

Aboriginal Cancer Care Unit

Honouring the **Aboriginal Path** of Well-being

NEWSLETTER • November 2006

Fresh Look for ACCU Newsletter

Shekon! Ahneen! Boozhoo!

We've listened! After feedback from a Newsletter Improvement Strategy which involved frontline health service workers and community members, ACCU has designed a fresh, new look for its newsletter.

Cancer is a major health problem in the Aboriginal people of Ontario. While there is still less cancer in First Nations and Métis people, the rate is going up and is now almost the same as the rest of Ontario. This is because of high colorectal and lung cancer rates. Cancers in First Nations and Métis people also tend to be found at later stages and this leads to poorer health outcomes.

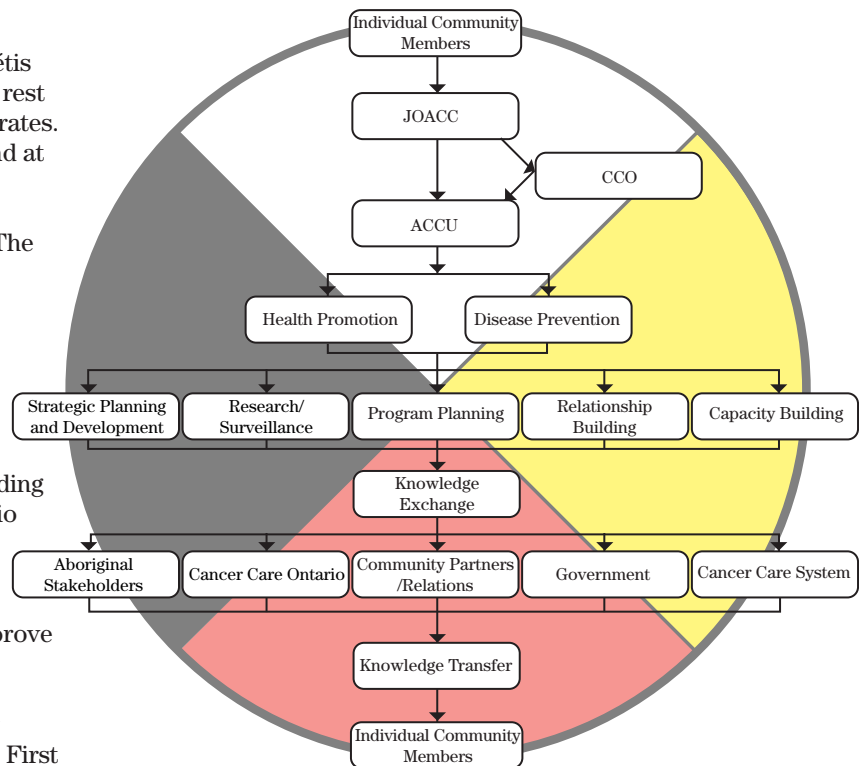
ACCU's vision is to honour the Aboriginal path of well-being. The unit will accomplish this mission through:

- tracking policies
- developing training modules
- creating linkages
- networking with regions
- establishing partnerships
- environmental scanning
- implementing community-based projects

The ACCU is in charge of strategic planning and development, research and surveillance, program planning, relationship building and capacity-building. Work is done with input from the Ontario Provincial Territorial Organizations (PTOs) who are on the Joint Ontario Aboriginal Cancer Committee (JOACC). The ACCU, through its Aboriginal Cancer Strategy and Aboriginal Tobacco Strategy, works for, and with the communities, to improve the cancer outcomes for Ontario's Aboriginal people.

One of ACCU's main focus areas is the design of a Community Learning Series. This train-the-educator approach will provide First

Nations and Métis communities the ability to respond to the rising rates of colorectal cancer cases. A main goal is to offer training to First Nation and Métis health care workers. Training will cover education and a range of services for cancer such as: prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, supportive care and palliative care.



Feature Recipe

Blueberry Sauce

2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries 500 mL
1/2 cup water 125 mL
1/4 cup sugar 50 mL
1 tsp lemon juice 5 mL
2 tsp cornstarch 10 mL



1. In a small saucepan, combine 1 cup of the blueberries with 1/4 cup of the water. Stir in the sugar and lemon juice. Stir and bring to a boil. Turn down heat and simmer for 7 to 10 minutes.
2. Mix the cornstarch into 1/4 cup of water. Add to the blueberry mixture. Stir until it thickens. Add the rest of the blueberries. Cook for 3 minutes over low heat.

TASTY IDEAS: Serve these sauces over fresh or canned fruit, ice cream, tea biscuits or pancakes. Freeze extra sauce for up to six months. Thaw in the fridge.

NUTRITION NOTES: Blueberries are high in fibre and vitamin C. They contain natural plant chemicals called phytochemicals that help fight cancer and other diseases.

Did You Know... What It Is?

Antioxidants

- Antioxidants protect cells from damage.
- Damage to cells can lead to cancer.
- Antioxidants may help protect your body from cancer cells.
- Antioxidants are found in many fruits and vegetables including: berries, carrots, squash, spinach and citrus fruits (oranges, lemons). You can use fresh, frozen or canned (avoid added sugar) sources.
- Vitamins C, E and A are examples of antioxidants.

Five to Ten a Day – Your Way!



On remote Georgina Island, eating healthy to reduce the risk of cancer and diabetes can be a challenge. With little access to mainland stores, many residents are drawn to the fried foods on hand at the island store leaving the Chippewas of Georgina Island at high risk for poor health. "Increasing the access to fresh fruits and vegetables is a big thing because... on Georgina Island, access to fresh produce is an issue," says Judy Barth, Public Health Nurse with York Region Health Services.

Studies show that eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables per day may decrease the risk of cancer and diabetes. That's why York Region Health Services ran the Take 5: 5 – 10 a day...your way program. Designed by Cancer Care Ontario, the program has been tested at 12 sites across Ontario and consists of six weekly two-hour sessions which engage participants in activities to help add healthy foods to their diets. With Take 5, Judy says they can reduce community members' risk of developing diabetes as well as different types of cancer which are prominent on the island.

Take 5 sessions were a partnership with Cancer Prevention Network of York Region, the Chippewas of Georgina Island, heartyparty.com and York Region Health Services. Susan Finkelstein, a Nutritionist with York Region Health Services, and Judy developed plans with participants to break down barriers to healthy eating.

With 20 participants Take 5 was aimed at women caring for children under the age of 14. "We know mothers influence what families eat and what their children eat. So if

you're able to influence the change in the mother you're able to influence the change in the family," says Judy. Lorna Fitzpatrick, Georgina Island's Community Health Nurse, agrees saying since Take 5 more parents are pushing healthy eating with programs like the Healthy Snacks program in the school.

Take 5 was run during fall 2005 with program evaluations done prior to, during and three months after the sessions. Outcomes showed members made a 37 per cent increase in their intake. Judy says they've seen a notable change in their thoughts about eating healthy, and expect greater participation at future health workshops. Georgina Island has even started a health committee, walking clinics, and hopes to start a Good Food Box program. Judy also commented on the renewed interest in Georgina Island's community garden as a source of fresh produce.

"...eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables per day may decrease the risk of cancer and diabetes."

Participation is often a challenge when running programs like Take 5. According to Judy, Lorna recruited members by making reminder phone calls and used an existing diabetes fund to offer prizes like cookware, blenders and peelers to draw members. Take 5 was promoted through posters, an article in the health centre's newsletter, radio ads and flyers. New health programs like Take Action Now, which focus on physical activity, and canning and preserve workshops are helping members keep up healthy eating habits.

Running the Take 5 program in an Aboriginal community has helped improve the original program design. From member feedback, facilitators noted ways to improve Take 5 like adding traditional foods. They also found the need for support from the ruling Band Council, the value of using prizes as a way to draw members and the need for a trusting bond with members. The Take 5 program can easily be implemented in other communities to help reduce their risk of certain cancers and diabetes.

Please place community contact information here.

Resources

Canadian Cancer Society
www.cancer.ca

Nutrition Resource Centre
www.nutritionrc.ca

Dietitians of Canada
www.dietitians.ca

Health Canada
www.hc-sc.gc.ca

National Cancer Institute
www.cancer.gov/cancertopics

Ontario Public Health Association
www.opha.on.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada
www.phac-aspc.gc.ca

If you are interested in any information or would like to find out more please feel free to contact our office.

**Aboriginal Cancer Care Unit,
Cancer Care Ontario**
620 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5G 2L7
T 416-971-9800 ext. 3261
Sally.Hare@cancercare.on.ca

Take a look at our website for up-to-date information.
www.cancercare.on.ca
http://www.cancercare.on.ca/Index_AboriginalCancerStrategy.htm

JOACC PTO membership list
Nishnawbe-Aski Nation
Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians
Union of Ontario Indians – Anishnabek Nation
Grand Council Treaty #3
Independent First Nations
Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association
Métis Nation of Ontario
Ontario Native Women's Association
Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres

Funding for this program has been provided by the Government of Ontario. No endorsement by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is intended or should be inferred.

Cancer Care Ontario is an umbrella organization that steers and coordinates Ontario's cancer services and prevention efforts so that fewer people get cancer, and patients receive the highest possible quality of care.

Tell us what you think!

Please give us your feedback on our new newsletter. Or drop us a word if you have any story ideas or topics you'd like to see in future issues to:

Sally.Hare@cancercare.on.ca

November 2006