



Indigenous Ceremonial Requests and Other Resources Amidst COVID-19

Smudging Requests

Due to COVID-19, Ontario hospitals have moved to a No Visitor Policy, with exceptions on compassionate grounds and/or other special safety needs. It is important at this time, while keeping in mind the safety of our patients and staff, that we best maintain dignity and respect to all patients receiving care, including Indigenous peoples request for ceremony, such as smudging.

Recommendations:

Every effort should be made to allow for ceremony to take place as patient/patient's family requests.

- 1) Follow the ceremonial/smudging policy if there is one in place
- 2) Allow the person to smudge in their room if possible
- 3) If the person cannot smudge in their room, move the person to a designated space, with patient's consent.

Only in extenuating circumstances where the above is not possible, ask the patient if they would like to use the medicines in alternative forms.

- 1) Cedar Water or Cedar Tea
- 2) Medicinal sprays (Example: Sweetgrass spray)
- 3) Medicine pouches (worn on the person, or pinned to the gown or pillow)

It is imperative that this option only be offered when every other option to allow for ceremony has been exhausted. Please be mindful of the significance of how ceremony is conducted and the importance of ceremony for a patient's traditional healing journey.

Indigenous Supports and Programming

Many Indigenous organizations are offering various types of virtual and telephone programming and supports, including Elder/Healer/Traditional Knowledge Keeper support during the pandemic. Please visit the following for more information:

- 1) Anishinaabe Health Toronto - <https://www.aht.ca/>
- 2) Métis Nation of Ontario - <http://www.metisnation.org/news-media/news/covid-19-support-programs/>
- 3) Inuit Tapiriit Kantami - <https://www.itk.ca/what-we-do/covid19/>
- 4) Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council - <https://www.tassc.ca/supports.html>