



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

# FEWER FACES, WIDE-OPEN SPACES

A GUIDE TO GATHERINGS AND EVENTS DURING COVID-19

The FNHA acknowledges the significance of sweat lodges, potlatches and other cultural and spiritual gatherings to our health and wellness, as well as the trauma caused by past banning of these activities.

Even so, now is not the time to hold or participate in group activities. Following are some risks associated with sweat lodges and potlatches, as well as some alternatives.

## RISKS



Going into a sweat lodge during COVID-19 would mean being in too-close physical contact and possibly breathing in the droplets in each other's breath.



Even gatherings of fewer than 50 people require an assessment of risk – especially if the event will entail travel and people sharing accommodations.

## ALTERNATIVES



Getting outside and spending time on the land and water (think “fewer faces, wide-open spaces”) is one of the most powerful ways to nurture health and wellness.



Connect to the Creator through prayer and focusing on your hopes for our future generations.



Consider holding smaller events for now, with the larger event at a later date (when it's safer to gather again).



If you are holding a smaller event, consider having bag lunches rather than shared meals, ensuring there are opportunities to wash and/or sanitize hands, and to practise physical distancing.



Modify any ceremonies and cultural practices with public health recommendations, or conduct them just with the family you live with/your “bubble.” Your bubble should always be the same five or six people – those in your household for example – and they should not be in other bubbles with other people!

For more information, visit [www.fnha.ca/coronavirus](http://www.fnha.ca/coronavirus)