



# HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE TOOLKIT



# Introduction

The Health and Climate Change initiative is aimed at educating Métis Citizens on issues where climate change and health intersect.

The purpose of these tools is to raise awareness of the risks facing Métis Albertans and offer resources to navigate climate change impacts. This toolkit is made of eight tools separated into three themes:

- ∞ **The importance of relationships in Métis culture**
- ∞ **Climate change impacts for Métis people**
- ∞ **Actions to support Métis health influenced by climate change**

This project began with a review of previous MNA engagement data from late 2018 to early 2019 about health and climate change impacts. From that data and research, we noticed themes emerge on health and climate change through an Indigenous lens. We then developed and finetuned a health and climate change toolkit for Métis community members to support both climate change and health action.

Thinking about climate change, especially how it affects our health in ways seen and unseen, can be overwhelming. We may feel like we have lost control over our safety and ways of life, and do not know where to start to make a difference.

We hope with this toolkit, you will find information that helps you navigate your health journey in the face of climate change.




## GROUP 1

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS IN MÉTIS CULTURE

These three tools illustrate the importance of relationships in Métis culture. We as humans are also interconnected in our relationships with other living organisms, the natural environment, and the land. The complexity of our relationships means there are many ways climate change can directly or indirectly impact our health.



# Relationships of Well-Being in the Face of Climate Change



Our health and well-being affect us as individuals, but also as members of our family and community. This tool shows a web of relationships and the ways Métis people experience health impacts holistically: spiritually, physically, mentally, culturally, and emotionally.

Our holistic health is interconnected to and has an effect on our family's and community's overall wellness. Knowing this helps us support one another in the face of climate change. This tool is tailored from data specific to Métis culture.

# Métis People's Connections to the Land



The infinity symbol represents Métis culture and our infinite connection to the land. As seen in this tool and in our research, the land is not just the place we live on; it gives us our identity, livelihood, resources, and culture as Métis people. It is important for us to think about our relationship to the land as reciprocal. The health of the land around us affects our own health. The impacts of climate change, such as natural disasters, pollution, and changes in animal and plant populations, strongly affect the land. Protecting the land from climate change is a way to protect who we are as Métis.

# Interconnectedness of Health and Climate Systems



The earth shows how humans, living organisms, and the natural environment's well-being are all interconnected. A change in one affects the others.

This tool is an example of the importance of interconnectedness in Métis culture. Our health as humans is affected by other living organisms and the natural environment, just as climate is affected by the natural environment, other living organisms, and humans.




## GROUP 2

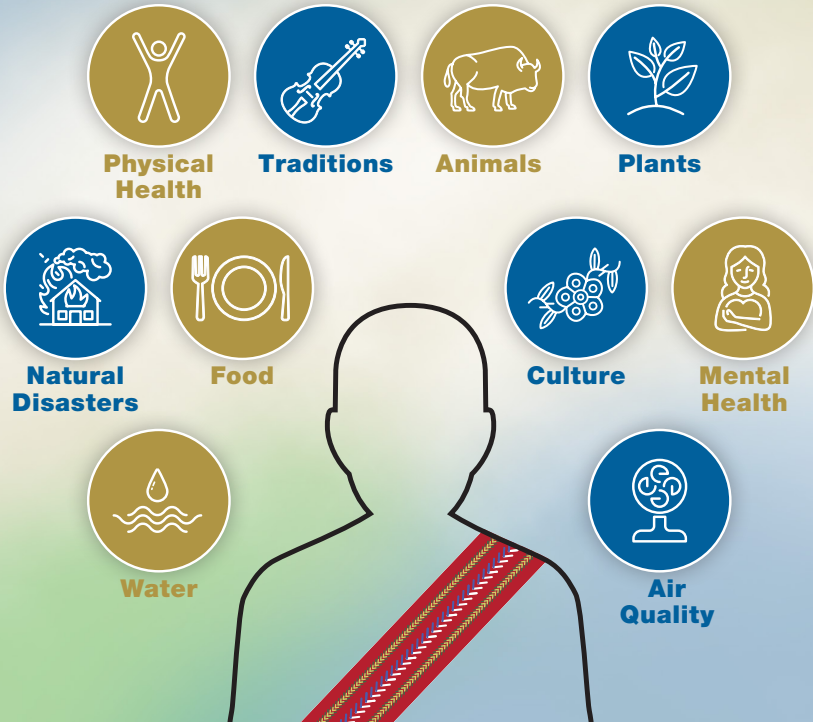
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# CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS FOR MÉTIS PEOPLE

This series goes through different ways climate change affects important elements of Métis people's lives, including our health. We can draw strength from our resilient Métis culture to mitigate climate change risks.



# Top 10 Citizen Concerns About Health and Climate Change

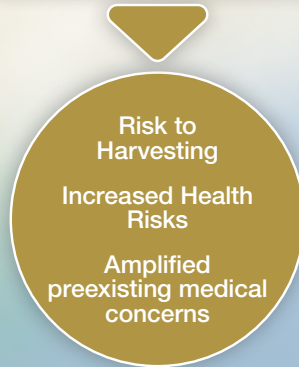


This tool shows the top 10 concerns about health and climate change we heard from Citizens at climate change engagements in late 2018 and early 2019. This information helps us understand your concerns and the areas you focus on in your life and in your community.

Traditions and culture, which are important to Métis Albertans, can be tools to support your physical and mental health and the health of fellow community members in the face of climate change. As seen in this tool, it is also key to consider the health of the environment around you.



# Climate Impacts and Métis Health Concerns



This tool highlights the connection between climate change and Métis health and well-being.

- ∞ Natural disasters can decrease animal and plant populations, reducing sources where you harvest and gather.
- ∞ Warmer temperatures can further spread invasive plants and animals, bringing in disease and threatening existing plants and animals used for food or traditional practices.
- ∞ Water contaminants are a health risk for Métis who harvest in contaminated areas.
- ∞ Severe weather events, like wildfire smoke, can threaten physical health and worsen preexisting medical conditions.

# Risks and Resiliencies of Métis Communities



This tool, based heavily on Métis-specific data, shows our Métis community's risks and resiliencies when dealing with health and climate change issues. Climate change has a deep impact, not only on the natural environment, but also on marginalized groups.

By understanding these risks and resiliencies, each of us can reflect on the risks we face and find strength in ourselves and our Métis community.



## GROUP 3

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# ACTIONS TO SUPPORT MÉTIS HEALTH INFLUENCED BY CLIMATE CHANGE

This section of the toolkit provides culturally-relevant actions to support Métis people's physical and mental health when climate change is involved, such as eco-anxiety. It is important to be aware of physical health risks and find solutions that work for you and your abilities.



# Climate Change Stress Relievers

## Calm

Breathe deeply  
Massage your temples  
Count to 10 or 100  
Cuddle with pets  
Tell a joke  
Have a nap  
Sit by a fire  
Meditate  
Pray



## Exercise

Stretch and do yoga  
Practice jiggling  
Go for a hike or brisk walk  
Work out at the gym  
Fly a kite



## Mindfulness

Make an appreciation list  
Write down your goals  
Keep a journal  
Write down your dreams  
Look at the big picture



## Self-Care

Get a good night's sleep  
Take a herbal tea break  
Eat a healthy breakfast  
Join a support group  
Be kind to yourself  
Talk with an Elder  
Take a bath  
Cry



## Hobbies

Read a book  
Listen to podcast  
Do a crossword puzzle  
Watch your favourite movie  
Cook Métis recipe  
Try beading  
Colour a picture  
Write a poem



## New Habits

Take a different route  
Spend an evening without TV  
Go for a drive with no destination  
Turn cocktail hour into exercise or mindfulness hour  
Clean one room in your house  
Volunteer  
Call an old friend



## Music

Dance  
Listen to music  
Try playing the spoons  
Make a playlist  
Learn the jig step  
Learn an instrument



## Nature

Listen to birds  
Put plants Indoors  
Find shapes in clouds  
Lie in a hammock  
Study traditional plants  
Enjoy the sunset or sunrise



*Adapted from AHS*

When you act on climate change, you may feel overwhelmed and start to experience what's called eco-anxiety. This tool shows you different ways to relieve your stress and cope with the mental health effects of climate change. Wellness comes in many forms and everyone's journey looks a little different.

These culturally-relevant techniques were developed by the Métis Nation of Alberta's Health department.

# Support Métis Health



This tool offers supportive information for Métis health risk factors gathered from earlier Citizen engagements.

According to our summary, here is how to take action against these Métis health risk factors, starting clockwise from the top left:

## ∞ **Dependence on harvesting**

Climate change affects the plants and animals Métis people harvest for food. To cope with this, you can research, take relevant courses, and speak with Métis knowledge holders on sustainable harvesting practices.

∞ **Age**

People of older age may have chronic disease and low immunity. It is important to recognize and support the needs of our Elders and older individuals.

∞ **Where you live (urban/rural)**

Residence location affects access to resources and supports. You can raise awareness about community members living in remote areas and form a support network or provide resources.

∞ **Land use**

This is a risk factor for those who use areas likely to be severely impacted by climate change (e.g., contaminated water sources, wildfire-prone forested areas). It is important to raise concerns about these specific areas and warn others through signage or education about the health risks when using polluted areas. You can also check the news to learn more about polluted areas.

∞ **Medical support access**

People with preexisting or chronic health conditions are more at risk to have their health affected by climate change. Searching for medical support or preparing for these effects can lessen your risk.

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For detailed information on the resources we used to shape the *Health and Climate Change Toolkit*, visit [albertametis.com/health-and-climate-change-toolkit](http://albertametis.com/health-and-climate-change-toolkit)





# CONTACT US!

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