
Project

For more information please
call 874.2712



AMSEA Water Safety Training Course September 1st and 2nd

THIS RIGOROUS TWO DAY COURSE WILL EQUIP
PARTICIPANTS WITH THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE
TO BE SAFE IN THE WATER.

INCLUDES ALASKA COLD WATER SAFETY.

Hosted by the SEARHC Traditional Foods Project

*The Tribe is seeking donations of
seafood and traditional foods
for the Shakes House
Dedication Dinner in May.*

• Gas Money Compensation Available

Please contact Traditional Foods Project
at 874.2712 or WCA at 874.4304



GUNALCHEESH

Thank you
to
Carl Stevens,
Gary Stevens,
Elmer Carlstrom
and F/V Miss Susan

*The SEARHC Traditional
Foods Project and WCA
would like to thank you for
your
generosity!*



Come Berry Picking With Us!

EVERY WEEK DAY

AUGUST 13TH TO 17TH AT 10AM.

Meet at WCA Office

CALL KEN HOYT FOR MORE INFORMATION AT 874-2712

Brought to you by the Shakes House Dedication Committee
and the SEARHC Traditional Foods Project



The SEARHC Traditional Foods
Project is seeking donations of
fish and wood for the new
Community Smokehouse.

Supplies will be used for classes and food
will be distributed to the community.

Please contact Ken Hoyt at 907-305-0022

GAS MONEY COMPENSATION AVAILABLE





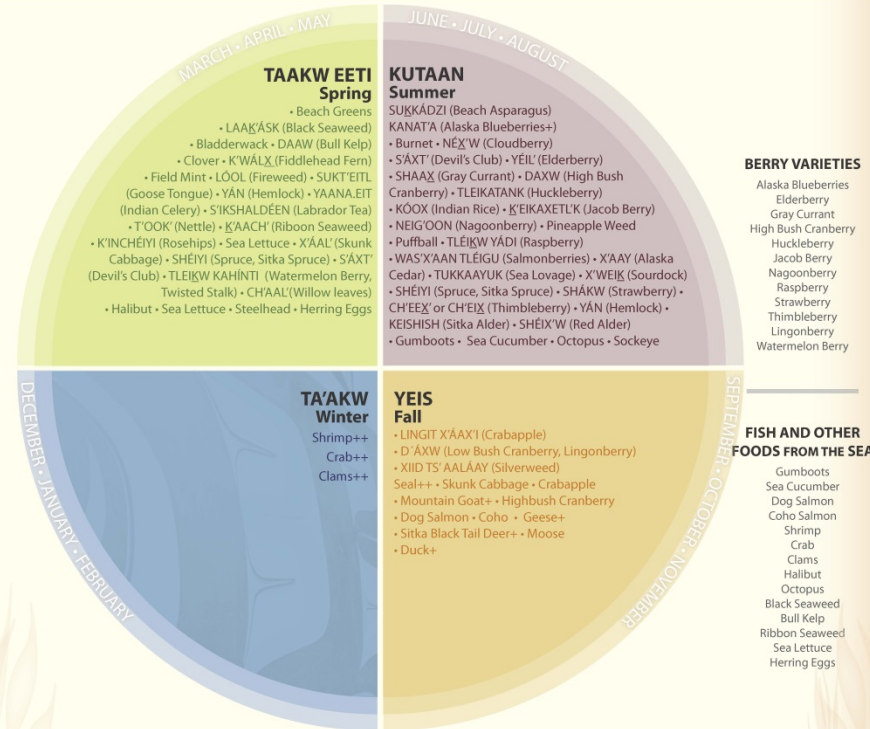
Southeast Alaska Traditional Food Guide



A weekly reminder to encourage gathering and using local plants and berries
Compiled by SEARHC Health Promotion



A SEASONAL CELEBRATION OF TLINGIT TRADITIONAL FOODS



+INDICATES FOOD IS AVAILABLE FOR MORE THAN ONE SEASON
CONTACT A LOCAL FISH AND GAME OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HUNTING AND FISHING REGULATIONS.



Is that.....good?

- Each grant had its own evaluation method and indicators
- As chronic disease prevention funding becomes more restricted, funders increasingly focus on supporting programs that use “evidenced-based practice” to impact risk measures. However, many evidenced-based practices proven effective in other parts of the U.S. may not have equivalent constructs in small, rural, isolated, economically limited, Alaska Native communities.

Risk factors in WISEWOMAN enrollees 2009

Hypertension	28%
Pre-Hypertension	33%
High Cholesterol	21%
Borderline High Cholesterol	31%
Diabetes	11%
Pre-Diabetes	20%
Tobacco Use	30%
BMI > 25 & < 29.9	31%
BMI > 30	44%
None of the Above	7%

Methods

- Communities implementing Traditional Foods grants were compared to communities of similar size and geographic location without grants.
- SEARHC designed this evaluation to explore people's beliefs about what makes a healthy community and what clinical health measures may have changed over time, to assess the influence of SEARHC's Traditional Foods Grants (TFGs). Communities that have implemented TFGs were compared to communities of similar size and geographic location which did not have funding support to do this – Comparison Communities (CCs).

Quantitative results

The data suggests that improvements in health measures in SEARHC communities from 2001 to 2015 include:

- increased consumption of fruits and vegetables
- increased tobacco-use interventions by providers.
- Self-reporting of diabetes mellitus remained stable between 2011 and 2014.

Improvements in the Traditional Foods grant communities not seen in comparison communities:

- Increase in HDL cholesterol in males
- Decrease in intimate partner violence for men
- Decrease in diastolic blood pressure in females

Qualitative Results

Qualitative survey responses indicate that programs supporting traditional knowledge and foods improve the health of communities through:

- Elder and youth empowerment
- Connecting generations
- Supporting spirituality
- Improving nutrition
- Providing psychosocial support
- Strengthening culture
- Bringing medical care providers together with the community
- Maintaining and strengthening local language use
- Bringing families together
- Strengthening the economy
- Increasing physical activity
- Teaching outdoor safety

Question for future study:

- How can we better measure traditional ways of knowing, strength of culture, sense of belonging, cultural pride, social support for community members, and strength of relationships?



Finally

- The strong message heard from respondents is the importance of consulting, engaging, and empowering local communities
- The lack of sufficient community engagement and involvement may be a handicap in tackling health concerns.
- Program planners and funding agencies are listening more and designing and funding programs that directly respond to the needs expressed by community members.

Gunál ch'eesh

