

American Indian Cancer Foundation

INDIGENOUS PINK COOKBOOK



American Indian
Cancer Foundation®

Pink food inspired recipes for Native breast cancer survivors, caregivers & families in Indian Country

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....3
Recipes.....4-23
 Breakfast.....4-6
 Lunch.....7-10
 Dinner.....11-14
 Snacks.....15-20
 Dessert.....21-23
 Eating on the go.....24-25
Breast Health Resource.....26
Breast Cancer Healthy Foods (pink in color).....27
Survivor Stories.....28-31
References.....32

The American Indian Cancer Foundation (AICAF) is a Native-led, national non-profit organization established in 2009 and became fully operational in 2011. AICAF is Native-governed; its board members and employees have an array of experience serving the health needs of our people. AICAF was established to address the tremendous cancer inequities faced by Native communities. AICAF focuses on prevention, early detection, treatment, and survivor support.

Indigenous Pink Day, one of AICAF’s larger awareness campaigns is a national breast cancer awareness campaign for Native people. Breast cancer is the most common cancer among Native women and is the second leading cause of cancer death. However, all bodies have breast tissue and are at risk for developing breast cancer. Indigenous Pink Day aims to educate Native communities about the importance of early detection and remind women, men, non-binary, and genderfluid relatives to talk to their doctors about breast cancer screening.

The #IPCookbook was first created in 2019. Since then, we have gathered additional healthy indigenous, delicious and pink recipes! There are recipes reflective of each season. We hope you enjoy these pink inspired recipes. We encourage you to take a photo of your meal, post it to social media and use these hashtags #IPCookbook #IndigenousPink #ReclaimingIndigenousHealth

BREAKFAST



STRAWBERRY BEET SMOOTHIE

DIRECTIONS

1. Add all ingredients to a high speed blender and purée until smooth.
2. Pour into individual glasses and enjoy!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup chopped raw beets peeled
- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 1 banana
- 1 cup almond milk or milk of choice
- Juice of ½ lemon
- ½-1 inch fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon flax seeds
- 1 tablespoon hulled hemp seeds
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

READY IN: 10 minutes

SERVES: 2

NOTES:

LUNCH

STRAWBERRY YOGURT PARFAIT

1. Place half of your strawberries in a medium-sized bowl with the sugar and stir until the fruit is evenly coated.
2. Allow the mixture to sit for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. After 15 minutes, smash the mixture with a fork to help release the juice from the fruit.
3. Place a few spoonful of granola in the bottom of two glasses. The layer of granola should be about ½ - 1 inch thick
4. Add a layer of yogurt about 3 inches thick to the glass followed by a layer of freshly sliced strawberries.
5. Top the strawberries with a generous amount of yogurt followed by granola and a few spoonfuls of the strawberry mixture.
6. Serve and enjoy!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ½ cups fresh strawberries, sliced, divided
- ¼ cup granulated sugar, (this can be adjusted based on the sweetness of the berries)
- 1 ½ cups granola
- 2 cups vanilla greek yogurt

PREP TIME: 20 minutes

READY IN: 20 minutes

SERVES: 4 small parfaits





BEET RICE

1. Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Tightly wrap beets foil and roast on a baking sheet until tender, about 1 1/2 hours. Let cool slightly. Peel the beets under running cold water. Place two of the beets in a blender or food processor and process briefly, until somewhat smooth. Dice the remaining beet into 1/2 inch cubes.
3. While beets are cooling, bring broth and water to a simmer in a 2- to 3-quart saucepan.
4. Heat butter in a wide, heavy pot over moderate heat. Cook the garlic and onion until softened and fragrant. Add the rice and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute.
5. Add wine and stir until absorbed, about 1 minute. Using a ladle, stir in 1/2 cup warm broth and simmer briskly, stirring constantly, until broth is absorbed. Continue simmering and adding warm broth, one ladle at a time, stirring constantly and letting each addition be absorbed before adding the next, until rice is just tender and creamy-looking, 18 to 22 minutes.
6. Stir in beets, beet puree, vinegar, salt, and pepper and cook, stirring, until heated through.
7. Top bowls of risotto with crumbled goat cheese and dill. Serve immediately.



INGREDIENTS:

- 3 medium beets (trimmed)
- 3 1/2 cups bone broth (or reduced-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth)
- 3 cups water
- 1 small onion (finely chopped)
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups Arborio rice
- 1/2 cup dry vermouth (or dry white wine)
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 cup goat cheese
- 1/4 cup fresh dill (chopped (for garnish))

PREP TIME: 30 minutes

READY IN: 2 hours

SERVES: 4-6

THREE SISTER SOUP

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large pot combine the hominy, green beans, squash, and potatoes.
2. Add water and chicken bouillon.
3. Bring to a boil. Then reduce heat to low and simmer until vegetables are soft (approx. 10 minutes).
4. Melt butter and blend it with the flour. Stir mixture into the soup.
5. Increase heat to medium and cook until soup thickens (approx. 5 minutes).
6. Season with salt and pepper and serve.



INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups canned white or yellow hominy corn. Drained (can be substituted with regular corn).
- 2 cups fresh green beans. Trimmed and snapped
- 2 cups butternut squash. Peeled and cubed.
- 1 1/2 cups white or yellow potatoes. Peeled and diced (for something sweeter you can use sweet potatoes)
- 5 cups water
- 1 1/2 tbsp chicken bouillon granules
- 2 tbsp butter. Melted
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp pepper

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

READY IN: 45 minutes

SERVES: 6

NOTES:

DINNER

BEET & WATERMELON SALAD



1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Wash beets, then slice off just a bit from the tops and bottoms.
3. Wrap beets loosely in foil and roast on the middle rack of the oven for 30-45 minutes or until tender, then let cool. Once beets have cooled, remove skin and dice them to desired length.
4. Combine watermelon and beets together in a large bowl. Chop mint and basil into 1-inch long strips, or smaller depending on desired length. Dice red onion into small pieces. Combine watermelon, beets, onions and herbs together with spinach. Drizzle olive oil over the top of the mixture. Cut orange in half and add juice from 1/2 of the orange to the salad.
5. Add 1 package of crumbled goat cheese. Toss, serve and enjoy!

Optional dressings or garnishing can include:

- Pomegranate seeds
- Pistachios
- If mixture is too tart, add 1 teaspoon of maple syrup to sweeten

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups red beets
- 1/2 large watermelon, diced
- 3 cups spinach
- 1 small red onion
- 1 cup basil leaves, thinly chopped
- 1/2 cup fresh mint
- 1 package crumbled goat cheese
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 orange, halved

PREP TIME: 20 minutes

READY IN: 1 hour

SERVES: 6





GRILLED SALMON WITH SWEET POTATOES

1. Preheat oven to 450°F.
2. Place sweet potatoes on a baking sheet and bake about 45 minutes, or until tender.
3. After sweet potatoes have baked for about 30 minutes, preheat grill to medium. Brush salmon fillets with olive oil.
4. Cut lemon in half and squeeze juice from 1/2 of the lemon over the top of fillets.
5. Place salmon on grill and cook until opaque throughout, about 5 minutes each side.
6. Plate salmon with sweet potatoes and enjoy!



INGREDIENTS:

- 2 medium sweet potatoes, halved
- 1 lemon, halved
- 2 salmon fillets (about 12 oz. each)
- 2 teaspoons olive oil

PREP TIME: 20 minutes

READY IN: 45 minutes

SERVES: 4



CRANBERRY CHICKEN

DIRECTIONS

1. Add the marinade ingredients to a food processor or blender and blend until smooth.
2. In a bowl (or Ziplock bag), coat the chicken thighs in the marinade.
3. Cover and place in the fridge to marinate for 30 minutes or up to 24 hrs. (Marinating overnight creates great flavor!)
4. Once marinated, preheat the oven to 375 F.
5. Remove chicken from the fridge and sprinkle with desired amount of cranberries before baking. Bake uncovered skin side down for 25-35 minutes depending on the size of chicken thighs.
6. Remove and turn skin side up. Check for doneness. Then brush each chicken skin with the maple syrup/balsamic vinegar combo.
7. Depending on the thickness of your chicken thighs, either bake a little longer skin side up, then broil. Or if chicken is almost done and not pink, then skip extra baking and just broil for 2-3 minutes or until skin is crispy and chicken is cooked evenly. Make sure the internal temperature of the thickest chicken thigh reaches 165 F.
8. Remove cooked chicken from the oven and let rest for 5 minutes before serving.
9. When plating, spoon the pan sauce over each chicken thigh then sprinkle with fresh thyme leaves and a dash of black pepper.

NOTES:



INGREDIENTS:

- 1/3 cup fresh cranberries or previously frozen and thawed
- 2 Tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 Tablespoons maple syrup
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic (about 1 clove)
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 1/2 pounds bone in, skin on chicken thighs (~4 to 6 chicken thighs) *see notes for substitutes
- 1/2 cup - 1 cup fresh cranberries or previously frozen and thawed
- 1 Tablespoon each maple syrup and balsamic vinegar mixed together to coat chicken during roasting
- Topping- fresh thyme leaves or dried herbs

PREP TIME: 30 minutes

READY IN: 1 hour 10 minutes

SERVES: 5



APRICOT CHICKEN

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. In medium bowl, mix jam, garlic, olive oil, soy sauce, mustard, jalapeño, ginger, salt and pepper, to taste.
3. Add chicken breasts and stir to coat.
4. Place apricots and onion slices on oiled baking sheet and then place chicken breast mixture on top, nestling apricots and onions around breasts.
5. Cook for 20-25 minutes, flipping halfway through. Chicken is done when a meat thermometer registers 165 degrees F.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup apricot jam or marmalade
- 2 tsp. garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1/2 small jalapeño, deseeded and minced (optional)
- 2 tsp. fresh ginger, grated
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- Black pepper, to taste
- 4 (6 oz.) boneless skinless chicken breasts, pounded thin with rolling pin or meat pounder
- 4 apricots, under-ripe, quartered and pitted*
- 1/2 red onion, sliced

PREP TIME: 20 minutes

READY IN: 40 minutes

SERVES: 4

SNACKS





CHOCKECHERRY JAM

1. If you have a juicer, use it! I don't, so I use this method:
2. Clean, wash, and remove stems from berries
3. Place in a large pot filled with enough water to just cover the fruit
4. Simmer 15-30 minutes until fruit softens
5. Use a potato masher to mash the juice out
6. Strain through a cheesecloth-lined colander or jelly strainer
7. Save the juice and discard pulp/pits
8. Mix chokecherry juice, lemon juice, and 4 teaspoons calcium water in a pot
9. Thoroughly mix sugar or honey in separate bowl with 4 teaspoons pectin & set aside
10. Bring juice mixture to a boil
11. Add pectin/sugar mixture, mix until completely incorporated, then return to a boil
12. Remove from heat, get ready to place it in your sterilized canning jars
13. Fill the jars, leaving 1/4' headspace
14. Boil in a hot-water bath canner 10 minutes (add an extra minute for every 1,000 feet you are above sea level)

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups chokecherry juice
- 1/4 cup of lemon juice
- 1 1/2– 2 cups sugar OR 1 1/2 cups honey
- 4 t. Pomona's Pectin (like this)
- 4 t. calcium water (included in Pomona's pectin)

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

READY IN: 40 minutes

SERVES: 30



BEET SMOOTHIE

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine strawberries, blueberries, orange juice, beets, banana, carrot and ginger in a blender; process until combined, about 30 seconds.
2. Divide between 2 glasses.
3. Serve immediately.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 1 cup frozen blueberries
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 (8.8-ounce) package refrigerated cooked beets (such as Love Beets)
- 1 medium banana, peeled
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and sliced
- 1 (1/2 inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled and grated

PREP TIME: 5 minutes

READY IN: 5 minutes

SERVES: 2

NOTES:



ODE'IMIN (STRAWBERRY) CEDAR TEA

1. Boil cedar in the 2 cups of water until it turns a golden color.
2. Chill until desired temperature or add ice to cool.
3. Chop washed strawberries and add to cedar tea mixture.
4. Let strawberries marinate in tea for twenty minutes before drinking.
5. If you'd like it colder, put it in the fridge or add ice. Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS:

- 2-3 strawberries
- 2 cups water
- Sprig of cedar

PREP TIME: 5 minutes

READY IN: 10 minutes

SERVES: 1

WOJAPE Wózapi

DIRECTIONS

1. Put the berries and water into a saucepan and set over low heat.
2. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is thick.
3. Taste and season with honey or maple syrup as desired.

INGREDIENTS:

- 6 cups fresh berries (chokecherries or a mix of blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, elderberries, cranberries, blackberries)
- 1 to 1½ cups water
- Honey or maple syrup to taste

PREP TIME: 5 minutes

READY IN: 10 minutes

SERVES: 4-6

NOTES:

DESSERTS



S'MORES WITH WOJAPI (BERRY SAUCE)

For wojapi:

1. Mash the berries together in bowl.
2. Place mashed berries into a medium pot and add water into the mixture. Bring berries and water to a boil.
3. Add ¼ teaspoon of cornstarch until you have desired thickness.
4. Reduce and simmer until texture is thick and syrupy. If necessary, add a little honey to sweeten.

For s'mores:

1. Heat one marshmallow on a stick over a fire or stove until soft and golden brown.
2. Break one graham cracker sheet in half to make two squares.
3. Break 1 chocolate bar in half and place on top of 1 graham cracker square.
4. Place cooked marshmallow on top of the chocolate and graham cracker square, then close with other half of graham cracker square.
5. Place s'more on top of plate. Pour wojapi over the s'more. Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS:

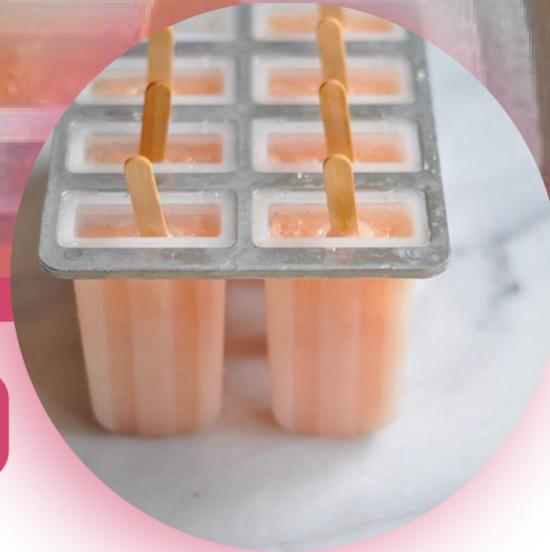
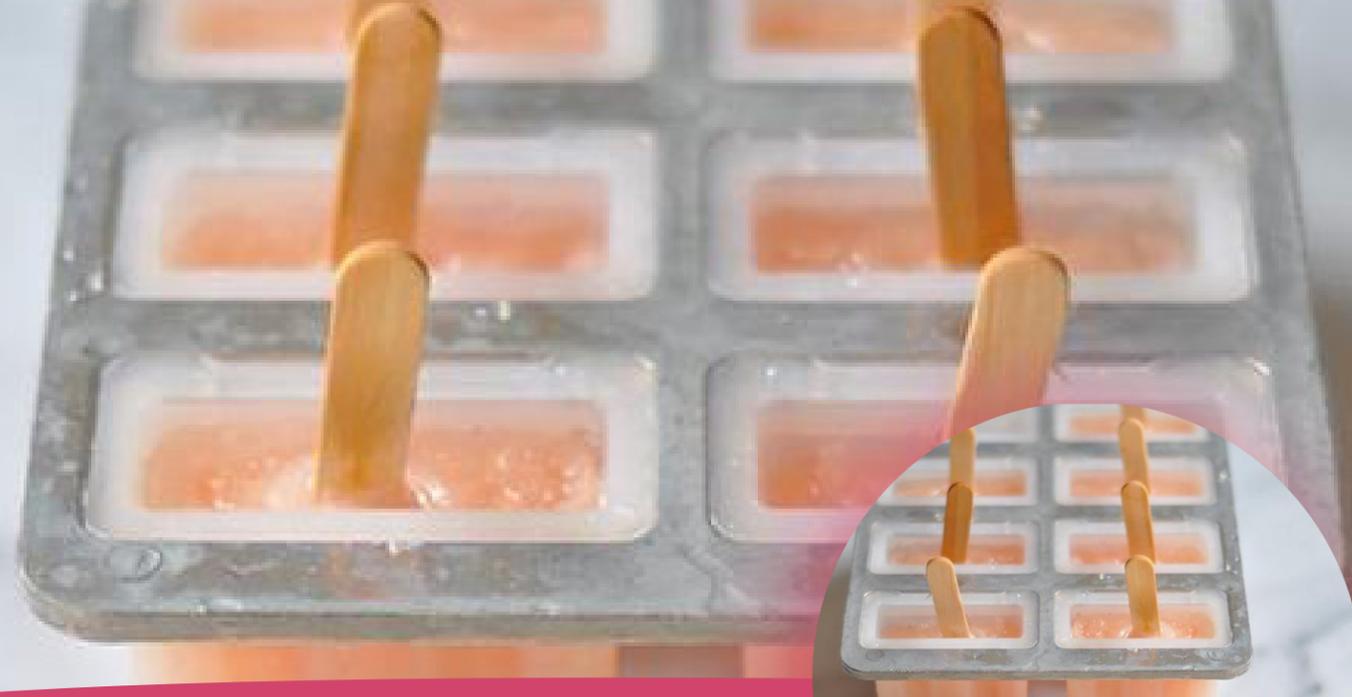
- 6 cups berries (strawberries, raspberries, blackberries)
- 1 cup water
- 6 sheets graham cracker cookies
- 6 marshmallows
- 3 regular chocolate bars, cut in 6 even squares
- 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- Honey

PREP TIME: 5 minutes

READY IN: 1 hour

SERVES: 6





GRAPEFRUIT POPSICLES

1. Add the sugar, water, and grapefruit zest to a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Remove from the burner and set aside for a few minutes.
2. Stir in the grapefruit and lemon juice. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve. Let cool.
3. Divide the mixture among popsicle molds and freeze for at least four hours, or until solid.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup of sugar
- 1 cup of water
- 1 teaspoon of grapefruit zest
- 2 cups of freshly-squeezed ruby red grapefruit juice
- 2 tablespoons of freshly-squeezed lemon juice

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

READY IN: 4 hours

SERVES: 8



CERRY CRISP

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Spray an 8x8-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
2. Pit cherries (if you don't have a cherry pitter, you can always use your hands like I did!) and then measure out 3 cups. Place cherries in baking dish.
3. Add flour, oats, coconut sugar, almonds, cinnamon, and salt to a medium mixing bowl, stirring until combined. Add coconut oil and use your fingers to incorporate the oil into the mixture until it's moist, crumbly, and very well combined. If your coconut oil is very hard, this will take a bit longer.
4. Sprinkle topping evenly onto the cherries. Bake for 30 minutes. Cool on a rack for 15 minutes before diving in, preferably with ice cream!

INGREDIENTS:

- 3 cups fresh or frozen sweet cherries, pitted (measure after pitting)
- ½ cup all purpose flour or white whole wheat flour
- ¾ cup old-fashioned oats
- ½ cup coconut sugar (can sub brown sugar)
- ½ cup pecans or walnuts, finely chopped
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp fine sea salt
- Heaping ¼ cup coconut oil, solid (or unsalted butter)

PREP TIME: 15 minutes

READY IN: 45 minutes

SERVES: 8

NOTES:

EATING ON THE GO



SNACKS

- Jerky
- Trail mix – look for one lower in sugar
- Mixed nuts
- Pistachios
- Apples
- Almonds
- Whole grain cereal cups
- Non-fat Greek yogurt
- String cheese
- Energy bars – try to stay away from those high in sugar
- Plain whole grain popcorn
- Corn Nuts
- Chips and Guacamole
- Almonds
- Protein Bars
- Apples
- Bananas and Peanut Butter
- Triscuits

BEVERAGES

- Water
- Sparkling Water
- Low sugar juice
- Coffee with minimal sugar
- Unsweetened tea
- Chocolate milk
- Raspberry leaf tea is delicious and restorative. It supports digestion, and is perfectly served after a heavy meal. Simmer both the raspberry canes and the leaves in a pot covered with water for 20 minutes. (From The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen Cookbook - Raspberry Leaf Tea Thakhánheca Wahpé)

Indigenous Pink Breast Health

1 in 8 women will get breast cancer in their lifetime

Increased Risks

GENETICS
Inherited DNA changes in genes

GENDER
Being female

FAMILY HISTORY
Mother, sister, daughter has had breast cancer

BREAST DENSITY
High density breasts

AGE
Getting older

CONTACT YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER IF YOU HAVE ONE OR MORE OF THESE RISKS

Breast cancer usually has no symptoms when the tumor is small and most treatable.

Screening Guidelines/Recommendations



Talk to your health care provider about when screening is best for you.



Breast cancer is the 2nd leading cause of cancer death for American Indian women. A mammogram may save your life.

What can I do?

BREASTFEED
Breastfeeding reduces estrogen exposure that helps prevent breast cancer

REGULAR MAMMOGRAMS
Women 40+ should have the option to have a mammogram once a year

REGULAR BREAST EXAMS
Speak to your health care provider for options

WEIGHT CONTROL
Overweight or obese women are at a higher risk

EXERCISE
Exercising 3 days/week may lower your risk

LIMIT ALCOHOL USE
Alcohol can increase estrogen which can increase risk



- **CHERRIES:** cherry extracts and cherry micronutrients have been shown to inhibit breast cancer growth, proliferation, migration and angiogenesis in cell and animal studies.
- **CRANBERRIES:** Cranberries are also a good source of resveratrol, which has been shown to increase the cytotoxic effects of radiation treatment and the chemotherapy drugs Adriamycin (doxorubicin) and Taxol (paclitaxel) against breast cancer.
- **RASPBERRIES:** Raspberries are another good berry to include in your diet if you are looking for ways to fight off cancer. These berries have anti-estrogen properties which aid in preventing cancers, but more importantly aids in fighting off Breast Cancer, particularly those breast cancers that are estrogen based. Oh, and they're an aphrodisiac, too!
- **TOMATOES:** Dietary carotenoids have been found to inhibit the cancer-promoting effects of both estradiol and genistein (a phytoestrogen found in soy), thereby reducing their harmful effects in hormone-dependent breast cancer.
As noted above, tomatoes are a dietary source of melatonin. Melatonin reduces aromatase activity within the breast, thereby decreasing estrogen production and protecting against ER+ breast cancer. Melatonin has also been found to reduce triple negative (ER-/PR-/HER2-) breast cancer growth, proliferation and migration in cell and animal studies.
- **STRAWBERRIES:** Strawberries have great benefits for increasing fiber, vitamins, and antioxidant intake. All of these components can help increase your immune system as well as fight off cancer. For an increased intake of antioxidants dip your strawberries in delicious dark chocolate!



ELNORA THOMPSON

Elnora knew her breast cancer risk and made healthy changes in her life: she quit smoking in 2000, started running and always got an annual mammogram.

In 2011 at the age of 64, Elnora had a suspicious mammogram that required follow up with a biopsy. The results were negative but required another mammogram in 6 months, this time the next mammogram and biopsy came back cancerous. She was diagnosed with Invasive Duct Carcinoma Stage 1. "I didn't have time for breast cancer", Elnora declared. Although she was optimistic about her diagnosis, she still didn't tell anyone. The IHS Women's Wellness Program reached out to Elnora and encouraged her to tell her son. In doing so, he became her biggest support system. The breast cancer diagnosis led to a PET scan, which found 2 other primary cancer sites in her thyroid and lungs, that showed no symptoms. Elnora endured three different cancer surgeries in one year.

Elnora's running club, Cherokee Runners, offered support and walked with Elnora in her first Relay for Life. The Cherokee Cancer Support Group was also a strong support system that reached out to Elnora and offered financial support during treatment and emotional support that contributed to her healing. Today, Elnora is cancer-free and volunteers with the Cherokee Cancer Support Group. The advice she shares with other American Indian and Alaskan Native Women is, "Get your screenings, my cancer was found early because I did screenings on time. I am also thankful for breast cancer because it helped find other cancers in my body."

Thank you, Elnora Thompson, for sharing your breast cancer survivor story to encourage others to get screened.

JEAN HOWARD

In 2016, Jean had just started a new job and was in the process of filing for medical insurance. When it was approved, she visited the hospital to treat a pain she had been feeling in her left arm. Upon examination, the doctor decided to give Jean a heart scan, but also recommended she have a breast screening; this would be Jean's first-ever mammogram. After the test, the doctor followed up immediately and urged her to return to the clinic. Feeling scared and uneasy, Jean replied that she would not be coming back. She knew they had found cancer.

She allowed herself the weekend to reflect, built up her courage and returned to the clinic the next Monday. And this was "when the fight started." Jean was officially diagnosed with stage II breast cancer in August 2016. Everything that followed in the coming weeks happened relatively quickly, Jean remembers. By September, all of the testings had been completed and Jean's treatment plan was developed and in place. Doctors performed a lumpectomy to remove the tumor, she then underwent eight weeks of radiation.

Prior to treatment, Jean's cancer team warned her about the possibility of being bedridden, experiencing fatigue, and losing her appetite. "I was all of those things, but I didn't let it overcome me," she said. Jean took control and cared for herself – she would drive herself to the hospital for treatment, then would return home to do chores like any other day.

"I did not become that person the doctor said I was going to become," she continued, "I overcame it."

With the number of doctors she encountered through testing and treatment, Jean said she almost needed a "crash course in medical terminology." At times it was difficult to focus and understand all the information being thrown her way, especially given the high-stress circumstances. She was appreciative of the love and support from all of her children. She remembers her daughter sitting beside her, writing down every detail and helping to make sense of it all. Jean also met with a social worker who worked to alleviate some of her expenses, as the many cancer treatments were proving to be financially crippling. Since she was not working at the time, the social worker connected Jean with programs that helped covered certain expenses like parking fees and household bills.

In February 2017, Jean returned to work part-time. Now in remission, she shares her journey throughout the community to inspire others to take care of themselves. She advocates for early detection, urging Native women to understand the importance of mammograms and to pay attention to their health.

"You know your body the best. If there's anything different, you know."

Thank you Jean for sharing your story with AICAF.

GERLINDA MORRISON

"We were like deer in the headlights," she said. Her family had just lost her mother-in-law to breast cancer after a long courageous fight. Gerlinda went through the holiday weekend and did not tell anyone about the terrifying phone call she received. Her daughters rodeoed and the family enjoyed celebrating the Fourth of July. The follow-up included another mammogram in Billings. The results from that mammogram were not good. The doctor said, "I think you have breast cancer, you need a strong support network, we need to take care of this as soon as we can." "Where did I go wrong?" She asked herself. Gerlinda is the kind of friend who reminds her friends and family to make healthy choices. She works hard to be the healthiest she can be; exercises at least 4 times a week, maintain a healthy weight, breastfed all three of her babies, takes vitamins, eats her fruits and veggies, she does not drink alcohol and had no family history of breast cancer. A biopsy was scheduled for the first week in August. Gerlinda did not know how to tell her family.

She finally told her older sister and her sister told her mother who then, told the rest of her siblings. Gerlinda comes from a large family, seven children in total. In the Crow Culture, out of respect, women do not tell their brothers about personal health issues, especially something as personal as breast cancer. She took her time to tell her daughters, "I wanted to have hope in my voice when I told them and to be strong for them. I prayed about it. I needed God there with me." The girls all reacted differently with anger, sadness, and optimism. Her youngest daughter said, "I will pray for you Mom, you got this." When Gerlinda told her close friends, it was just as hard. "I could not say cancer, I said the 'c-word'. I asked them to say the word cancer with me."

GERLINDA MORRISON (*continued*)

Gerlinda came out of the double biopsy and saw all of her family in the waiting room, even her brothers. "At that moment, when I saw everyone had my back, I knew I was going to be alright. My siblings and family are my strength." She was optimistic and told her family not to be sad, it still might not be cancer. However, the biopsies confirmed two early stages (in situ) breast cancer sites that genetic tests showed were not inherited. Her family wanted to help and knew she would need financial assistance.

Financial complications did arise, which pushed back treatment until October. The family held a fun run with proceeds going towards helping Gerlinda during treatment. Self-advocacy took on a whole new meaning for Gerlinda, she was fighting for her life. She was accepted into the Montana Breast and Cervical Cancer Program and qualified for Medicaid. The surgery went well and she was discharged on a Sunday afternoon. They gave her a prescription for pain medications but the Indian Health Service pharmacy was not open to fill that prescription. The money her family had raised from the fun run paid for the prescription and two days of lodging and food in Billings. Her doctor wanted her close by in case of complications.

It has been one year since Gerlinda's surgery of removing both breasts. She is doing well and can be found loving life and cheering on her girls. Her oldest daughter Charine shared, "I see my Mom living her life happier, healthier and loving. She tells everyone to get their yearly checks and gets on every one of our family and friends to be healthy." There are two pieces of advice Gerlinda would like to share with other American Indian and Alaska Native Women: 1. Listen to your body, nobody knows it better than you. 2. Be proactive in your healthcare you deserve.

Thank you Gerlinda Morrison for sharing your breast cancer survivor story to encourage others to get screened.

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THIS IS LIVING WITH CANCER™

This Is Living With Cancer™ is a program developed by Pfizer Oncology that includes resources designed for all people living with cancer, regardless of cancer type or stage of disease. This program is available to anyone in the United States, whether they're currently on a Pfizer treatment or not.



Advocacy resources

Encouragement, education and tools to help patients navigate their treatment journey.



Nutrition, exercise and wellness tips

Articles about healthy living, exercise and dietary considerations, as well as resources on managing depression, anxiety, pain and more.



Inspiration

Hear the real stories of people living with cancer. Their journeys may be different, but they all share strength, resilience and inspiration.



Personalized support

Whether you're a patient or a caregiver, **This Is Living With Cancer™** is here to provide personalized support and resources that fit your needs.

Find tools to help live life beyond your diagnosis at

ThisIsLivingWithCancer.com

American Indian Cancer Foundation

<https://americanindiancancer.org/aicaf-project/breast-cancer-awareness/>



#IndigenousPink

#IPCookbook

#ReclaimingIndigenousHealth



American Indian
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