



Healthy Foods North

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Overview

Healthy eating and physical activity are important factors that promote good health and prevent disease. Some of the health problems that a good diet and exercise can help prevent are obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer.



Shelf labels identifying cereals that are high in fiber and the healthiest choices in a local food store.

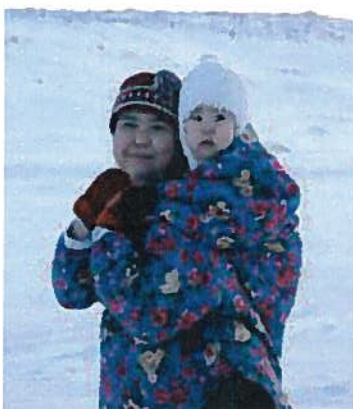


Participant of a HFN taste test session.

Together with Inuit and Inuvialuit communities, our program, **Healthy Foods North (HFN)**, aimed to reduce the risk of chronic disease and improve dietary intake in the North.

Diet and disease risk can be improved by creating and putting into practice a program that addresses the specific needs of each community and incorporates traditional cultural values.

The success of a program like HFN can be determined by measuring eating habits and exercise patterns in these communities before and after the program takes place.



Inuit mother and child in Nunavut.

A Nordic Walking Club organized by HFN to promote physical activity.



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The Healthy Foods North Program

The specific goals were to:

1. Encourage more **traditional** foods to be eaten among youngsters
2. **Provide** community members training and leadership development in running the program
3. Provide nutrition and lifestyle education that was **accessible** to all community members
4. Increase **physical activity** through traditional activities and community-based programs
5. Reduce the amount of high **fat** and high **sugar** foods people are eating
6. Increase the amount **fruit and vegetables** that people are eating
7. **Inform** government and other organizations about what needs to be done to improve the nutritional environment in the North



Arctic char drying in Kugaaruk, Nunavut.

The first phase of our health program involved the collection of information from the community about the kinds of food people were eating. This was done by our team members who conducted interviews about the foods eaten and physical activities taking place in the communities. The results of the interviews were presented at community meetings, and the information was used by participants to develop the program. Community leaders were involved in all stages of the program development.



Community members participate in meetings to develop the HFN program.

The program worked in partnership with local Inuit and Inuvialuit communities to address community needs and desires. In partnership with food retailers, the program aimed to change the availability of food by offering healthier options in stores at lower prices. These healthier food choices were then promoted using posters, flyers, interactive educational presentations, bilingual and colour-coded basic shelf labels, taste tests, educational displays, and radio, and television announcements.

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ሙሉ ጠቅላይ ልማት ለሕይወት ለማስተካከል
Eat Well, Live Long, Pass it on

ማድረግ ለሕይወት ለማስተካከል
Healthier Cooking / Meal Planning

የቆዳ ልማት ለማስተካከል ለማድረግ ለሕይወት ለማስተካከል
Add Frozen Vegetables to Your Soups and Stews
 ለሕይወት ለማስተካከል ለማድረግ ለሕይወት ለማስተካከል
 A fast and easy way to make a healthier meal

ጠቅላይ ልማት ለማስተካከል ለማድረግ ለሕይወት ለማስተካከል
Why Buy Frozen:

- የቆዳ ልማት ለማስተካከል ለማድረግ ለሕይወት ለማስተካከል
- የቆዳ ልማት ለማስተካከል ለማድረግ ለሕይወት ለማስተካከል
- የቆዳ ልማት ለማስተካከል ለማድረግ ለሕይወት ለማስተካከል

ጠቅላይ ልማት ለማስተካከል ለማድረግ ለሕይወት ለማስተካከል
Use Cooking Spray to reduce the fat!

ጠቅላይ ልማት ለማስተካከል ለማድረግ ለሕይወት ለማስተካከል
Why Use a Shopping List?

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 ጠቅላይ ልማት ለማስተካከል ለማድረግ ለሕይወት ለማስተካከል
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ሙሉ ጠቅላይ ልማት ለሕይወት ለማስተካከል
Healthier Eating in the Home

HFN display in both Inuktitut and English describing ways to plan and prepare healthier meals.

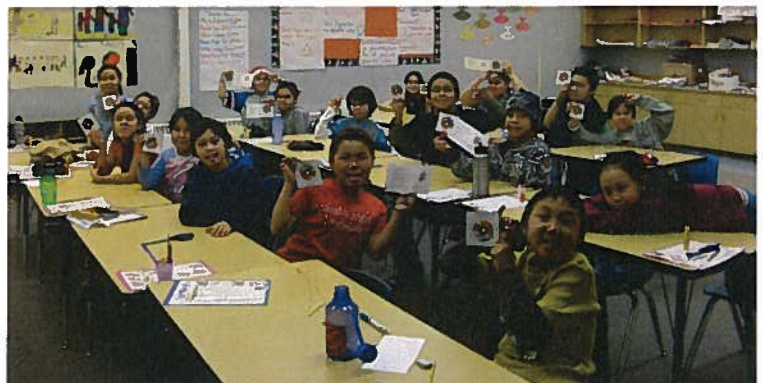
Other activities that we introduced included cooking classes in the communities, presentations with youth in schools, educational radio stories, and community-wide events. The program also aimed to increase physical activity through promotions in worksites, schools, and community groups, such as walking clubs.



A walking club participant checks her pedometer to see how many steps she walked.



A HFN walking club takes a walk to increase physical activity.



Students hold up their HFN gifts after an educational lecture on healthy eating and physical activity.

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Working with established organizations involved in Inuit and Inuvialuit health ensured the success of HFN. HFN partnered with national food retailers, local food stores in each community, community-based organizations, and local hamlets.



A HFN project coordinator is pictured at a local community health fair organized by HFN in collaboration with the local hamlet, school, health center, and community-based organizations.



Elders provide country meats to promote eating country foods as part of the HFN community health fair.

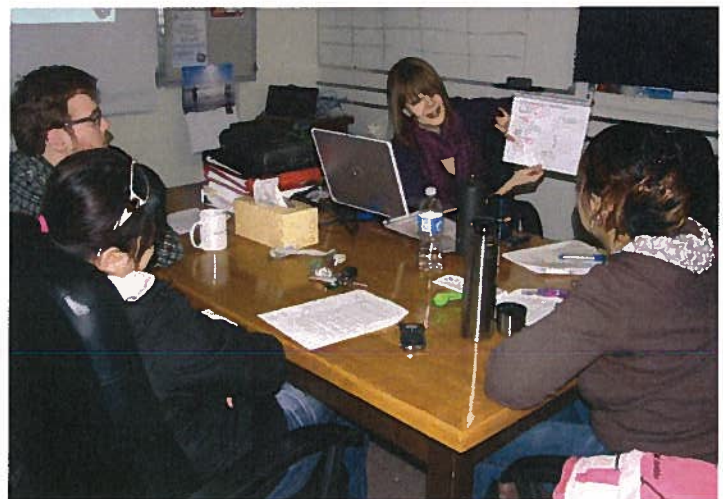


HFN cooking class at the school to teach children how to make healthy smoothies.

To date, numerous community members have been trained to serve their communities and act as peer educators. Community members were also trained as research assistants for evaluation of the program, providing them with practical skills to be used in future employment.



Program trained community members learn how to bake high fiber muffins for community cooking classes.



One of the sessions held to train community members .

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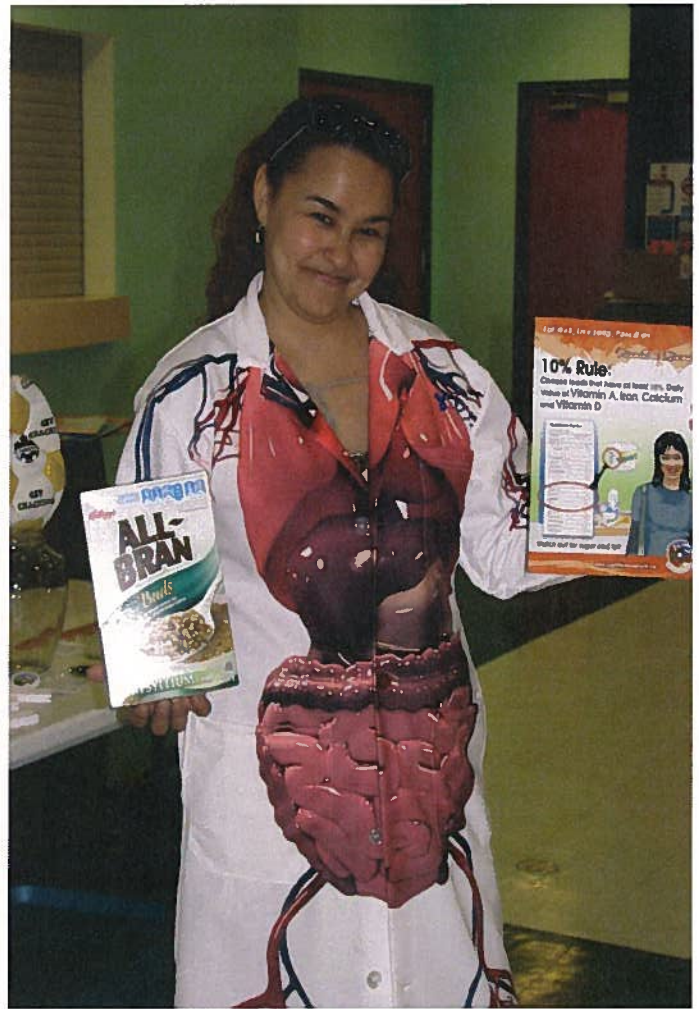
A program trained community member conducts a taste test session in a local food store to demonstrate the amount of fat in full fat coffee whitener.



HFN staff promote eating fruits and vegetables at a community parade.



A community member collects research data on food prices after being trained.



A trained community member is ready to present on the importance of fiber at a local health fair.

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Program Success

Surveys were conducted with 380 Inuit and Inuvialuit adults in six communities in Nunavut and the NWT before the HFN program was introduced. Of the six communities, four received the program and two did not receive the program at the time. Surveys were conducted in these 6 communities again after the program was completed. The survey information was used to assess diet, physical activity, body mass index (BMI), which is a calculation of an individual's weight to height ratio, and other dietary factors.

Preliminary results showed that several positive changes occurred after the program took place. For example, people were eating less high fat, non-traditional meats (e.g., fried chicken) in the program communities compared with no change in the other communities. Additionally, program participants were eating less high fat dairy products (e.g., full fat milk).



Two HFN team members meet with the Honorable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health of Canada.

After the HFN program, participants were eating less fat and carbohydrate, but getting more vitamin A, vitamin D, and calcium in their diet. Women who are pregnant or might become pregnant often do not get enough of the nutrients they need. This can affect the mental and physical health of the unborn baby. When women of reproductive age were surveyed, the quality of their diet improved significantly after the program. After the HFN program, these women were eating more vitamins A, D, and E, magnesium, potassium, and Omega-3, which, for example, is important for fetal brain development. Another important marker of the program's success is that on average, members of the program communities lost weight. These results highlight the important impact that a long term program could have on reducing risk of chronic disease. All data and results were shared with the communities and discussed in community presentations to give the information back; community members have been provided with the opportunity to present results at various local, territorial, national, and international forums.



A trained community member presents at the International Conference of Circumpolar Health in Yellowknife, NT, pictured here with Russian delegates.

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Other successes of HFN include health promotion events through organizations, such as Community Healthy Fairs, workshops for the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, community feasts, and cooking classes with youth. HFN has been successful in building partnerships with various organizations and training community members to develop, implement and evaluate the HFN program.



Part of the HFN team at the International Conference on Circumpolar Health in Yellowknife, NT.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks are given to the communities for their support, participation, and collaboration.

Healthy Foods North Team, Nunavut

The Nunavut HFN Team would like to particularly thank all the Hamlet Councils, Health Committees, and food shop managers of the participating communities, as well as the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, Atii-go Media, and the following community staff, data collectors, project coordinators and invaluable supporters:

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Healthy Foods North Team, the Northwest Territories

We are equally grateful to the Hamlet Councils and food shop managers of the participating communities in the Northwest Territories and the following community staff, data collectors, project coordinators and invaluable supporters who make up our Northwest Territories HFN Team:

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Project Partners and Supporters

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Arctic Foods
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First Air
Government of the Northwest Territories,
Department of Health & Social Services
Inuvik Interagency Committee
The North West Company
Northern Transportation Company Limited
NWT Recreation and Parks Association
Stanton's Stores (Inuvialuit Development
Corporation)

Future of the Program

Additional funding and support are required for continuation and expansion of this important program.

For more information, please contact:

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