

CANCER SCREENING FLIPBOOK

**An Information Tool for Health
and Wellness Providers and
Community Members**



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

**BC
CAN
CER**

Provincial Health Services Authority

Acknowledgement



We raise our hands and gratefully acknowledge that this resource was created on the land and traditional territories of the First Nations peoples in British Columbia (BC).

This resource was developed in collaboration with BC Cancer and with funding support from the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer.

Thank you to Cancer Care Ontario for their permission to adapt their *Cancer and Screening Toolkit* for use in BC.

Thank you to all of the contributors who made the creation of this resource possible



Purpose of this tool

This flipbook supports wellness champions and health providers in their conversations about cancer and cancer screening with community members. The flipbook can be used in both one-on-one or group settings.

You do not need to have a clinical background to use this resource. Community health representatives, home visitors or wellness promotion leads may all find this flipbook useful for starting a conversation with community members about cancer screening.

There are many sources of information that support the speaking points in this flipbook. You may want to refer to the BC Cancer website, call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 or speak to a local health provider. The First Nations Health Authority's (FNHA) cancer web page also includes tailored health resources.

HealthLink BC telephone line:
8-1-1

BC Cancer:
www.bccancer.bc.ca/screening

FNHA:
www.fnha.ca/cancer

Purpose of this tool

To share information and support conversations about cancer screening and related services.



**CANCER
PREVENTION
& CULTURAL
SAFETY**



A wholistic approach to cancer prevention

Many cancers are preventable. Focusing on your wholistic wellness is an important way to minimize your risk of getting cancer.

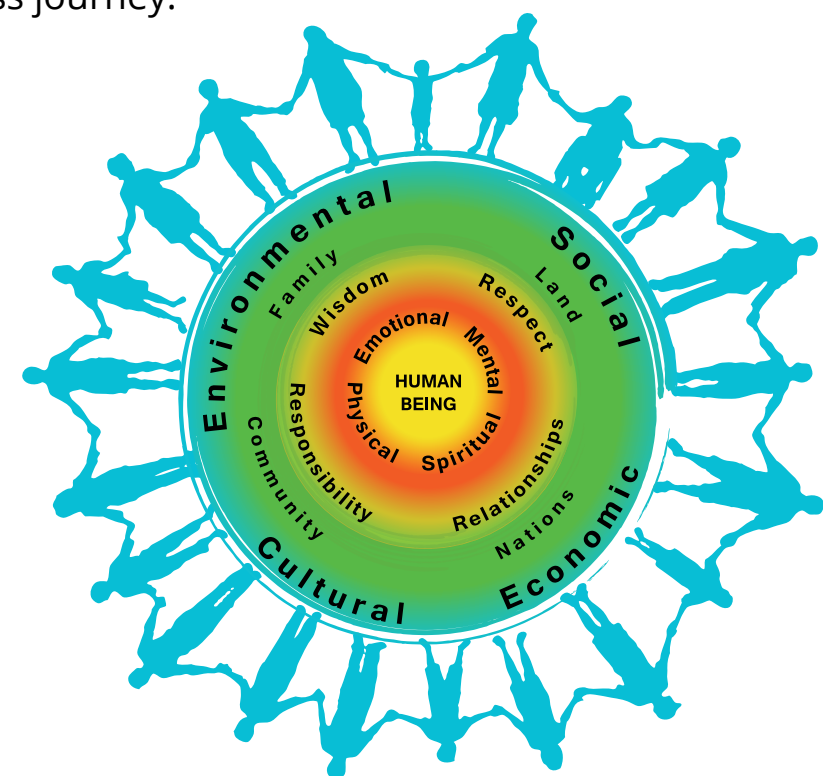
There are many connections between your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. For example, outdoor activities like gathering plants, fishing or hunting benefit you physically, but they also support your mind and spirit.

A number of factors influence your chances of getting cancer, such as genetics, your age and what you eat. These are often referred to as risk factors. Some risk factors, such as genetics and age, are outside of your control. Others, like the food you eat or your activity levels, are within your control and can be influenced by healthy environments and strong support systems.

You can positively impact your health and well-being by doing activities that make you feel balanced and spending time with people who make you feel good. Each person's wellness priorities and journey will be different, and should be respected.

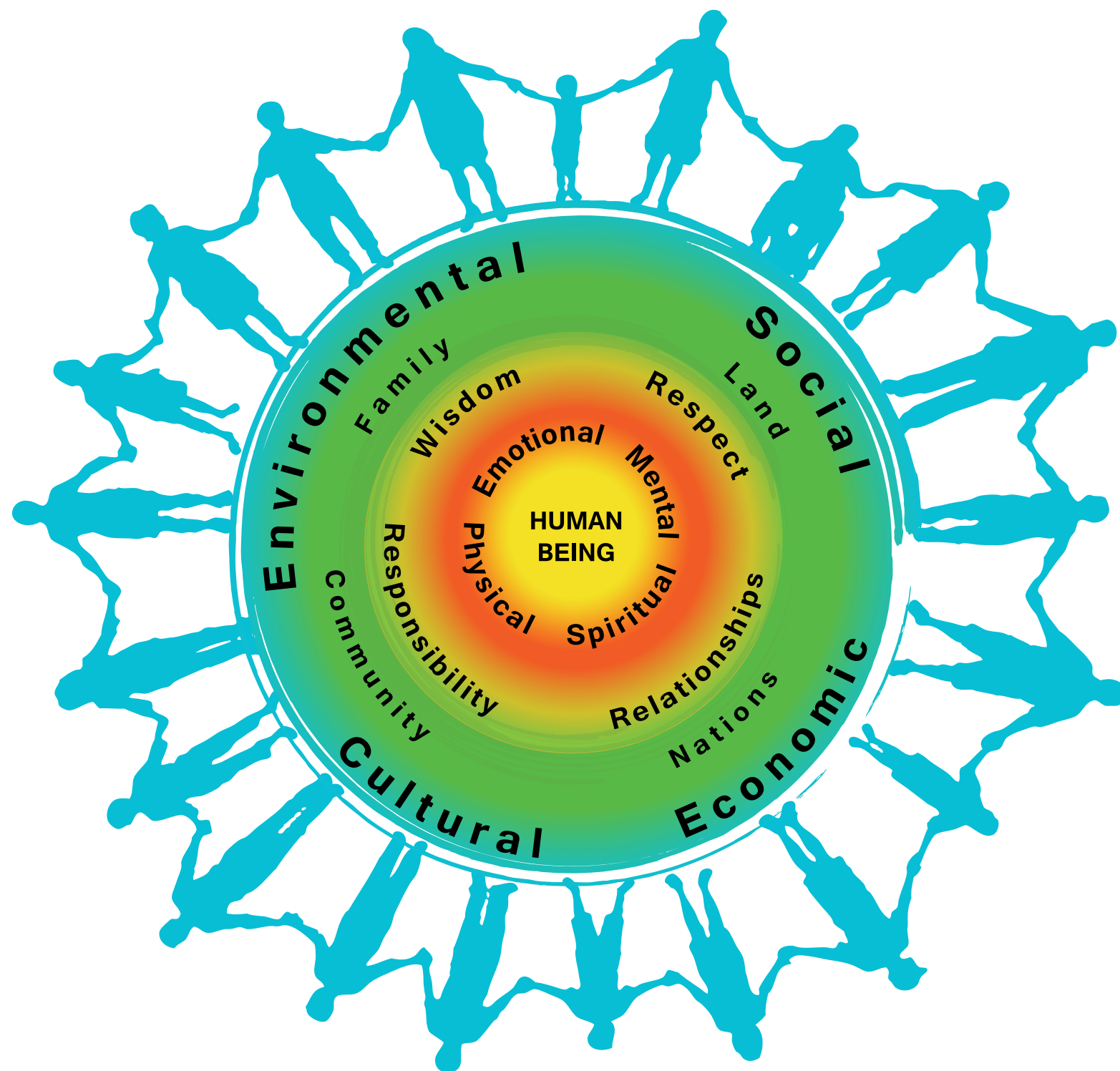
Doing things for your wellness can help you at any age and any stage – including when you are healthy and when you are healing.

Your health and wellness are influenced by the world around you, including your family, community and the land and environments in which you live and work. Think about how you can support your own wellness while also connecting with your family, community and environment as part of your overall health and wellness journey.



A wholistic approach to cancer prevention

- > Focusing on your wholistic wellness helps reduce your risk of cancer
- > Some risk factors for cancer are outside of your control – like your family history or age
- > You can reduce many cancer risks by making healthy choices that support your overall wellness



Cancer prevention pathways

Healing from trauma

Healing from trauma is foundational to wellness. Many Indigenous communities and individuals have experienced – and continue to experience – trauma. It is possible to heal and transform trauma. Participating in land-based practices and drawing on the support of traditional knowledge keepers, cultural leads, Elders and family are some pathways for healing.

Being active

Being active is an important part of wellness. Even small amounts of exercise make a big difference, and they benefit your mental health too. Walking is a great way to get started. If there are children and youth in your life, you can do physical activities with them. This is a fantastic way to strengthen your relationships with them while being a good role model for an active lifestyle.

Eating well

Eating well is about more than just the foods we put in our bodies. Food is a way of sharing health, strengthening family and community connections, claiming sovereignty, giving back, demonstrating resilience and sharing information, culture and language. Try eating foods from the land, whether traditionally harvested or locally grown. Choosing a variety of different foods

(such as unprocessed foods like fruit, vegetables, beans, grains, eggs, lean meats, fish and wild game) is the easiest way to meet our nutrient and energy needs. When you're thirsty, make water your first choice to stay hydrated. Gathering, preparing and eating food together is a family-strengthening activity. Ask for support from a health provider if you need more information about shopping on a budget, gardening, gathering traditional foods, canning and cooking. You can also call 8-1-1 to speak with a registered dietitian.

Nurturing your mind and spirit

Nurturing your mind and spirit is an essential part of wholistic wellness as mental and physical health are closely interconnected. It can be helpful to seek out support to heal from trauma, manage stress and find balance. Spending time in nature, participating in cultural activities and being with people you trust and look up to can bring greater peace and confidence. Connecting with Elders, knowledge keepers and healers can support your spiritual wellness. Smudging, brushings, sweat lodges, spirit baths, traditional dancing and drumming are examples of cultural activities or ceremony that can support your mind and spirit.

Cancer prevention pathways

- > Healing from trauma
- > Being active
- > Eating well
- > Nurturing your mind and spirit



Cancer prevention pathways

Respecting tobacco

Respecting tobacco means respecting the cultural uses of the natural tobacco plant within some First Nations communities and reducing the use of addictive commercial tobacco like cigarettes and chewing tobacco. It can be challenging to quit commercial tobacco and it may take many attempts to reach this goal. To learn about medications that can support your decision to quit commercial tobacco, call First Nations Health Benefits at 1-855-550-5454.

Getting the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine

Getting the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is one of the best ways to prevent cervical cancer and other cancers of the anus, throat, mouth, penis, vagina and vulva. This vaccine helps your body prepare for and fight the virus that can trigger these kinds of cancer. The vaccine is available to all children at 11 to 12 years of age as well as eligible adults. Call First Nations Health Benefits at 1-855-550-5454 to learn more about vaccine coverage.

Reducing alcohol

Reducing alcohol can decrease your chances of getting cancer and other chronic diseases. Thinking about how much alcohol you drink, and how often and why you drink, is the first step in setting mindful goals, such as planning when to drink and setting a drink maximum based on factors specific to you and your circumstances. Talk to your health care provider about how much alcohol is best for you based on your age, your health and any other factors you and your health care provider consider important. Finding ways other than alcohol to manage stress, like going on a walk with a friend, can help. Reducing your alcohol consumption can have positive impacts on the holistic health of you, your family and your community.

Practicing sun safety

Practicing sun safety protects your skin and eyes and reduces your chances of having cancer of these body parts. Setting an example and helping children and youth practice sun safety is important, as sunburns during childhood greatly increase the risk of skin cancer later in life. A good way to catch skin cancer is to regularly check your skin for irregular-looking moles or marks. Make it a habit on your outings to put on sunscreen, slip on a shirt, slap on a hat, slide on sunglasses and seek shade!

Cancer prevention pathways

- > Respecting tobacco
- > Getting the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine
- > Reducing alcohol
- > Being sun safe



Cancer prevention:

Spotlight on the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is a very common virus that is easily spread through intimate touching and sexual activity. Some types of HPV infections can cause cancer. Getting HPV vaccines as a preteen or adult can help prevent these cancers from developing.

HPV infection is related to:

- > Almost all cases of cervical cancers
- > About 80%-90% of anal cancers
- > 40% of vaginal and vulvar cancers
- > 40%-50% of penile cancers
- > 25%-35% of mouth and throat cancers
- > Over 90% of genital warts

The HPV vaccine can help prevent cancers of the cervix, anus, mouth, throat, penis, vagina and vulva. The vaccine helps prepare the body to fight off an HPV infection if the body is later exposed to this virus.

All people benefit from the HPV vaccine. It is available to all children starting at 11 to 12 years of age to build immune protection early. HPV vaccines are given as two or three doses over a six-month time period. The HPV vaccine is well studied and safe.

HPV vaccination is offered for free to:

- > All children in Grade 6
- > Youth/adults born in 2006 or later who missed their Grade 6 vaccination
- > HIV positive people between the ages of 9 and 26
- > Transgender or two-spirit people between the ages of nine and 26
- > Males between the ages 9 and 26 who:
 - > are not yet sexually active but are questioning their sexual orientation
 - > have sex with other men

The HPV vaccine is helpful for all people.

To learn more, visit:

www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/human-papillomavirus-hpv-vaccines

Cancer prevention:

Spotlight on the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine

The HPV vaccine can help prevent cancers of the cervix, anus, mouth, throat, penis, vagina and vulva.

HPV vaccination is recommended starting at 11 to 12 years of age to build immune protection early.

The HPV vaccine is well studied and safe.



Mental wellness and culturally grounded care

Thinking about having a cancer screening test or waiting for screening results can bring up many thoughts and feelings. You may want to draw on the supports that are right for you. That could mean reaching out to a friend, health care provider, family member or Elder/cultural support person; going for a walk; or doing an activity that grounds you.

Cultural and traditional health practices can help you prepare for a cancer screening appointment. Talking to an Elder, receiving a brushing, or participating in ceremony before or after a cancer screening procedure might be helpful for you.

Talk to your health care providers about your wishes and decisions about cultural supports and traditional medicines. A key question you may wish to ask is whether there are any potential interactions between the medicines you are taking or may need to take.



Mental wellness and culturally grounded care

Friends, family, Elders, knowledge keepers and mental health providers can provide you with support during cancer screening.

Cultural and traditional health practices can help prepare you or make you feel safe for cancer screening.

Talk to your health care providers about your wishes and decisions.



Cultural safety in health care

Colonialism and discrimination continue today in the health care system. There is a need to improve cultural safety and humility in health care services, from cancer prevention and screening through to survivorship and end of life. Culturally grounded health resources like this flipbook are one way of supporting safer care.

Cultural safety is the outcome when a community member feels safe and respected when receiving health information and care in an environment free of racism and discrimination.

Person-centered decision-making is central to culturally safe care. Person-centered decision-making means community members receive reliable health information, have the safety and space to ask questions and share perspectives, and have their beliefs, priorities and decisions respected by their health providers. This flipbook aims to promote respectful conversations about cancer screening and to offer reliable and easy to understand information to support community members in their decisions about cancer screening.

Cultural safety in health care

The goal of cultural safety is for all people to feel safe and respected when receiving health information and care in an environment that is free of racism and discrimination.



Your rights when receiving health care

You have the right to receive respectful and high-quality care when accessing cancer screening. Your questions, priorities and concerns matter.



You have the right to:

- > Be treated with respect as the decision-maker about your treatment choices
- > Receive clear information about your health and treatment options
- > Give consent for health procedures and treatments
- > Decline or stop treatment at any time
- > Receive health care free of racism and discrimination
- > Receive health care that supports your cultural, traditional, spiritual and mental wellness needs
- > Bring a friend, family member or support person to appointments
- > Know that your personal information is private and can only be shared with your consent
- > Ask health providers as many questions as you need
- > Share your priorities and concerns about your health or treatment
- > Ask for a second assessment and opinion from another provider
- > Request your personal health information records

Your rights when receiving health care

- > Respect
- > Clear information
- > Consent
- > Privacy
- > Culturally relevant care
- > To ask questions
- > To bring a friend



Communicating concerns or feedback

If you have any concerns or feedback about the care you are receiving, share them with your health care provider as soon as possible.

You can also share experiences and feedback by reaching out to:

- > Patient navigators & liaisons (you can be connected to an Indigenous or Aboriginal patient navigator through [BC Cancer](#), your Regional Health Authority, or BC Women's and Children's Hospital)
- > Health care provider colleges (e.g., the College of Physicians and Surgeons of BC)
- > The Patient Care Quality Office of your local health authority
- > The FNHA Quality Care and Safety Office

BC Cancer:

www.bccancer.bc.ca/our-services/services/indigenous-cancer-control

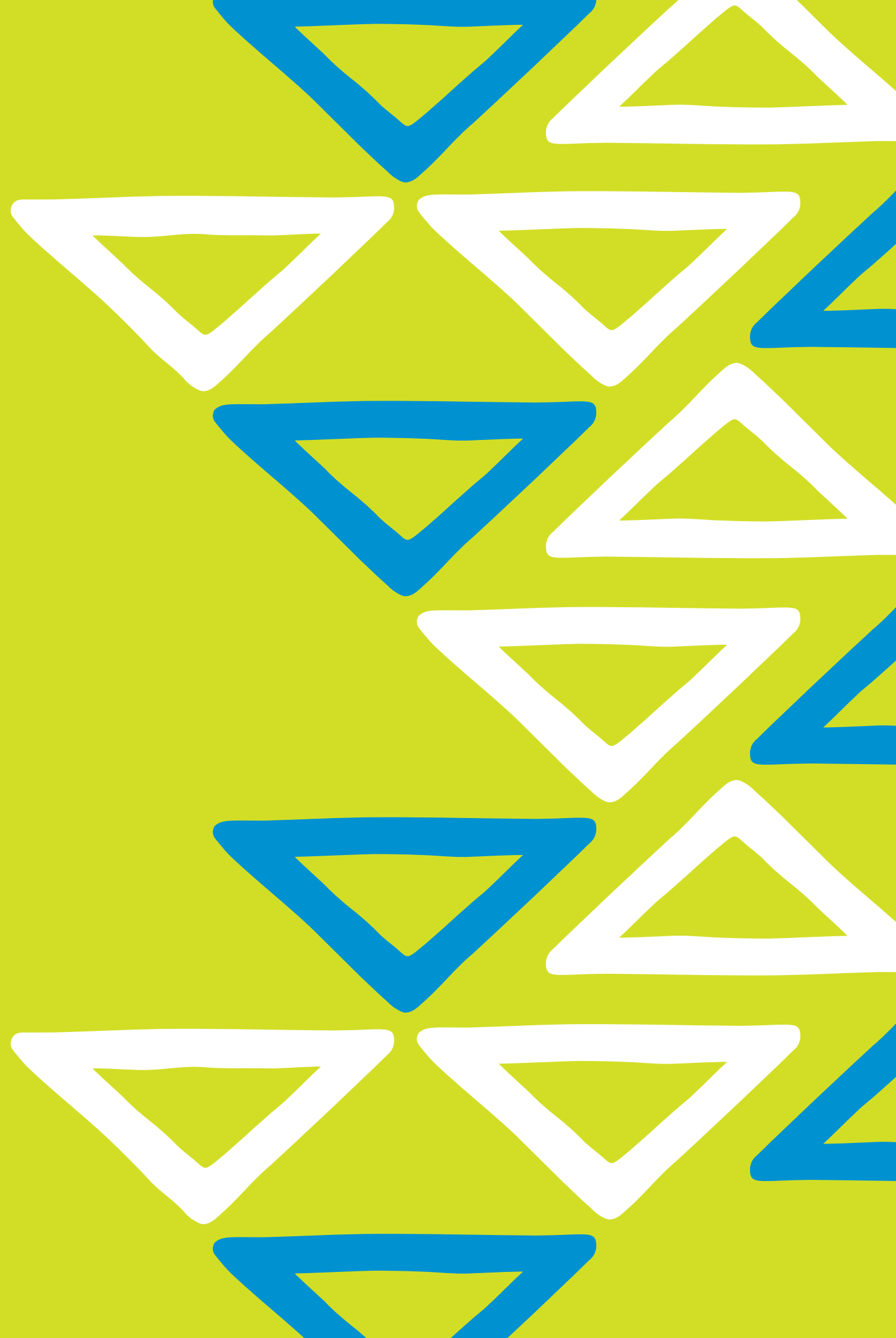


Communicating concerns or feedback

- > Directly to your health provider
- > Patient navigators & liaisons
- > Health care provider colleges
- > The Patient Care Quality Office of your local health authority
- > The FNHA Quality Care and Safety Office



CANCER & CANCER SCREENING



What is cancer?

Cancer is a disease that starts in our cells. It can occur in almost any organ or tissue of the body.

Cancer happens when a damaged or abnormal cell is not repaired by our body. The cancer cell is able to make copies of itself and these damaged cells can grow quickly and take over nearby tissues and organs.

Over time, cancer cells can clump together and spread to other parts of the body.

If you are not sure, speak with your health care provider.

Regular cancer screening is the best way to identify cancer early on. Knowing the results of your screening tests will enable you to make informed decisions about your health.

It is important to know that cancer can be:

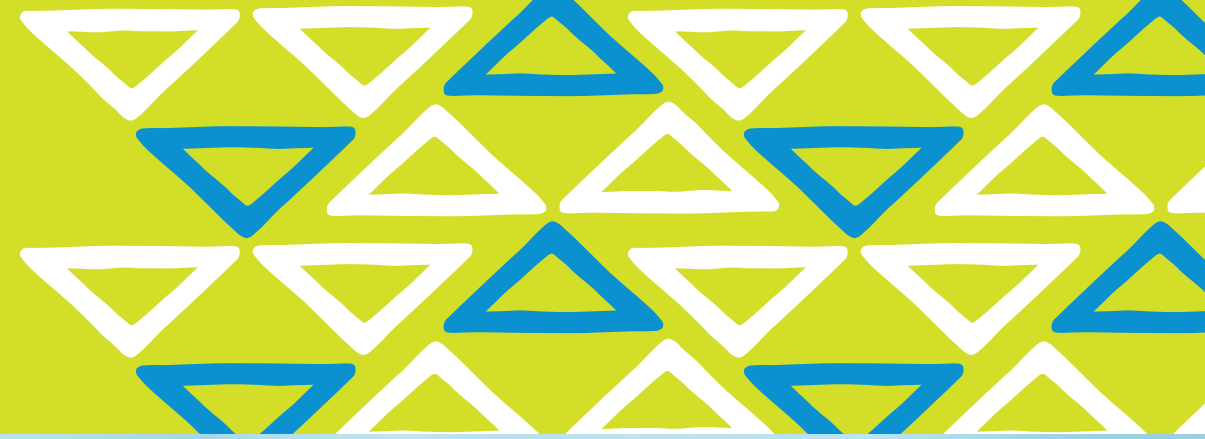
- > preventable
- > detectable (it can be found with tests)
- > treatable
- > beatable (you can recover from cancer)

Stay in touch with your body and see your health care provider as soon as possible if you have symptoms that could be a sign of cancer. Your symptoms may not be cancer at all, but a checkup and tests can help you know more.

Cancer symptoms could include things like:

- > A change in bowel or bladder habits
- > A sore that doesn't heal
- > Unusual bleeding or discharge
- > A lump or swelling of the breast or other body part
- > A nagging cough
- > Indigestion or trouble swallowing
- > Skin changes
- > A recent change in a wart or mole
- > Unexplained weight loss or gain
- > Unexplained fever, tiredness or pain

What is cancer?



Cancer is a disease that starts in our cells.

Cancer happens when a damaged or abnormal cell is not repaired by our body. The cancer cell is able to make copies of itself and can grow quickly and take over nearby tissues and organs.

Cancer can be:

- > preventable
- > detectable (it can be found with tests)
- > treatable
- > beatable (you can recover from cancer)

The earlier you can identify cancer, the better. That's why it's important to pay attention to potential cancer symptoms and to be screened regularly for cancer.



First Nations cancer trends in BC

In BC, we can learn from First Nations-specific cancer data. Trends in screening rates and cancer diagnoses are essential to understand the health and wellness of First Nations people across BC and to support strategies and services that better meet local needs.

We are seeing an increase in certain cancers among First Nations people. For many types of cancer, there is a lower chance of survival after diagnosis for First Nations people in BC. This signals a need to ask more questions about access to health care and the responsiveness of the health system.

It is important to note that as more First Nations people participate in cancer screening, the number of cancer diagnoses may increase. We expect to see an increase in cancer diagnoses when screening rates go up because the purpose of screening is to find cancer in the body. Without screening, some cancers would be left undiagnosed.

Cancer information that is important for First Nations people in BC to know about includes:

- > Rates of cervical cancer and colorectal cancer are higher among First Nations people in BC compared to other residents
- > First Nations men and women have an increasing rate of lung cancer

- > Breast cancer is one of the most commonly diagnosed cancers among First Nations women and people with breasts
- > Some cancers, such as cervical cancer, are diagnosed later in their progression in First Nations in BC, illustrating the need for greater access to primary care and screening
- > First Nations people in BC have a lower rate of overall cancer diagnoses compared to other residents, when looking at all types of cancer diagnoses together. This may be due to a number of reasons, including lower screening rates. The FNHA is exploring these reasons further
- > Access to care can be affected by physical distance, the availability of trusted health providers, the safety and trustworthiness of providers and service, and individuals' past experiences with health services
- > Early access to screening and treatment may contribute to positive health outcomes, such as increased survival rates after diagnosis. More work is needed to support cultural safety and humility in the health system, and to increase the availability of screening and care in all areas throughout BC, including in rural and remote areas

Source:

www.fnha.ca/WellnessSite/WellnessDocuments/Cancer-and-First-Nations-Peoples-in-BC.PDF

First Nations cancer trends in BC

There are higher rates of the following cancers among First Nations people in BC:

- > Colorectal cancer
- > Cervical cancer

For many types of cancer, there is a lower chance of survival after diagnosis for First Nations people in BC.

More research needs to be done on access to care and cultural safety.



What is cancer screening?

There are many ways to screen for cancer

Cancer screening looks at what's going on inside your body as you age. It can involve X-ray images of body parts, or analyzing samples of blood, cells or stool.

The goal of cancer screening is to find cancer early, before you have symptoms and before the cancer has a chance to grow and spread. Early detection can help improve your chances for effective treatment and recovery.

Cancer screening is available to people in specific age groups or who have certain known risk factors. You may need to get cancer screening more often if you have a family history of cancer or have higher personal health risks. Your health care

provider can let you know what kind of screenings you should have and how often you should be screened.

Getting screened regularly can bring peace of mind for you and your family.

Many cancer screening tests come back with no concerns.

If your cancer screening test results come back with irregularities, this does not mean that you have cancer. It means more testing is needed to learn more about what is happening in your body. Talk to your health care provider about what the screening results mean for you and the potential next steps.

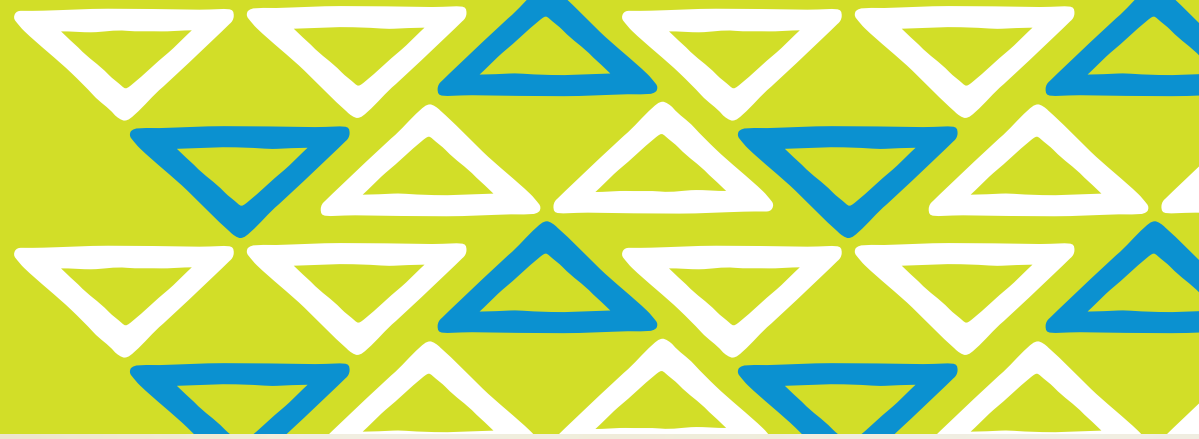
What is cancer screening?

Cancer screening refers to different tests used to look for signs of cancer in your body.

The goal of cancer screening is to find cancer early, before you have symptoms and before the cancer has a chance to grow and spread.

Many cancers can be treated more easily and with better chances of a good recovery if they are found early or before they have a chance to develop.

Even if you do not have a family history of cancer, it's important to get regular cancer screenings to protect your health.



Preparing for screening

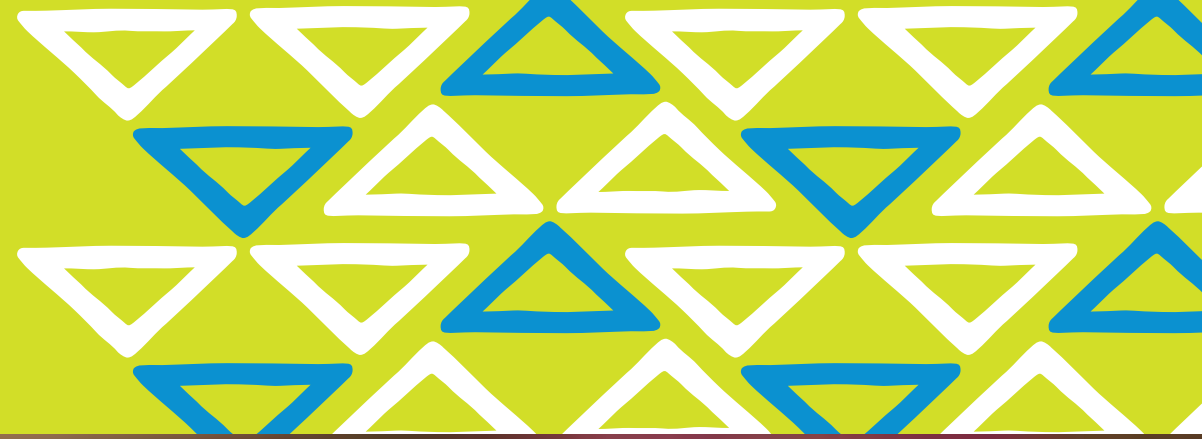
Going to a cancer screening appointment is an important decision for your health and wellness. However, you may experience a range of feelings when you think about cancer screening.

To help you with your decision or to prepare for your appointment, you may wish to:

- > Talk to a trusted primary care provider about cancer screening and ask as many questions as needed
- > Bring a friend or family member to your appointment
- > Talk to an Elder, cultural support or patient navigator
- > Prepare for the screening with ceremony
- > Try breathing exercises to stay relaxed
- > Ask for a second staff member to be in the room as a witness
- > Plan a celebration after your appointment
- > Know you can share concerns or report a health care harm about unsafe care
- > Remember you have the right to pause, stop or reconsider health care at any point
- > Reflect on your role and control as an expert and key decision-maker in your own health and health care choices

Cultural and traditional health practices can help prepare you or make you feel safe for regular cancer screening. It may be helpful to talk with an Elder, or prepare with smudging, brushing or ceremony.

Preparing for screening



- > Talk to a trusted primary care provider
- > Talk to an Elder, cultural support or navigator
- > Bring a friend to your appointment
- > Prepare with ceremony
- > Try breathing exercises
- > Plan a celebration
- > Ask for a witness
- > Share your questions/concerns
- > Know you have the right to pause, stop or reconsider care
- > Reflect on your role and control as an expert in your own health



Cancer screening programs in BC

BC Cancer offers provincial screening programs for breast, cervical colon and lung cancer in BC. Screening is free for eligible individuals.

If you live in an area that requires travel to access screening services or a lab, transportation and accommodation coverage may be available to you with documentation of appointment or a health care provider's referral. Check with your benefits provider or call First Nations Health Benefits at 1-855-550-5454.

Breast cancer screening = A mammogram (an X-ray of your breasts)

- > Available to BC women and people with breasts who are 40 and older
- > Screening is available every two years if you are between the ages of 40 and 49 and recommended every two years if you are between 50 and 74 with no family history of breast cancer. Yearly screening is recommended for women and people with breasts between the ages of 40 and 74 who have a first-degree relative (mother, daughter or sister) who has had breast cancer
- > Book an appointment yourself by calling 1-800-663-9203
- > Mammograms can be done at a hospital, clinic or mammography van

Cervical cancer screening = A Pap test (a swab of your cervix)

- > Screening is recommended every three years for women and people with a cervix who are between the ages of 25 and 69
- > Book a Pap test appointment with your local health care provider or walk-in clinic
- > [Options for Sexual Health](#) has over 60 clinics in BC where you can get a Pap test. Call 1-800-739-7367 for more information

Options for Sexual Health

www.optionsforsexualhealth.org/care/clinic-finder/

Colon cancer screening = A fecal immunochemical test (FIT) kit (a test of your stool)

- > A fecal immunochemical test (FIT) is recommended every two years for most people between 50 and 74 years of age. Individuals with a personal history of adenomas or who have a significant family history of colon cancer may need a colonoscopy every three to five years. Talk to your health care provider to learn when you should start screening
- > Talk to a health care provider to get a FIT form. You will need to bring the FIT form to a lab. The lab will let you know how to complete the FIT
- > Call 1-877-70-COLON if you can't find a lab in your community
- > You can do the test yourself in the privacy of your home and bring it back to the lab when done
- > If you have a family history of colon cancer or known risk factors, you may need a colonoscopy (a different kind of test) every three to five years. Talk to your health care provider to find out if this applies to you.

Lung cancer screening = a low-dose CT lung scan (a picture of your lungs)

- > Lung screening is available for people between the ages of 55 and 74 who have a smoking history of 20 years or more (including people who currently smoke and people who have smoked in the past)
- > Call 1-877-717-5864 to talk to a lung screening team member to assess your overall health. If you have an increased risk of lung cancer, you may be asked to have low dose X-ray pictures of your lungs taken
- > A lung scan is done at a hospital

Talk with a community health nurse, nurse practitioner or doctor to learn more about cancer screening. You can also call the First Nations Health Authority First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day program (1-855-344-3800) or 8-1-1.

Cancer screening programs in BC



Breast cancer screening – Mammogram

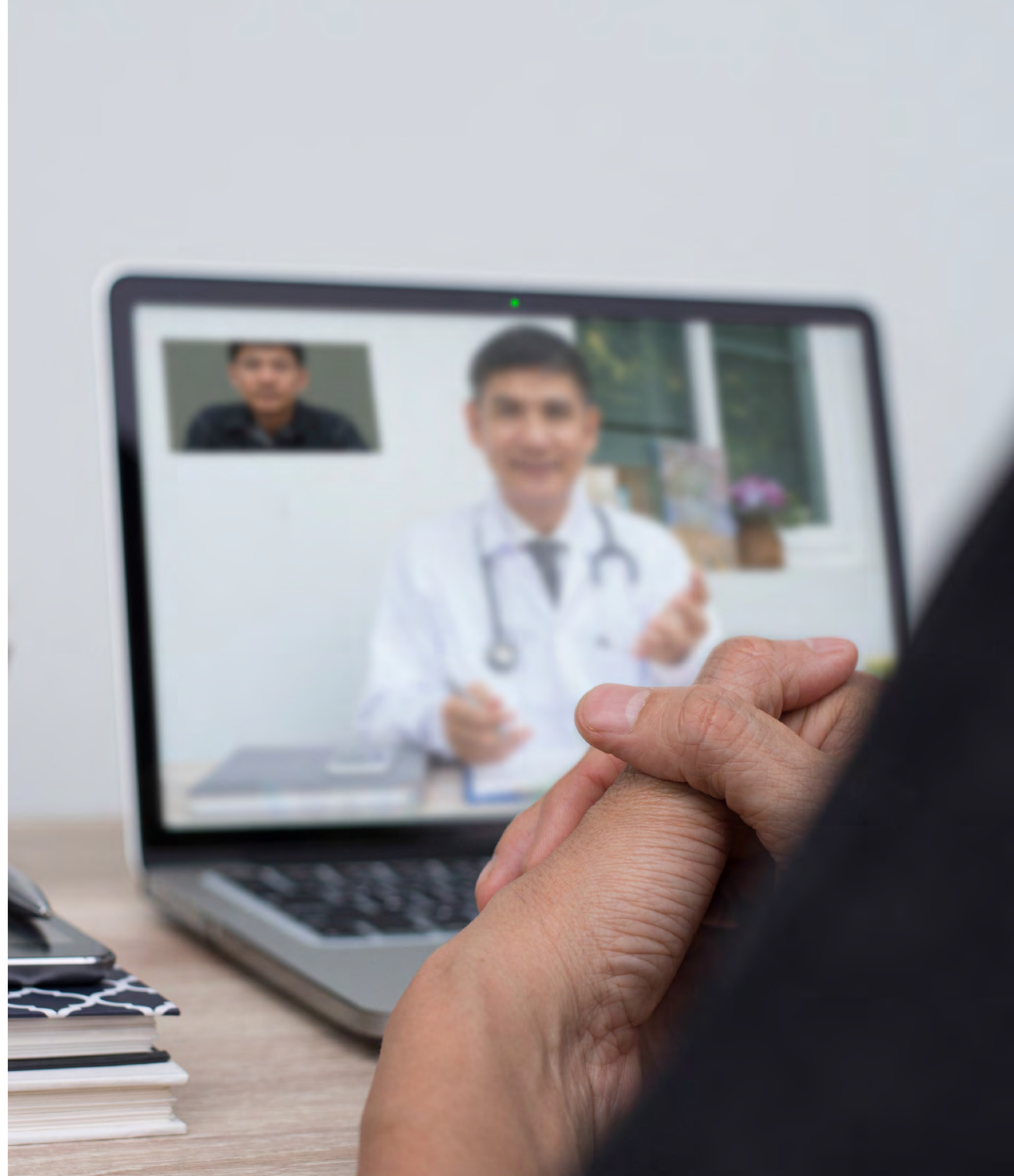
Cervical cancer screening – Pap test

Colon cancer screening – FIT kit

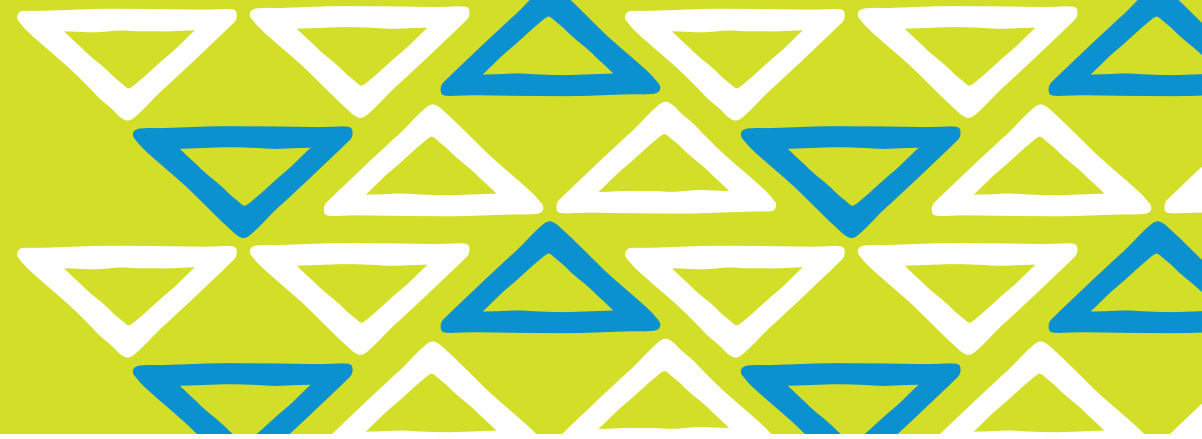
Lung cancer screening – CT lung scan

Talk with a community health nurse, nurse practitioner or doctor to learn more about cancer screening.

If you don't have a trusted health care provider, call the First Nations Health Authority First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day program (1-855-344-3800) or 8-1-1.



What is diagnostic testing?



If a cancer screening test comes back with an unusual result and your doctor believes that further tests are needed, you will be referred for diagnostic testing. **Diagnostic tests gather more information about what is going on in your body.** They may involve a range of tests and could include collecting cell samples that will allow doctors to see what the cells in your body are doing using a microscope.

Being referred for diagnostic testing does not necessarily mean that you have cancer.

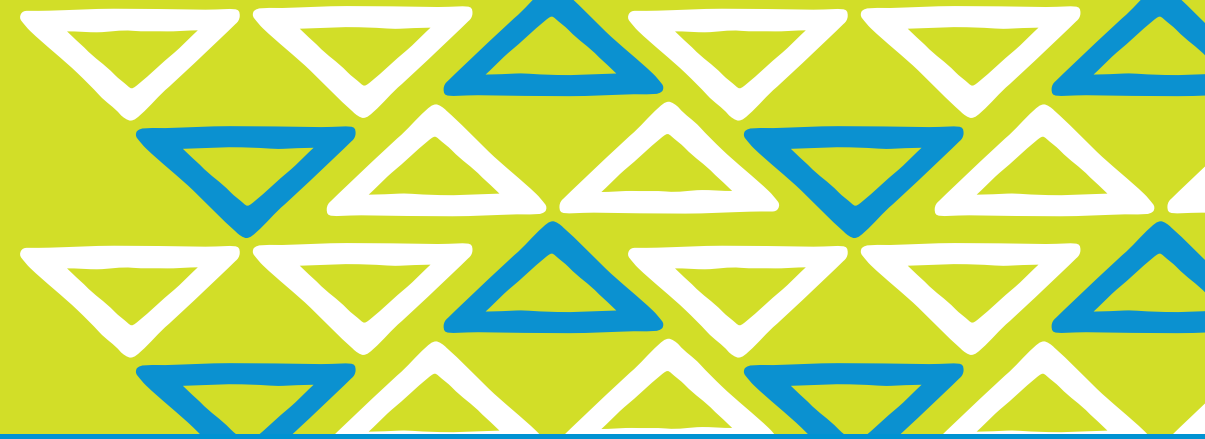
Some cancers can be treated more easily and with a better chance of recovery when found early with diagnostic tests. Some cancers can be prevented if found and treated early.

A biopsy is a test to collect cells from a body part for analysis. This test is done by putting an instrument into the specific body part, like a needle into your breast tissue.

Some tests may be uncomfortable. Be sure to ask if there are ways you can be made more comfortable during the test.

Talk with your health care provider about any questions you have about cancer screening and diagnostic testing. Refer to the “Your rights” and “Preparing for screening” sections for other ideas.

What is diagnostic testing?



Diagnostic testing is follow-up testing if you have an unusual screening result.

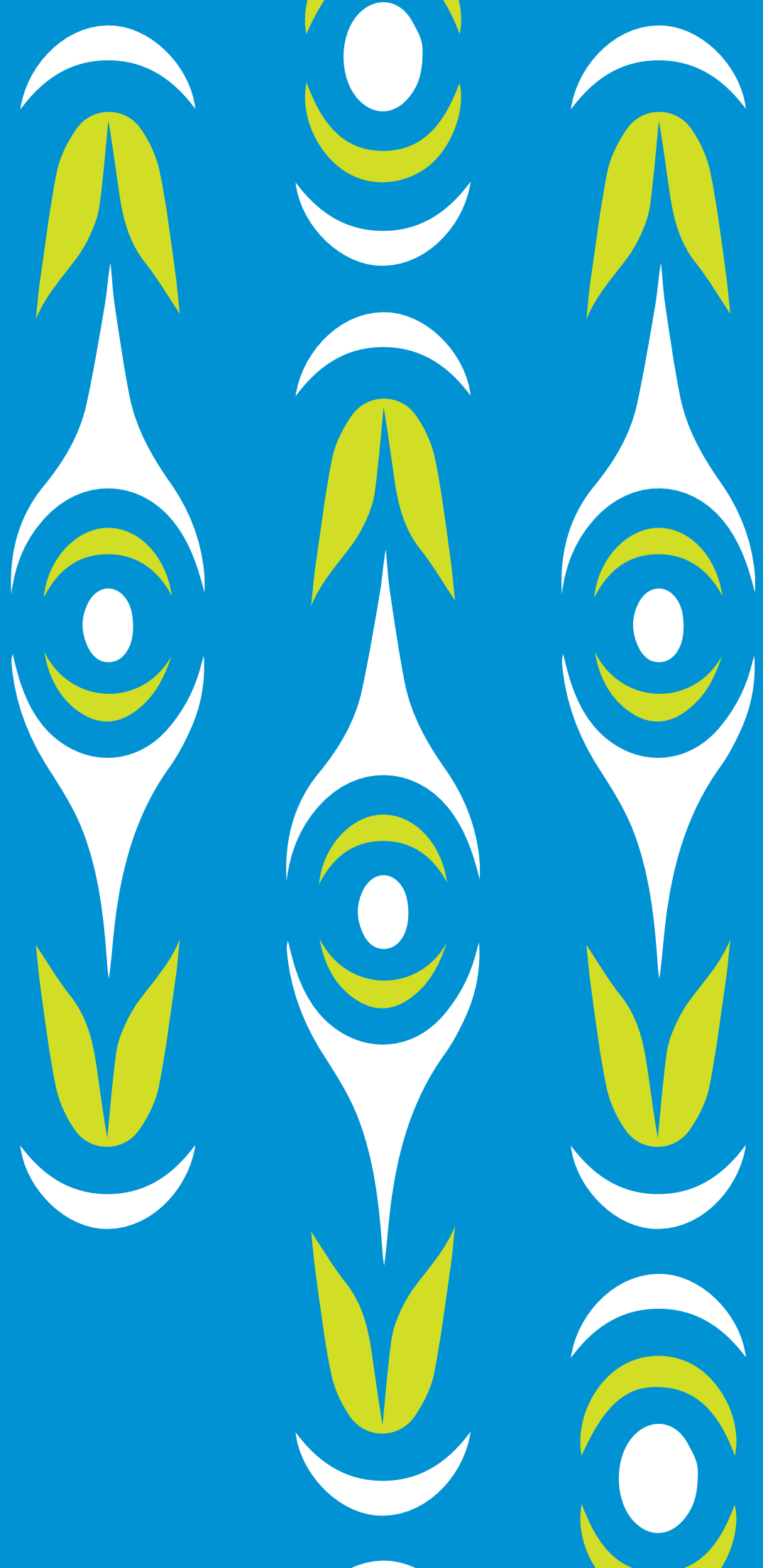
Being referred for diagnostic testing does not necessarily mean you have cancer. It means more information about your cells is needed.

Diagnostic tests often involve collecting cells and sending them to a lab to be looked at with a microscope.

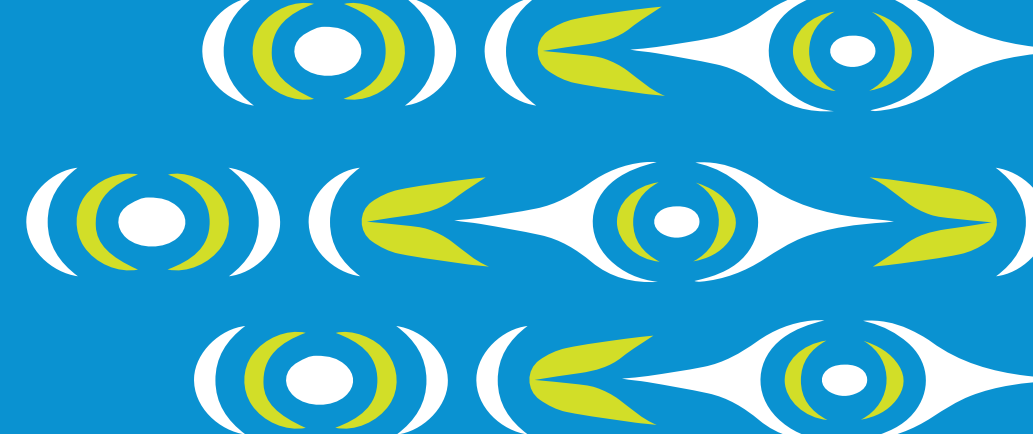
Some cancers can be treated more easily and with better chances of a good recovery when found early with diagnostic tests.



BREAST CANCER SCREENING



Breast screening



Breasts are soft organs on the chest that primarily contain fatty and glandular tissues.

Breast cancer screening is called a mammogram. Mammograms are X-rays of the breasts. Getting regular mammograms is useful because it allows health care providers to compare images of your breast tissue over time and identify any changes early on.

Mammograms can find potentially cancerous lumps when they are very small and you cannot feel them. Finding cancerous lumps when they are small means the cancer is less likely to have spread and is more likely to be treated with good results.

Mammograms are available for women and people with breasts who are 40 years of age and older in BC. A mammogram is recommended every two years, but if your mom, sister or daughter has had breast cancer, you should be screened every year.

A referral from a health care provider is not needed. You can call **1-800-663-9203** to **book your own appointment.**

Breast screening

Mammograms are available for women and people with breasts who are 40 years of age and older.

A mammogram is recommended every two years, but if your mom, sister or daughter has had breast cancer, you should be screened every year.

You do not need a referral from your doctor for a mammogram.

Honour yourself, your family, your community and your ancestors – make breast cancer screening a regular part of your wellness, for you and the ones you love.



What to expect

A mammogram is done at a special clinic. You will be asked to undress from the waist up to have the X-rays done. The health care provider will help you place your breast on a special X-ray machine. A plastic plate will be pressed down slowly on your breast to hold it in place for up to 10 seconds.

Although the pressing may feel a bit uncomfortable, it is done quickly. Two pictures of each breast are taken.

Seeing a trusted health care provider, bringing a friend or requesting that a witness in the room are all ways to be supported during this procedure. Please refer to the **“Preparing for screening”** section of this flipbook for more ideas.



What to expect

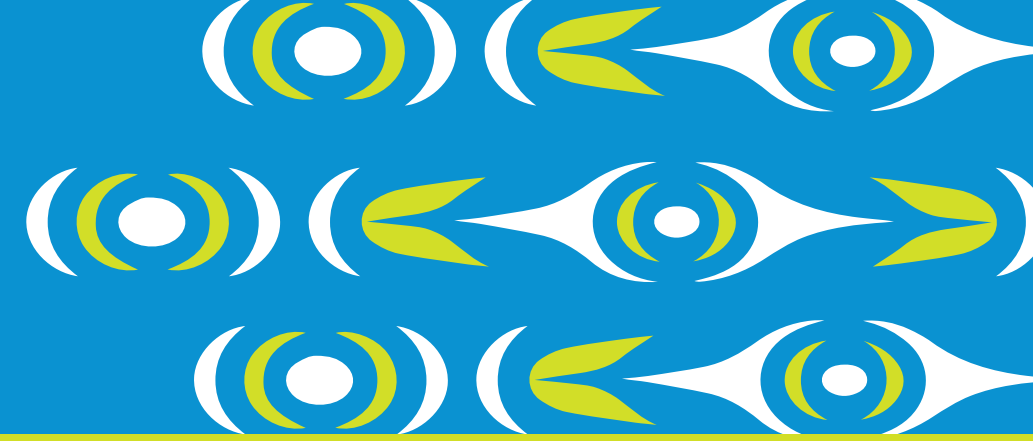
A mammogram is done at a special clinic.

The health care provider will help you place your breast on a special X-ray machine.

A plastic plate will be pressed down slowly on your breast to hold it in place for up to 10 seconds.



Breast diagnostics tests



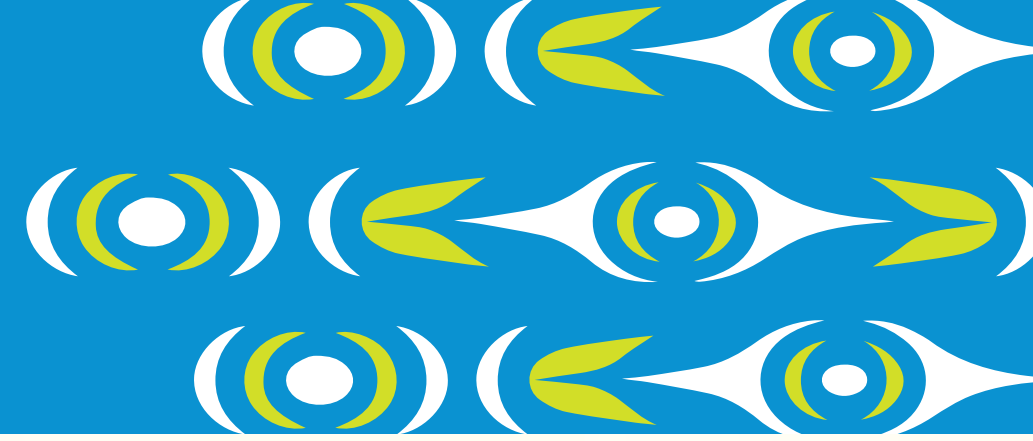
After your screening mammogram, more testing may be needed, depending on your results. Keep in mind that more testing does not necessarily mean you have cancer. Over 95 per cent of those who are called for additional tests do not have cancer.

Diagnostic tests can include:

- > **Diagnostic mammogram:** Takes X-rays of the area of concern
- > **Ultrasound:** Uses sound waves to produce an image of the area
- > **Needle biopsy:** Takes a sample of tissue from the area of concern



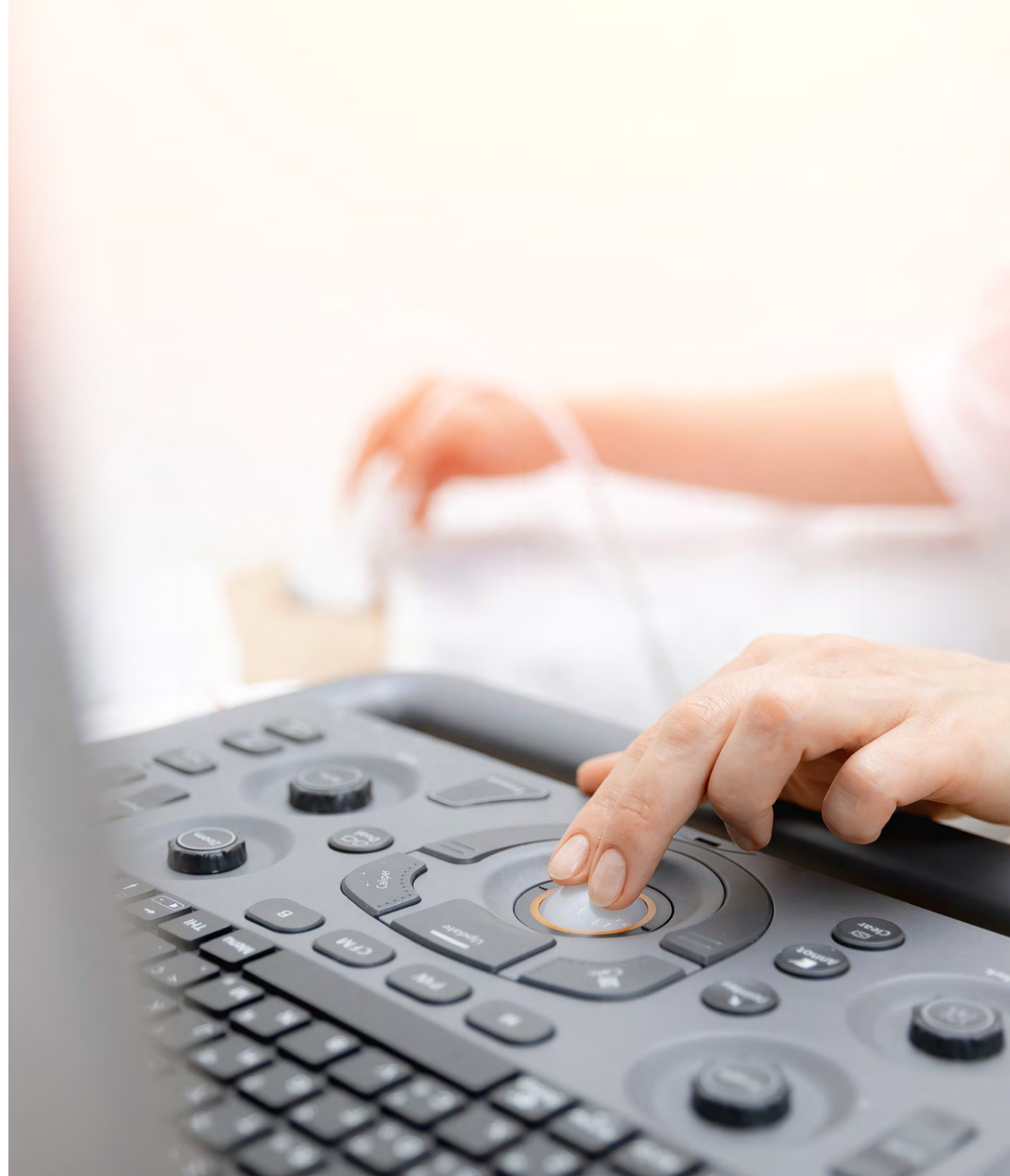
Breast diagnostics tests



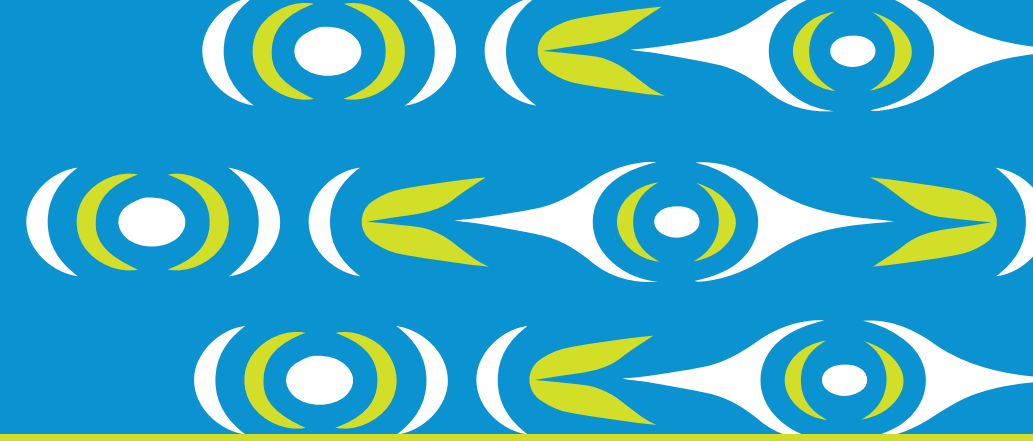
After your screening mammogram, more testing may be needed, depending on your results.

Diagnostic tests can include:

- > **Diagnostic mammograms:** Takes X-rays of the area of concern
- > **Ultrasound:** Uses sound waves to produce an image of the area
- > **Needle biopsy:** Takes a sample of tissue from the area of concern



Be breast aware – Signs of breast cancer



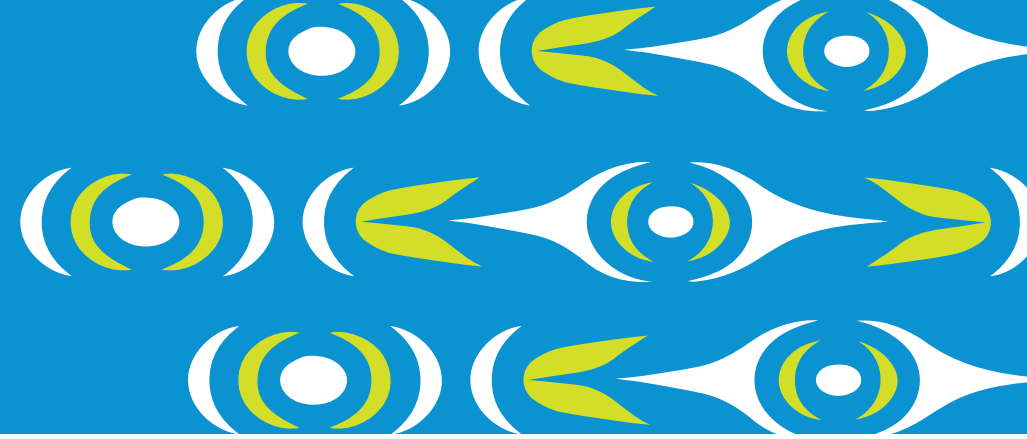
It's important to be aware of any changes in your breasts and to watch for any unusual signs.

If you notice something different in the way that your breasts look or feel, talk to your health care provider right away.

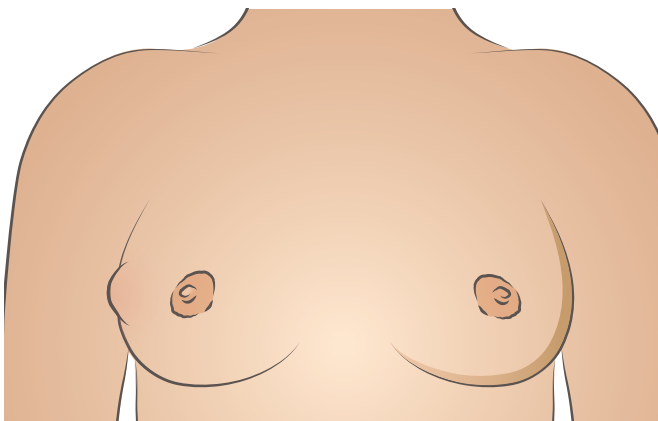
Examples of changes to look for include:

- > Lumps or thickening in the breast
- > Fluid leaking from the nipple
- > Redness
- > Inflammation
- > Dimpling or puckering
- > Skin change, such as a spot that wasn't there before
- > Change in breast size or shape
- > Nipple change

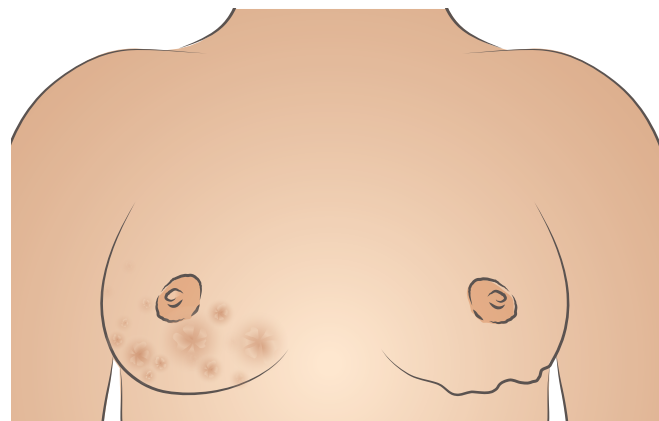
Be breast aware - Signs of breast cancer



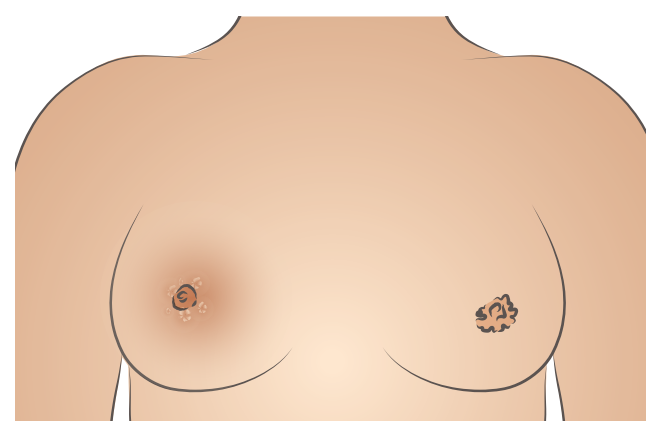
It's important to be aware of any changes in your breasts and to watch for any unusual signs. If you notice something different in the way that your breasts look or feel, talk to your health care provider right away.



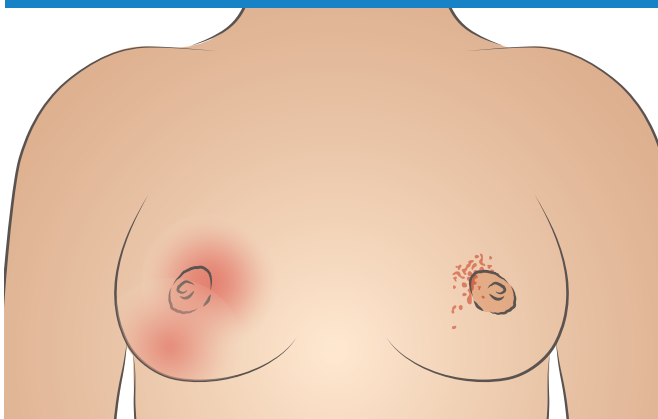
Lumping, thickening,
or hardening of breast



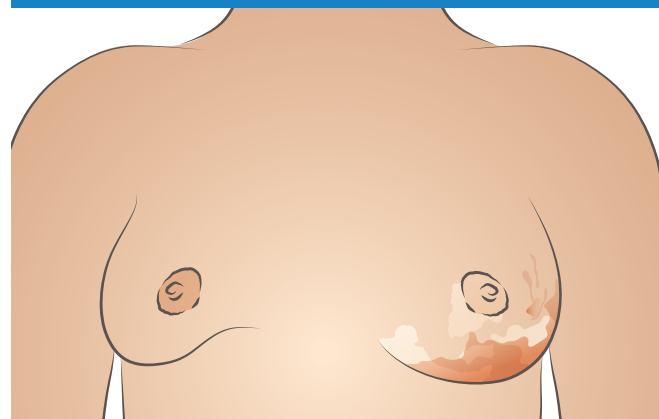
Dimpling or
puckering of breast



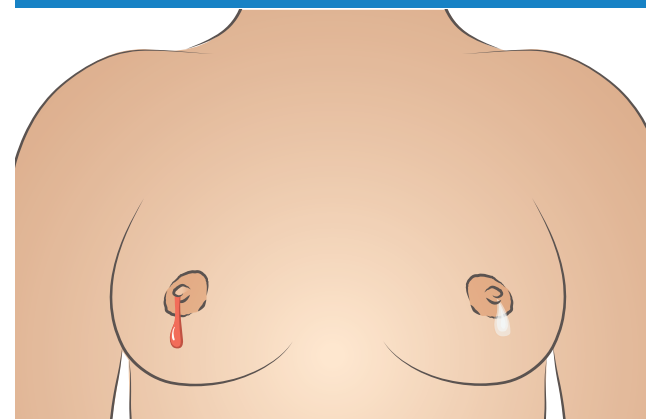
Change in size or
shape of nipple



Appearance of rashes
or redness



Skin change or change
in breast size or shape



Fluid leaking from nipple
(bloody discharge or clear)

CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING



Cervical screening

The cervix is a doughnut-shaped organ that connects the vagina and the uterus. Menstrual blood during your period comes from your uterus and is shed through your cervix.

Cervical cancer screening is done with a Pap test. A Pap test involves taking a swab of your cervical cells, which are then sent to a lab for analysis with a microscope. A Pap test can find pre-cancerous or cancer cells in the cervix. If these unusual cells are found and treated early, cervical cancer can be stopped from growing and you have better chances of a good recovery.

Women and people with a cervix who are between the ages of 25 and 69 should get a Pap test every three years.

Making time to get regular Pap tests is an important step in taking charge of your health. Pap tests are done in a clinic.

You should have a Pap test if:

- > You've been through menopause and are under 70
- > You've ever been sexually active, even if you are not sexually active right now
- > You've had the HPV vaccine
- > You're in a same-sex relationship
- > You're a transgender or two-spirit person with a cervix

Currently, First Nations people in BC have a higher rate of cervical cancer than other residents.

Cervical screening

Women and people with a cervix who are between the ages of 25 and 69 should get a Pap test every three years.

Pap tests are done in a clinic.

Honour yourself, your family, your community and your ancestors – make cervix screening a regular part of your wellness, for you and the ones you love.



HONOUR YOURSELF

Screen for cervical cancer regularly.
Early detection can save your life.



What to expect

A Pap test can be done by a doctor, nurse practitioner, naturopath, midwife or nurse in a clinic space.

You will be asked to undress from the waist down and given a sheet to cover you. You will be asked to lie back on a clinic table with your feet up. Your health care provider will gently put an instrument called a speculum in your vagina to see your cervix. The provider will collect cells from your cervix with a small brush or spatula. While the process is not usually painful, it can be uncomfortable. The cell samples will be sent to a lab for examination. The health care provider may also do a pelvic exam and feel around your uterus and vaginal area for any unusual lumps.

Seeing a trusted health care provider, bringing a friend or requesting that there be a witness in the room are all ways to be supported during this procedure. Please refer to the “Preparing for screening” section of this flipbook for more ideas.

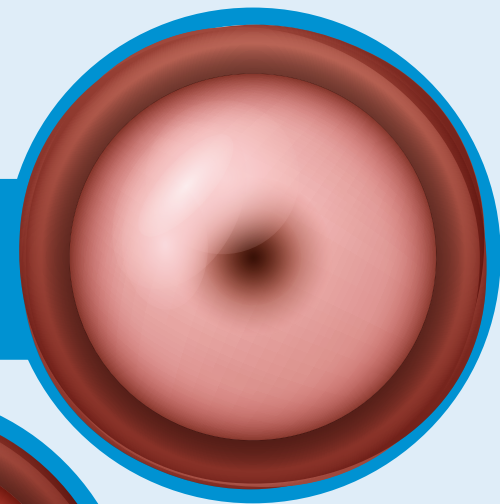
What to expect

The health care provider will collect cells from your cervix with a small brush or spatula. The sample of cells will be sent to a lab to be looked at.

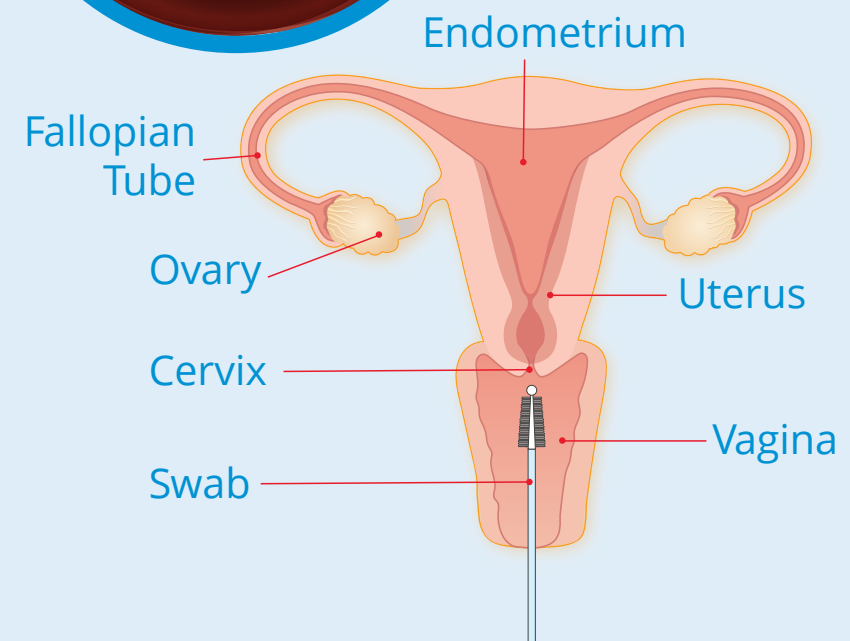
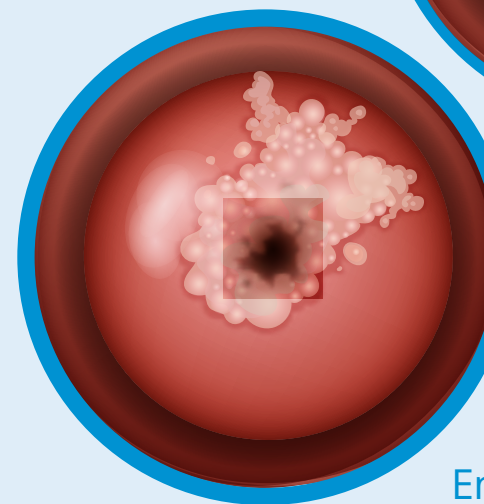
A health care provider may also feel around your uterus and vaginal area for any unusual lumps.

What is a Pap Test?

Normal Cervix

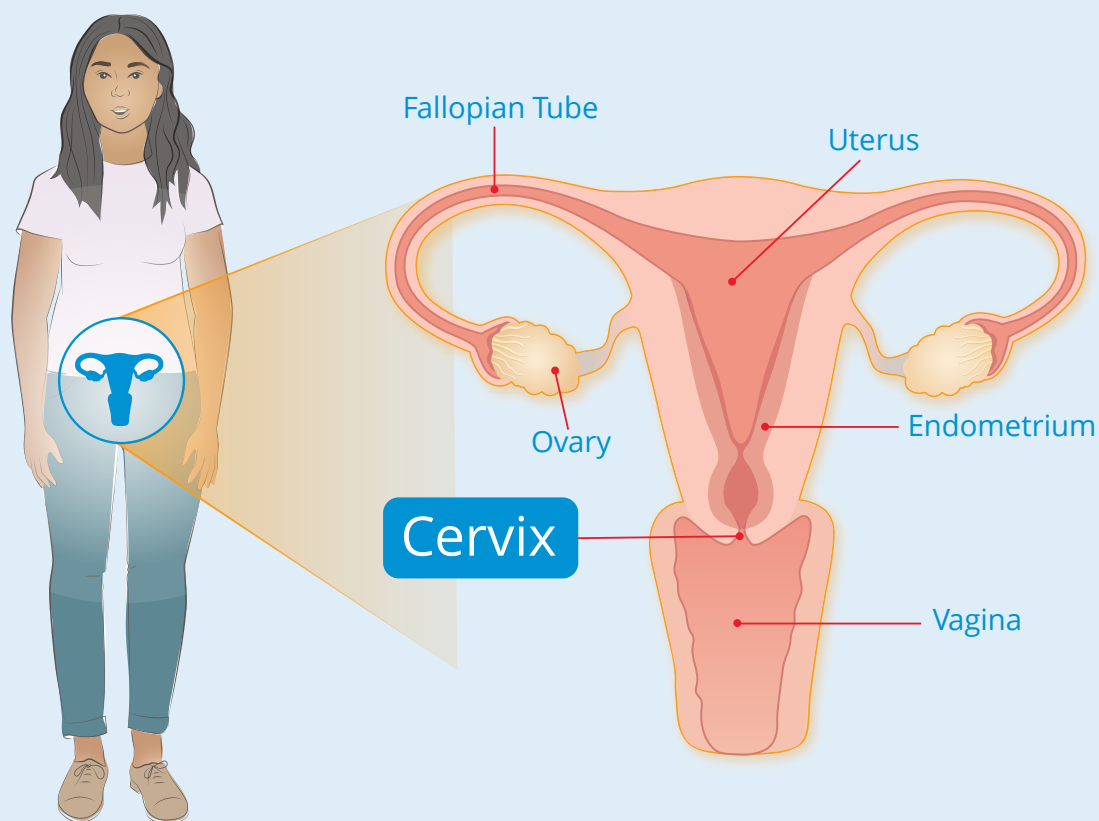


Cancerous Cervix



Cervical diagnostics tests

Depending on the results of your Pap test, more testing may be needed. Remember that a call for more testing does not necessarily mean you have cancer.



Follow-up testing can include:

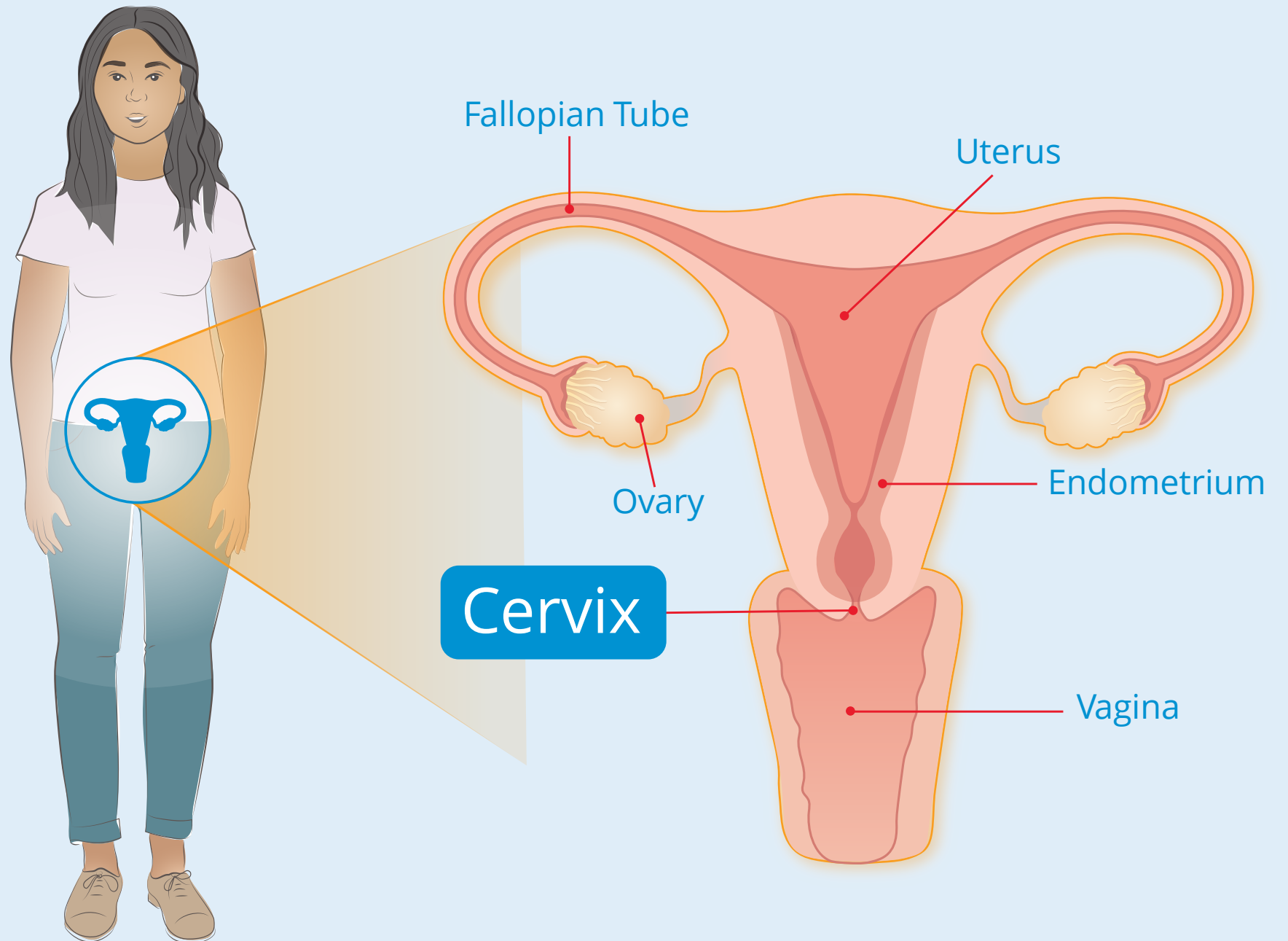
- > A follow-up Pap test in six months to monitor for mild cell changes
- > A colposcopy test: An examination like a Pap test where your health care provider uses a magnifying instrument to look closely at your cervix. Vinegar or iodine is applied to the cervix to see any unusual spots better. The health care provider may also remove a small piece of tissue from your cervix and send it to a lab for analysis. You may feel discomfort or cramping, but no freezing or medication is needed

Cervical diagnostics tests

After your Pap test, more testing may be needed depending on your results.

A colposcopy test is like a Pap test but uses a magnifying instrument for a health care provider to look closely at your cervix. The health care provider may remove a small piece of your cervix tissue for further analysis in a lab.

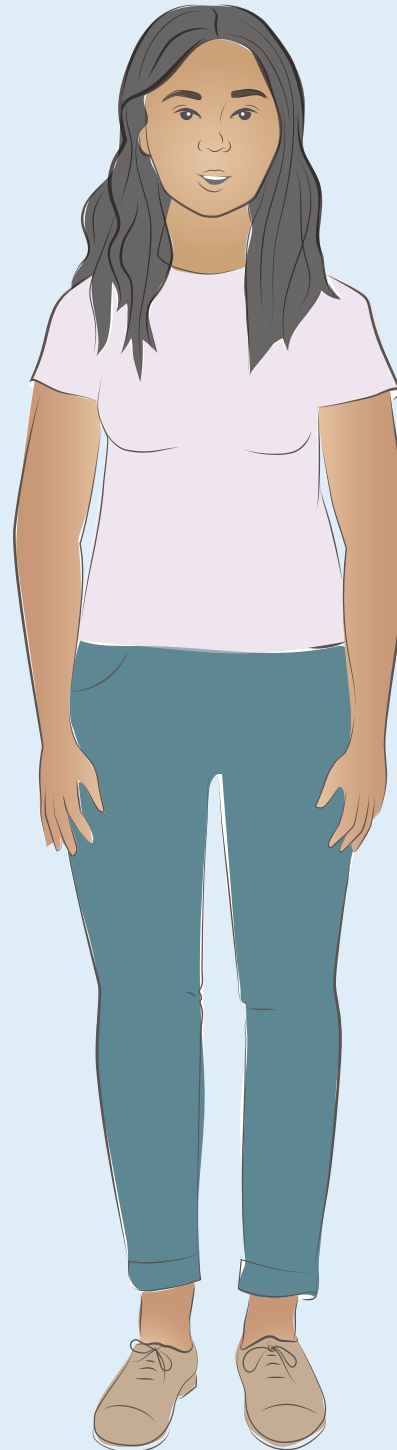
A colposcopy is like a pap test but uses a magnifying instrument for a provider to look closely at your cervix.



Be cervix aware - Signs of cervical cancer

If you notice any unusual changes in your vaginal area, contact your health care provider as soon as possible. Signs of cervical cancer to look for include:

- > Unusual vaginal bleeding (such as bleeding between periods or after sex)
- > Unusual or persistent vaginal discharge
- > Pelvic pain, or pain during sexual intercourse



Symptoms vary from one person to another, but may include abnormal:

Pelvic pain

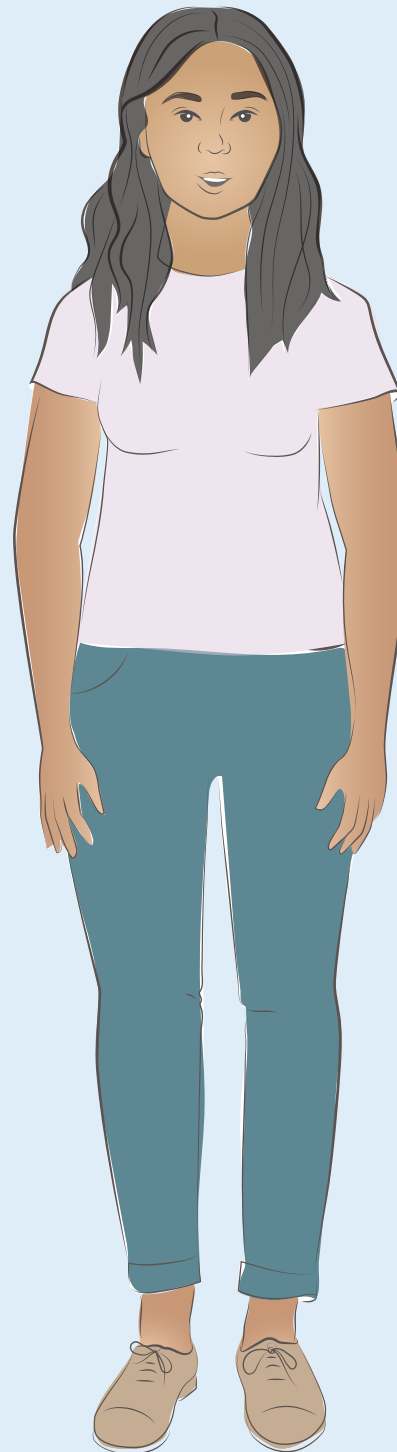
Vaginal bleeding

Vaginal discharge

Be cervix aware - Signs of cervical cancer

Talk to your health care provider as soon as possible if you notice any of these changes:

- > Unusual vaginal bleeding (such as bleeding between periods or after sex)
- > Unusual or persistent vaginal discharge
- > Pelvic pain, or pain during sexual intercourse



Symptoms vary from one person to another, but may include abnormal:

Pelvic pain

Vaginal discharge

Vaginal bleeding

COLON CANCER SCREENING



Colon screening

The colon is also known as the large intestine or bowel. It is the lower part of your digestive system where your body absorbs water and nutrients from broken down food and moves waste out of your body as stool.

Colon screening helps to catch cancer at its early stages. Early detection is key when it comes to colon cancer and can lead to more successful treatments. When colon cancer is found at its earliest form, there is a 90 percent chance of recovery and survival.

First Nations men and women in BC have higher rates of colon cancer than the other residents, making it very important to screen for colon cancer.

Colon screening is recommended every two years for people between the ages of 50 and 74.

Colon cancer screening can be done using a fecal immunochemical test (FIT), which involves collecting a sample of your stool to be looked at under a microscope for signs of blood.

For people with a significant family history of colon cancer or with a personal history of colon growths (polyps), a different screening test called a colonoscopy is recommended every three to five years, depending on each person's situation.

A referral from a doctor or nurse practitioner is needed for both types of screening.

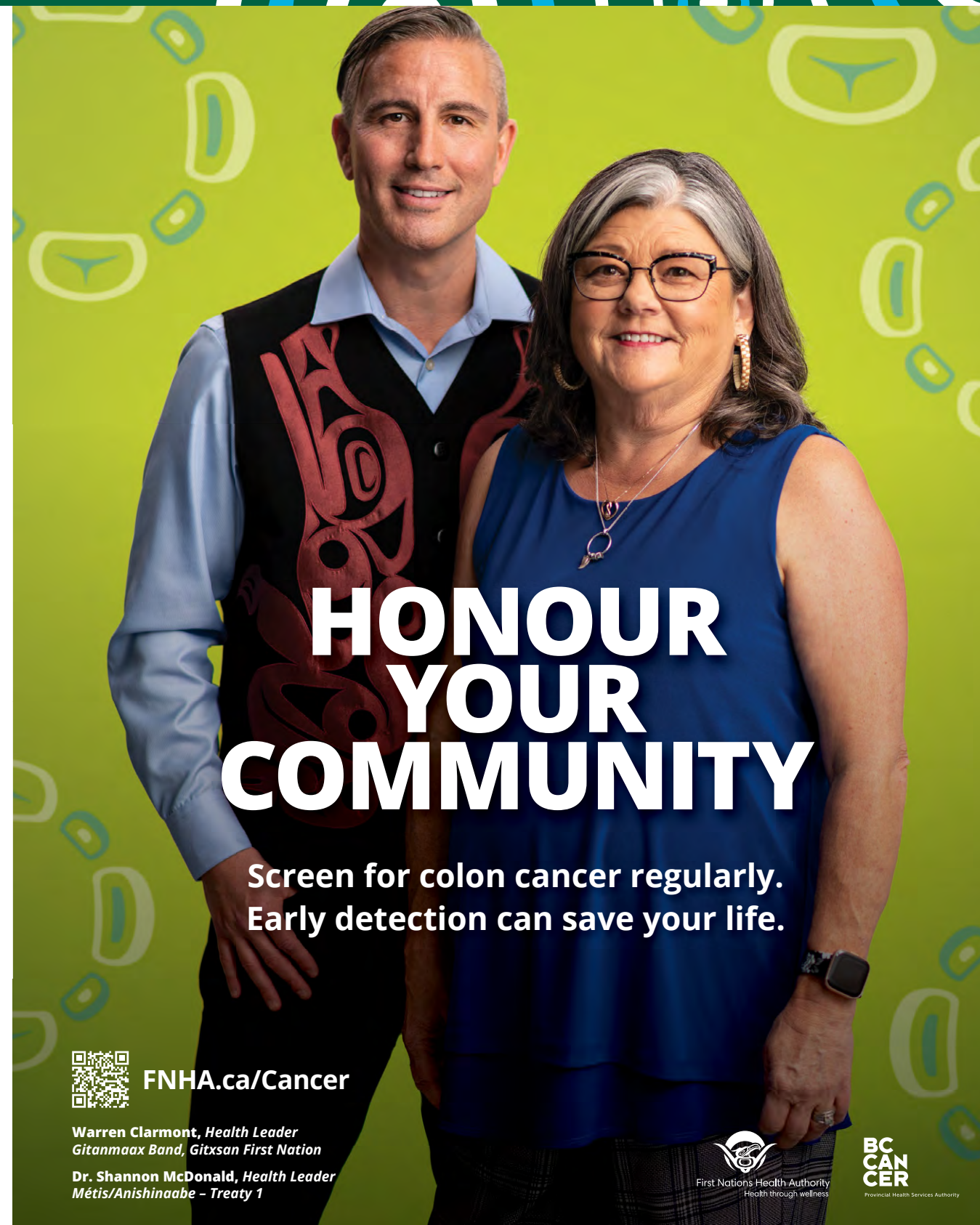
Colon screening

Colon cancer screening is recommended for people between the ages of 50 and 74.

Colon cancer screening for most people is called a fecalimmunochemical test (FIT) and should be done every two years.

For people with a significant family history of colon cancer or with a personal history of growths (polyps), a different screening test called a colonoscopy is recommended every three to five years.

Honour yourself, your family, your community and your ancestors – make colon screening a part of your wellness, for you and the ones you love.



[FNHA.ca/Cancer](https://fnha.ca/cancer)

Warren Clarmont, Health Leader
Gitanmaax Band, Gitxsan First Nation

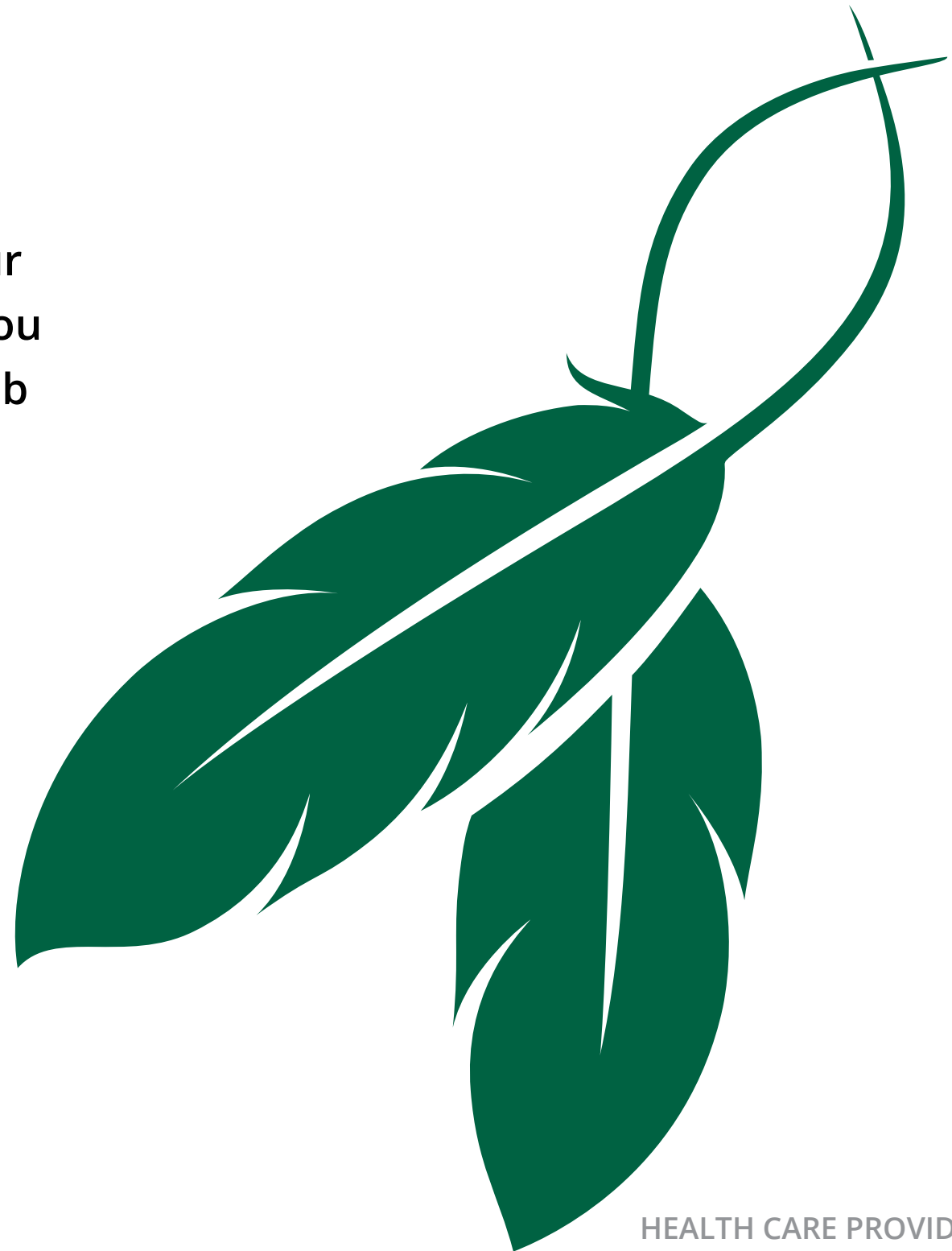
Dr. Shannon McDonald, Health Leader
Métis/Anishinaabe – Treaty 1



What to expect

Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)

You can do a FIT wherever you feel most comfortable, including in the privacy of your home. Your health care provider will give you a FIT kit lab requisition form to bring to a lab near you. You can bring the kit home to collect your stool sample and then return it to the lab. There are no special food or medication changes needed before the test. FIT kits need to be returned to the lab in person, not by mail.



What to expect

Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) Kit:

Your health care provider will give you a FIT kit request form to bring to a lab near you. You can bring the kit home to collect your stool (poop) sample and then return it to the lab.

1. Check

Date of birth: 15/NOV/1963
John
Smith

Your Date of Birth Your Name

2. Prepare

3. Poop

4. Collect

Snap closed

5. Drop off

Store completed sample in refrigerator, but not the freezer, until the sample is returned to the lab (within 7 days).

Do not allow sample to freeze or become too hot.

BEST WITHIN
2
DAYS

RETURN TO
lab

What to expect

Colonoscopy

This screening is done at a hospital. The entire visit takes between two and three hours, and the procedure itself will take 20-45 minutes. **You will be given instructions about what you can eat and drink before the test. You will also be given a prescription for a laxative that you will need to pick up from a pharmacy several days before the colonoscopy.** You will take the laxative to clear the stool out of your body so that your colon is easy to see.

On the day of the screening, you will be asked to put on a hospital gown. You will be given medication through a vein to make

you sleepy and help you feel comfortable during the procedure. You will be asked to lie down and a doctor will put a tube with a small camera into your anus and up into your colon to see inside. Tissue samples or growths in your colon may be removed and looked at under a microscope. The colonoscopy can make you feel gassy or cause cramping. You will need someone to bring you home after as you may be sleepy.

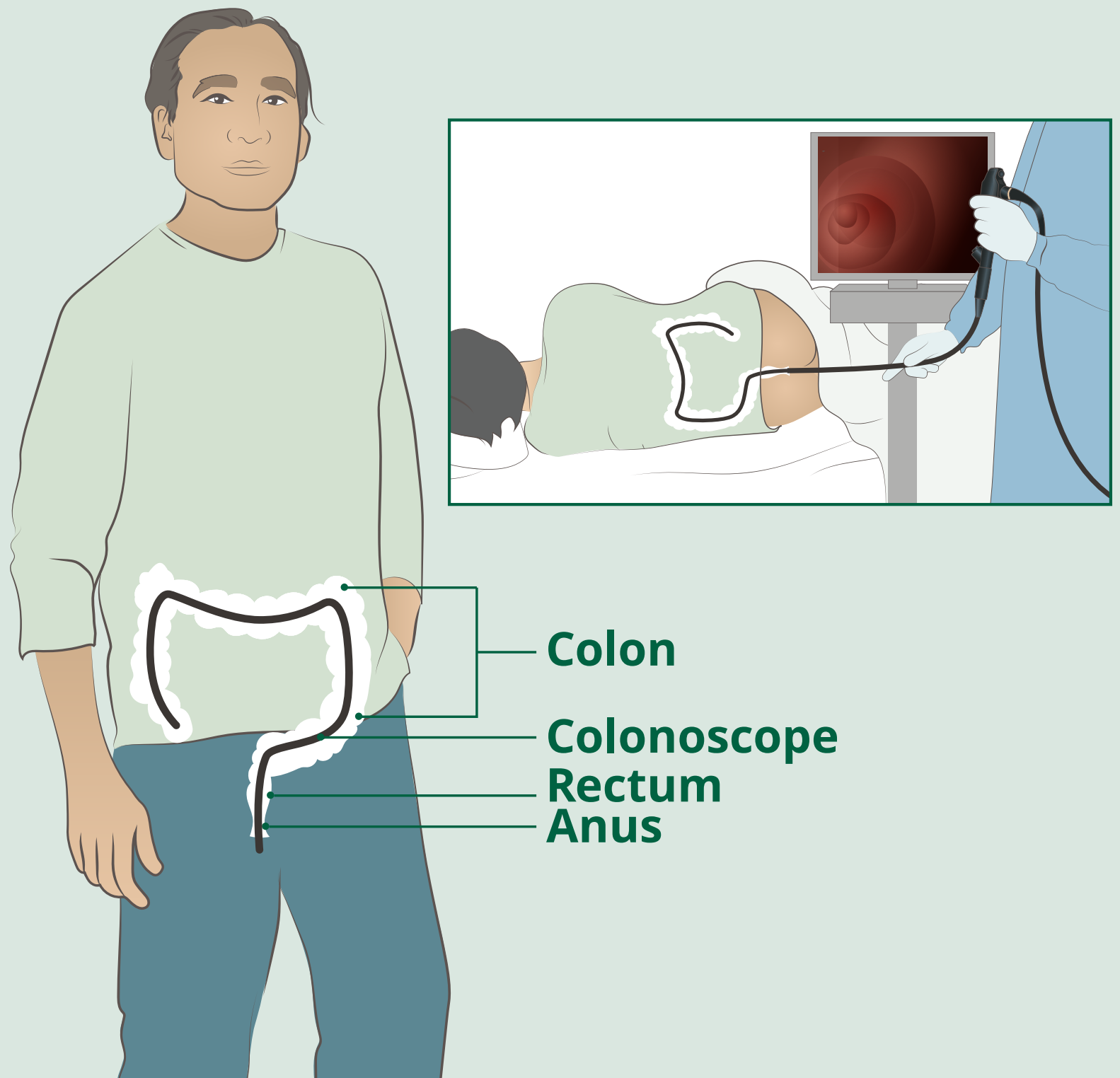
Seeing a trusted health care provider, bringing a friend or requesting that there be a witness in the room are all ways to be supported. Please refer to the “Preparing for screening” section of this flipbook for more ideas.

What to expect

Colonoscopy:

This screening is done at a hospital and is a two to three hour visit, with the procedure itself taking 20-45 minutes.

A doctor will put a tube with a small camera into your anus and up into your colon to see inside. Tissue samples or growths in your colon may be removed to be looked at with a microscope.



Colon diagnostics tests

Follow-up testing can include:

- > **Barium enema colon X-ray:** A special liquid is put into your colon through a tube and then X-rays are taken
- > **Biopsy of colon or rectal tissue:** A doctor removes a small portion of the colon or rectum to examine it under a microscope
- > **CT scan of abdomen:** A CT scanner, a large tunnel-like imaging machine, takes a picture of your abdomen
- > **Ultrasound of abdomen:** A health care provider will take a picture of your abdomen using a wand-like camera held against your stomach area

After colon screening, more testing may be needed depending on your results. It is important to note that more testing does not necessarily mean you have cancer.

Colon diagnostics tests

After colon screening, more testing may be needed depending on your results.

Follow-up testing can include:

- > Barium enema colon X-ray
- > Biopsy of colon or rectal tissue
- > Colonoscopy
- > CT scan of abdomen
- > Ultrasound of abdomen



Be colon aware – Signs of colon cancer

If you notice any unusual changes in your digestive system, contact your health care provider as soon as possible.

Many of the signs of colorectal cancer can also be caused by other conditions.

Signs of colorectal cancer to look for include:

- > A change in bowel habits (constipation, diarrhea, blockage)
- > Blood in stool (poop)
- > Pain in abdomen
- > Anemia (low iron levels)
- > Nausea or vomiting
- > Unexplained weight loss or weakness

Change in bowel habits (constipation, diarrhea)

Blood in stool (or poop)

Pain in abdomen

Anemia (low iron in your blood)

Nausea or vomiting

Unexplained weight loss

Be colon aware – Signs of colon cancer

Talk to your health care provider as soon as possible if you notice any of these changes:

- > A change in bowel habits (constipation, diarrhea, blockage)
- > Blood in stool (poop)
- > Pain in abdomen
- > Anemia (low iron levels)
- > Nausea or vomiting
- > Unexplained weight loss or weakness

Change in bowel habits (constipation, diarrhea)

Blood in stool (or poop)

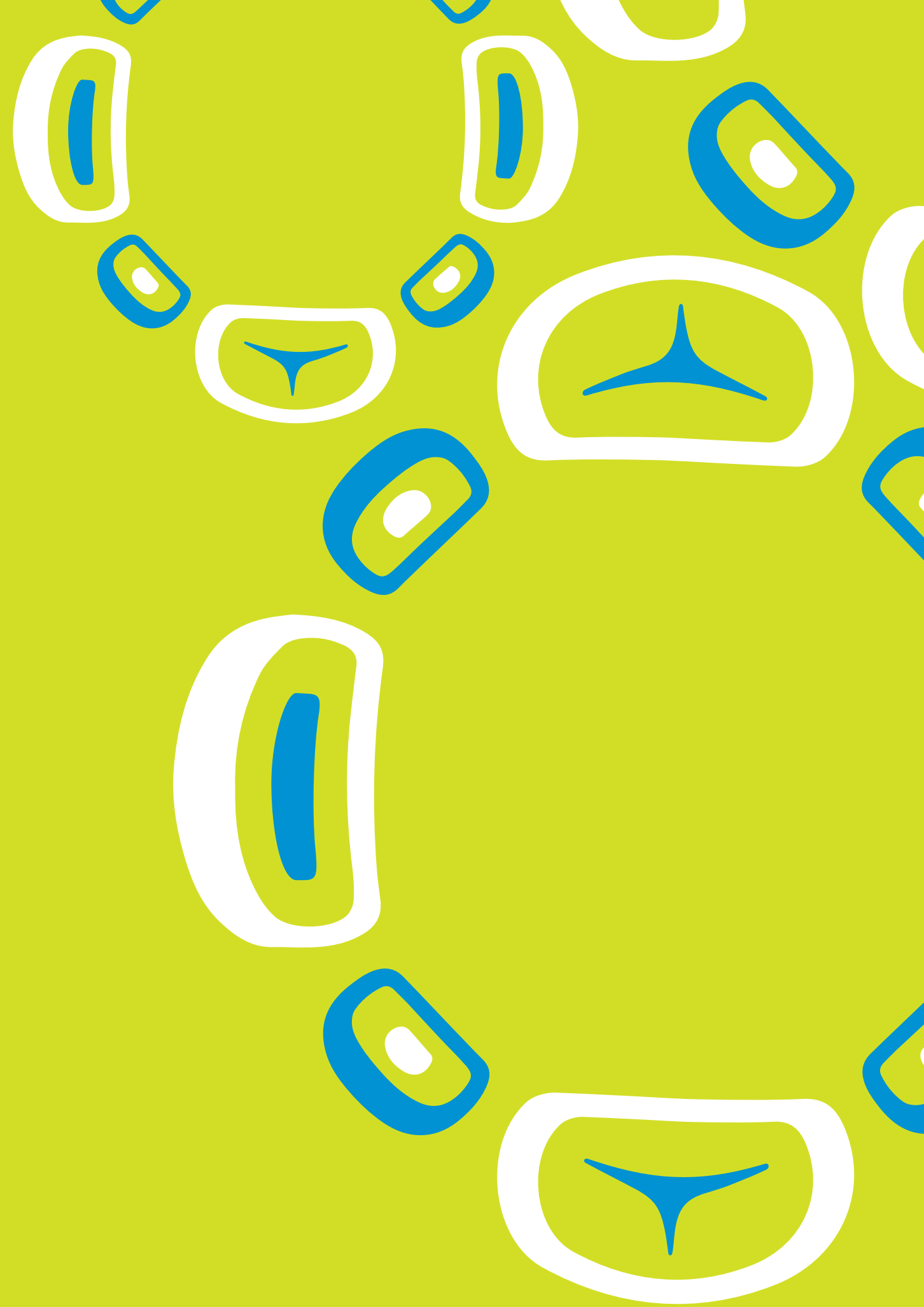
Pain in abdomen

Anemia (low iron in your blood)

Nausea or vomiting

Unexplained weight loss

LUNG CANCER SCREENING



Lung screening

Your lungs are a pair of spongy organs in your chest that bring air and oxygen into your body.

Lung screening may help to identify cancer early. Early detection is key when it comes to lung cancer and can lead to more successful treatments. Early detection of lung cancer can increase the chances of survival by 20 per cent. Lung cancer symptoms usually do not appear until the cancer has grown and spread, so being screened to catch things early on is important.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in BC. Cancer data shows that lung cancer diagnoses among First Nations people in BC have increased in recent years.

Lung screening is recommended for people who are 55 to 74 years of age and who have a smoking history of 20 years or more.

To contact the Lung Screening Program, call 1-877-717-5864. You will be asked a series of questions about your age, overall health and smoking habits. If you have an increased risk of lung cancer, you may be encouraged to have low-dose x-rays taken of your lungs.

Reducing or quitting smoking is an important way to take care of your lungs. There are resources to help you on this journey.

www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Are-You-Trying-To-Stop-Smoking-Or-Vaping.pdf



**HONOUR
YOUR
ANCESTORS**

Screen for lung cancer regularly.
Early detection can save your life.

 FNHA.ca/Cancer

Dr. Kelsey Louie, Health Leader
Tla'Amin First Nation

First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

BC
CANCER
British Columbia Cancer Services Authority

Lung screening

Lung screening is available for people between the ages of 55 and 74 who have a smoking history of 20 years or more (including people who currently smoke and people who have smoked in the past).

To book a lung screening test, call BC Cancer's Lung Screening Program. They will ask you questions to see if you are eligible for screening. If you have an increased risk of lung cancer, you may be encouraged to have low-dose x-rays taken of your lungs.

Reducing or quitting smoking is an important way to take care of your lungs. There are resources to help you on this journey.

Honour yourself, your family, your community and your ancestors – make lung screening a part of your wellness.



HONOUR YOUR ANCESTORS

Screen for lung cancer regularly.
Early detection can save your life.

What to expect

When you call the Lung Screening Program, you will speak with a Program Navigator for five to 10 minutes over the phone. They will ask you questions about your smoking and health history. These questions will assess your overall health and chances of getting lung cancer. You do not need to answer any question(s) you are uncomfortable with. If you smoke and are interested in quitting, you will receive information to help you quit commercial tobacco use.

If you are considered to have a greater chance of getting lung cancer, the next step will be to get an appointment for a lung scan through a referral. The scan will be at a hospital. During your scan, you will lie on a

table and a doughnut-shaped scanner will take pictures of your lungs. The scan takes less than 10 seconds and is not painful. You will rest your arms above your head and hold your breath for a few seconds while the scan is happening. You can wear your own clothes during the scan, but you must remove metal objects, such as a belt or a bra with underwire. Loose-fitting clothing is recommended.

Seeing a trusted health care provider, bringing a friend or requesting that there be a witness in the room are all ways to be supported. Please refer to the “Preparing for screening” section of this flipbook for more ideas.

What to expect

When you call the Lung Screening Program, you will speak with a Program Navigator for five to 10 minutes over the phone. They will ask you questions about your overall health and your smoking history.

The scan will be at a hospital. During your scan, you will lie on a table and a doughnut-shaped scanner will take pictures of your lungs. The scan takes less than 10 seconds and is not painful. You will rest your arms above your head and hold your breath for a few seconds while the scan is happening.



Lung diagnostics tests

After your lung scan, more testing may be needed depending on your results. Keep in mind that more testing does not necessarily mean you have cancer.

Follow-up testing can include:

- > A follow-up CT scan of your lungs
- > A lung biopsy (where a small sample of lung tissue is removed so that it can be looked at more closely under a microscope)

A lung biopsy usually takes place at a hospital. Lung biopsies can be done in different ways: with a needle, under a CT scanner or with a small scope and with local freezing to your throat.

You may feel some soreness or discomfort after the procedure and may need to take it easy for a day or two. Your health care provider will contact you with the results.



Lung diagnostics tests

After your lung scan, more testing may be needed depending on your results. This testing may include a follow up CT scan or lung biopsy.

Lung biopsies can be done in different ways: with a needle, under a CT scanner or with a small scope and with local freezing to your throat.



Be lung aware - Signs of lung cancer

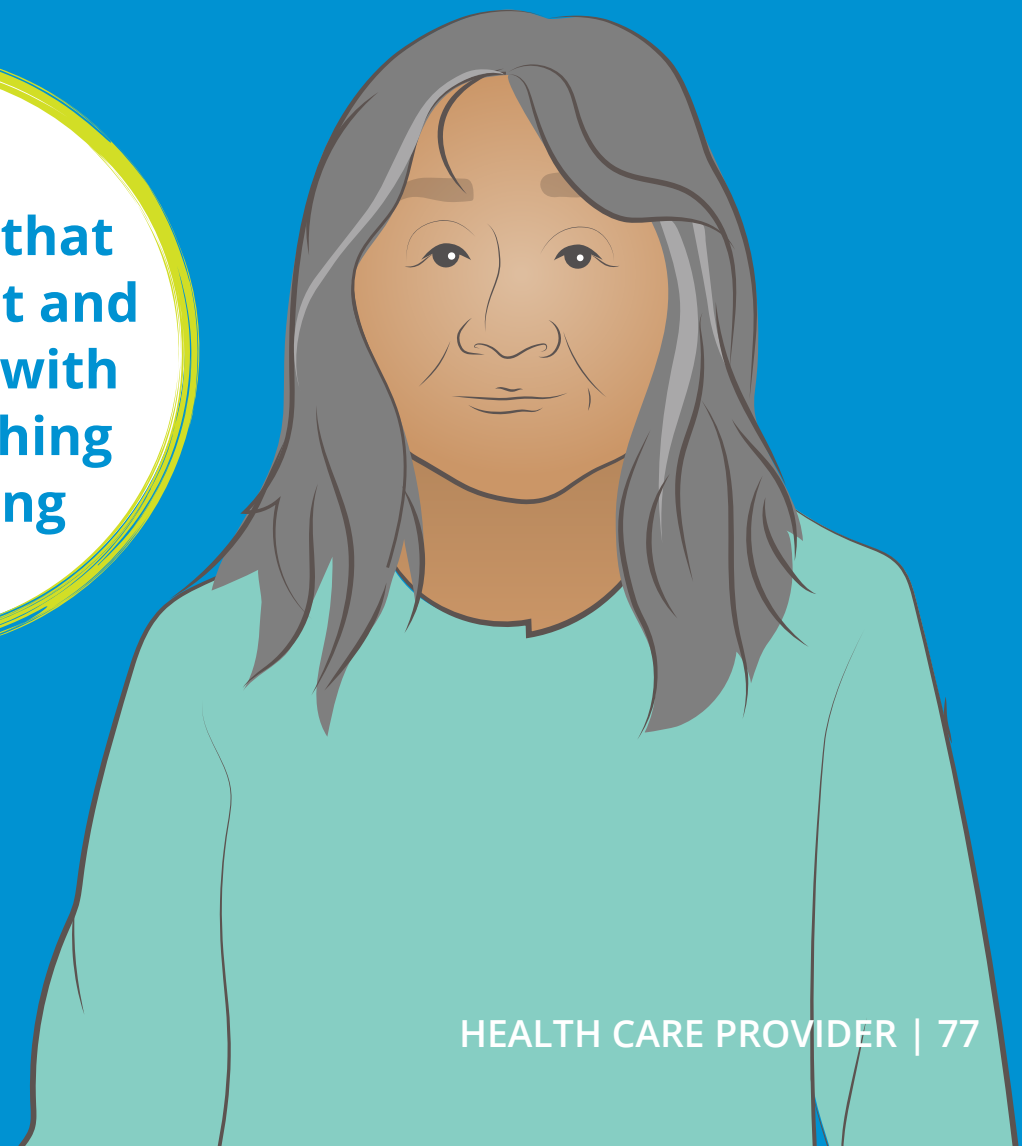
If you notice any unusual changes to your lungs or breathing, contact your health care provider as soon as possible. Signs to look for include:

**Coughing that
does not go away
or gets worse**

**Shortness
of breath**

**Chest pain that
is always felt and
gets worse with
deep breathing
or coughing**

**Coughing up blood
or rust-coloured spit**



Be lung aware - Signs of lung cancer

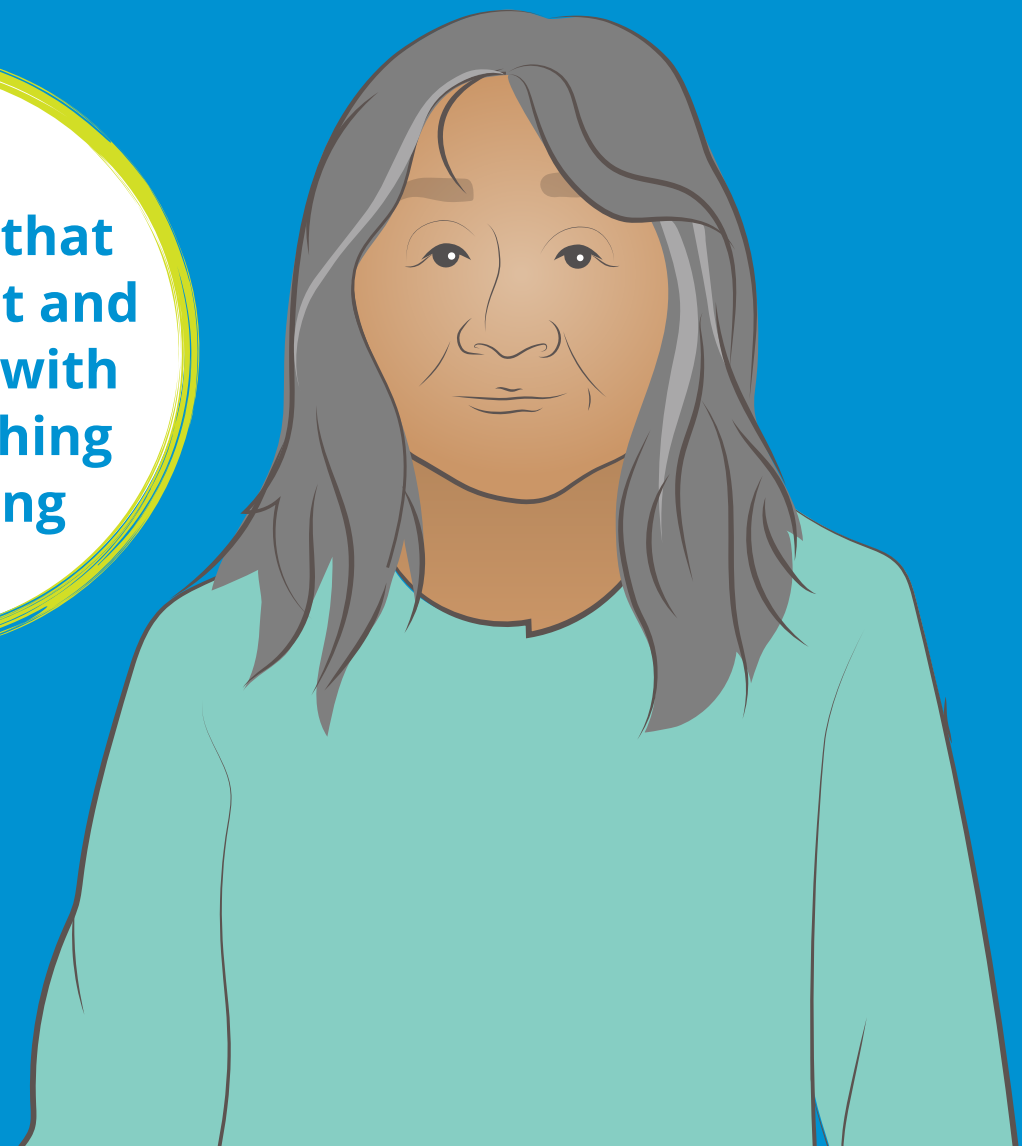
Talk to your health care provider as soon as possible if you notice any of these changes:

Coughing that does not go away or gets worse

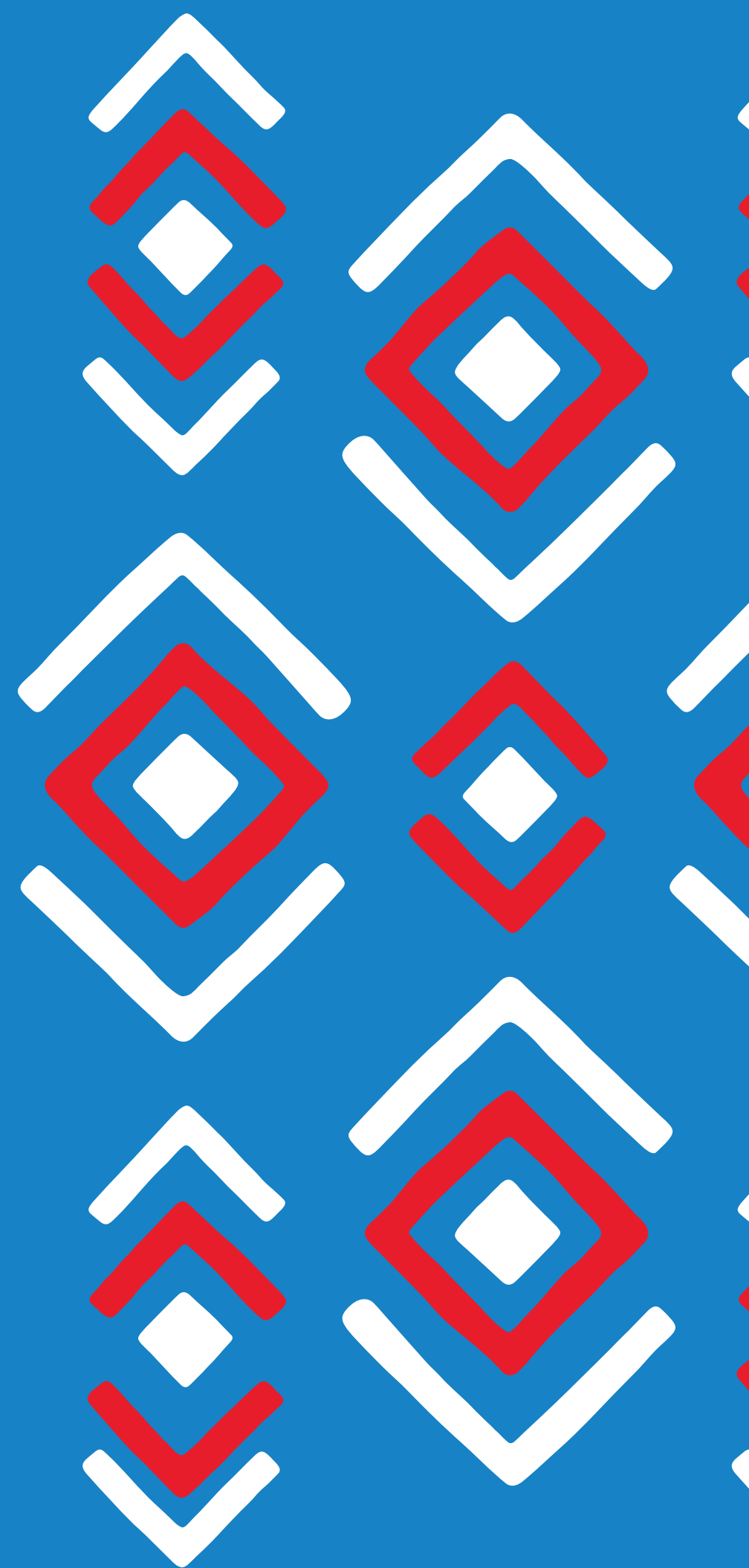
Shortness of breath

Chest pain that is always felt and gets worse with deep breathing or coughing

Coughing up blood or rust-coloured spit



TREATMENT & RESOURCES



Cancer treatment

If you are diagnosed with cancer, the next step is learning about your treatment options.

There are three main ways to treat cancer.

Surgery:

The physical cutting out and removal of cancer from the body, possibly including the removal of nearby tissue and glands.

Cancer drugs (chemotherapy):

The use of powerful drugs to kill unusual cancer cells in your body. Chemotherapy drugs can be given by pills, shots, creams, medicine through your veins or directly on your tumour.

Radiation:

The use of high-intensity energy waves to kill unusual cancer cells and shrink tumours in your body. Radiation is applied directly on the cancer through a beam from a machine.

Cancer treatment options depend on factors like the type, size, stage and spread of the cancer.

Your cancer care providers will share information about the treatment options that are available to you. They are there to answer your questions and support your decisions.

Treatment may involve travelling to a special cancer centre or other locations for care. Ask about travel and accommodation services and supports that might be available to you if you need to travel for cancer care and follow-up.

Cancer treatment



There are three main ways to treat cancer:

- > Surgery
- > Cancer drugs (chemotherapy)
- > Radiation

Cancer treatment options depend on factors like the type, size, stage and spread of the cancer.



Other types of supports

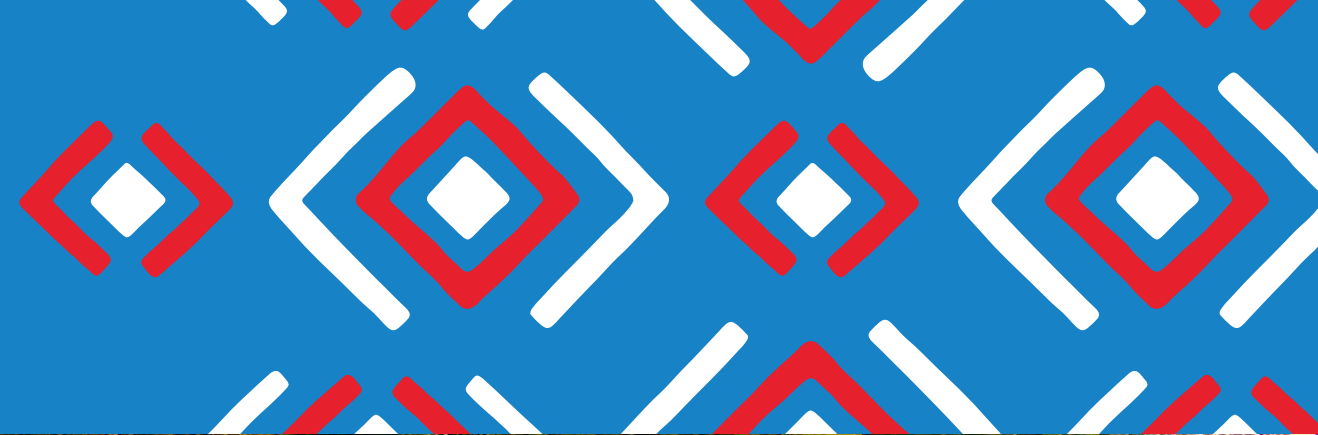
Many holistic health supports and providers can help you through your cancer treatment journey. Cancer treatment can have physical, mental, emotional and spiritual impacts.

Talk to your cancer care providers if you wish to have cultural supports, traditional medicine or other complementary treatment as part of your care plan. It is important that your care team members are working together and aware of what you need to heal and recover. Be sure to ask if there are any potential interactions between medicines.

Consider connecting with the supports that feel right for you in healing, such as:

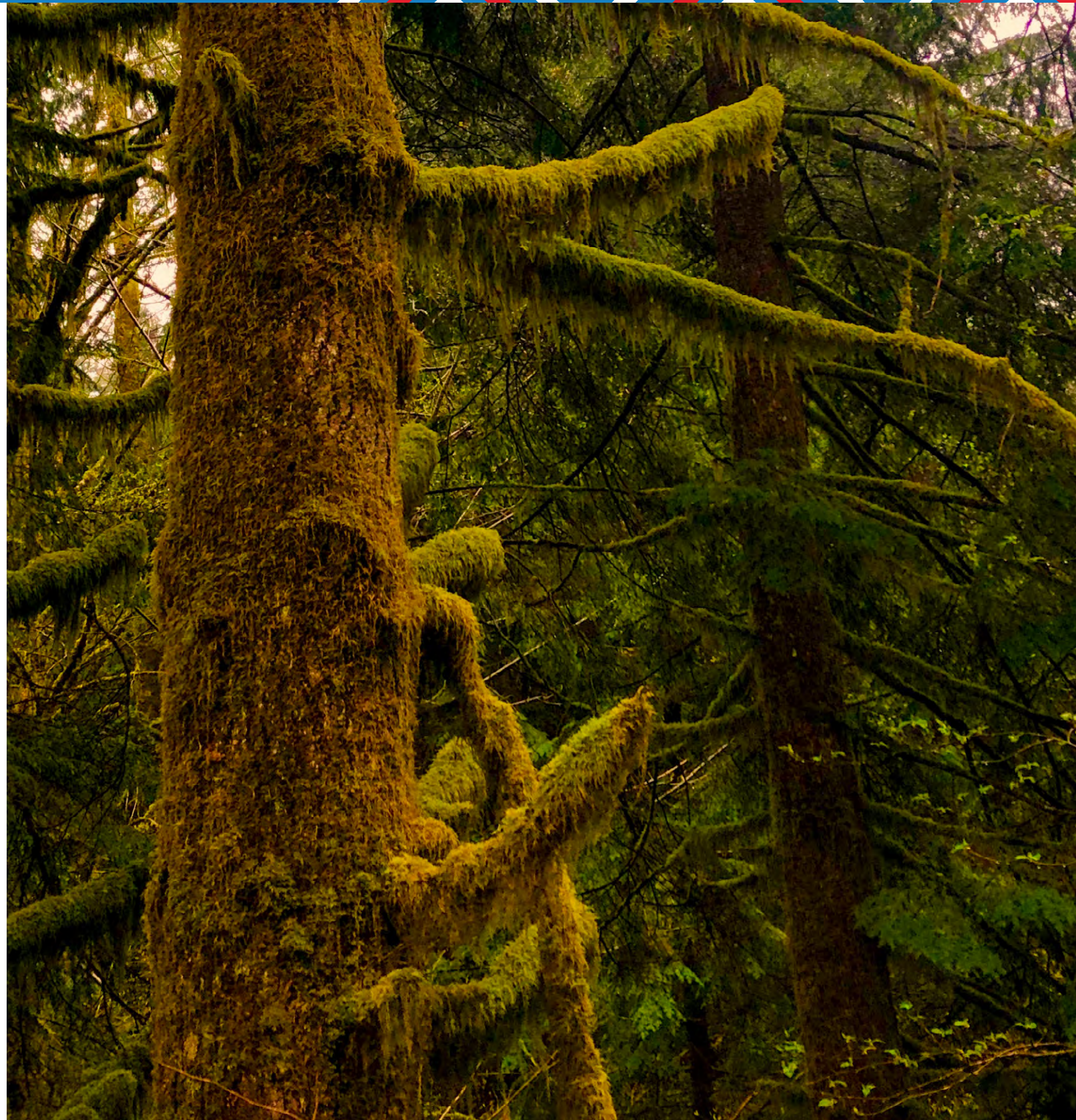
- > Elders
- > Cultural leads
- > Traditional medicine practitioners
- > Yoga and meditation practitioners
- > Dietitians
- > Massage therapists
- > Clinical counsellors
- > Acupuncturists
- > Physiotherapists
- > Naturopaths
- > Homeopaths
- > Chinese medicine practitioners

Other types of supports



Talk to your cancer care providers if you would like to include **cultural supports, traditional medicine or other complementary treatment** as part of your care plan.

It is important that your care team members are working together and aware of what you need to heal and recover.



Resources



Telephone support:

1-855-344-3800: First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day Program
1-844-935-1044 or quality@fnha.ca: FNHA's Quality Care & Safety Office
1-855-550-5454: FNHA's Health Benefits Program
1-800-663-9203: Mammography appointment booking with BC Cancer
1-800-739-7367: Options for Sexual Health to find a clinic offering Pap tests
1-877-70-COLON: To find a lab to get a FIT kit
1-877-717-5864: Lung Screening Program
1-888-590-3123: Tsoow-Tun Le Lum Cultural Supports
1-800-721-0066: Indian Residential School Survivors Society Cultural Supports
1-800-588-8717: KUU-US 24/7 Indigenous Support Line
310-6789 (No area code): 24/7 Mental Health Support Line
8-1-1: Registered nurse or dietitian with HealthLink BC

Online resources:

[FNHA.ca/Cancer](https://fnha.ca/Cancer)
www.bccancer.bc.ca/screening
www.bccancer.bc.ca/our-services/services/indigenous-cancer-control-smokershelpline.ca/talktobacco/about

Travel and accommodation contacts:

Travel Assistance Program (TAP), Health Connections and more: [Travel and accommodation assistance - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov2/health/indigenous/indigenous_cancer_control/indigenous_cancer_control_services/indigenous_cancer_control_services_travel_assistance_program)

1-855-550-5454: FNHA's Health Benefits Program:
www.fnha.ca/benefits/medical-transportation

Health resources:

Wellness daily organizer:

www.fnha.ca/WellnessSite/WellnessDocuments/Wellness_Diary.pdf

Canning guide:

www.fnha.ca/WellnessSite/WellnessDocuments/FNHA-Canning-Foods-Your-Guide-To-Successful-Canning.pdf

Traditional food fact sheets:

www.fnha.ca/WellnessSite/WellnessDocuments/Traditional_Food_Facts_Sheets.pdf

Mental health and wellness supports for Indigenous People:

www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-mental-health-and-wellness-supports-for-indigenous-people.pdf

Advance care planning resources:

www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/healthy-living/advance-care-planning

Culturally relevant quit tips:

www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Are-You-Trying-To-Stop-Smoking-Or-Vaping.pdf

Cancer 101 toolkit for First Nations, Métis and Inuit People:

www.cancercareontario.ca/en/cancer-101-toolkit

Cancer screening resources for First Nations, Métis and Inuit People:

www.cancercareontario.ca/en/get-checked-cancer/indigenous-cancer-screening-resources

Resources

Learn more about cancer screening at:

[FNHA.ca/Cancer](https://fnha.ca/Cancer)

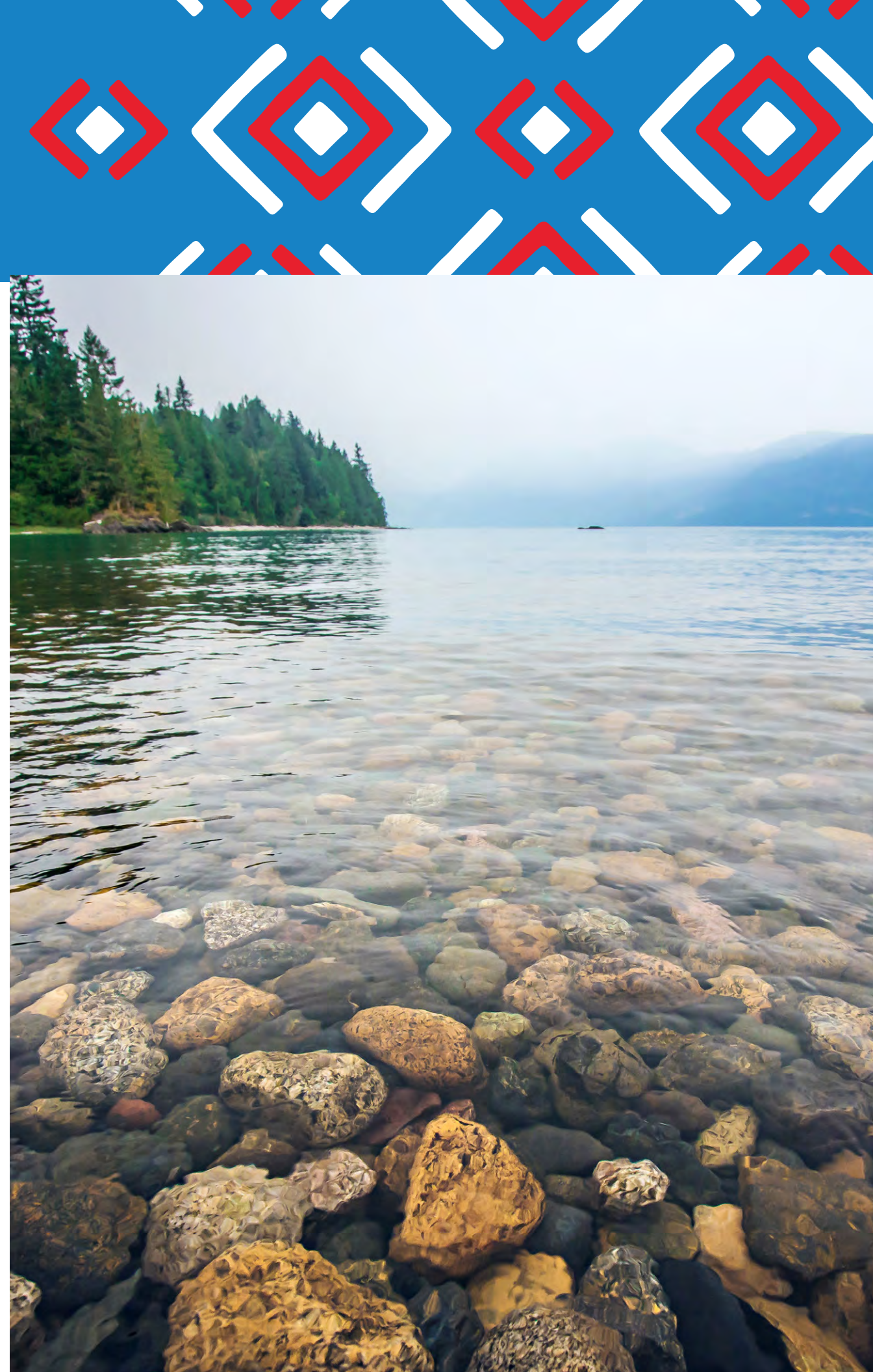
BC Cancer Screening Services:

www.bccancer.bc.ca/screening

1-855-344-3800: To talk to a physician with the First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day program

8-1-1: To talk with a registered nurse with HealthLink BC

1-844-935-1044 or quality@fnha.ca to talk to the FNHA's Quality Care & Safety Office



[FNHA.ca/Cancer](https://fnha.ca/Cancer)



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

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Provincial Health Services Authority