



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Weathering a COVID-19 winter

There are tried-and-true ways to stay strong during challenging times.

A message from Dr. Shannon McDonald, FNHA Acting Chief Medical Officer

Winter is upon us, and we're in the middle of a pandemic, so it's a good idea to prepare ourselves to deal with darker, colder days while also dealing with the COVID-related isolation and stress.

With this in mind, I want to share some strategies that will help us get through the upcoming winter months in good mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health.



- **Keep your hopes up.** Focus on the light at the end of the tunnel: remind yourself daily that this, too, will pass, spring will bloom again, and a COVID vaccine is getting closer and closer.
- **Accept the situation.** Instead of resisting reality by complaining or being negative, decide to accept that things will be different and difficult for a while.
- **Find joy in small things.** We may not be able to travel, vacation, or gather right now, but there are still things to be happy about.
- **Practise gratitude.** Every morning, think of at least three things you are grateful for. You might even want to keep a gratitude journal.
- **Set small goals.** For example, if you don't cook or exercise but have always wanted to, you could try out simple recipes or aim for 15 minutes of exercise each day.
- **Get creative!** When we engage in creative activities we feel happier.
- **Sleep well.** Even though your schedule may not be the same as it was before COVID, set a regular time to go to bed. Aim for seven to eight hours of sleep per night.
- **Get moving.** In addition to exercising regularly, it's even more important than ever to get up and move.

Please take good care of yourself this winter – and beyond. You are worth it!