

# Eat Well Saskatchewan - Executive Summary

Many First Nations people are facing serious health-related challenges and inequities as a result of Residential Schools and colonization, coupled with insufficient healing and wellness resources. Many chronic diseases can be prevented, treated and managed with proper nutrition. Registered Dietitians (RDs) are the most qualified health care professionals to provide clients and communities with evidence-based food and nutrition advice and interventions to support positive health outcomes and save future health care dollars. Due to the remoteness of First Nation communities in Saskatchewan, access to RDs is limited or non-existent.

Given these challenges, the Government of Canada, First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (Saskatchewan) and Dietitians of Canada partnered to establish and operate a six-month Dietitian Call Centre pilot project titled Eat Well Saskatchewan (EWS). A Dietitian Call Center, also known as a Dietitian Advisory Service (DAS), is a primary health care service that provides the public and health care professionals with access to a RD through telephone or email. This results in timely, cost-effective and accessible evidence-based food and nutrition information and advice. EWS operated from January 8/18 – June 29/18 and provided First Nations communities in Saskatchewan with free, confidential, easy and trustworthy access to a RD through a toll-free phone number and email, Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. As time and resources allowed, the service accepted questions from anyone in Saskatchewan.

## Results of the Pilot Project



- Top 5 reasons for contact were:



- Data from calls indicated:

- **65%** of callers were First Nations (either a member of a First Nation or calling on behalf of a First Nations person) from various areas of the province.
- **87%** of callers were female, 13% were male.
- **87%** of callers indicated the service was useful.
- **93%** of callers indicated they would use the service again.
- **96%** of callers indicated they would recommend the service to someone else.
- **96%** of callers indicated they would like to see the service become a permanent service for all Saskatchewan residents in the future.



Indigenous Services  
Canada

Services aux  
Autochtones Canada



Dietitians of Canada  
Les diététistes du Canada

- **Data from Callback Surveys demonstrated the service lead to positive behavior changes and increased healthy eating knowledge:**

- **67%** of respondents have made changes as a result of the call that they believe will help themselves/or their family eat healthier.

- **94%** indicated yes (88%) or somewhat (6%) in response to the statement “I felt the dietitian listened to my questions.”

- **81%** indicated yes (75%) or somewhat (6%) in response to the statement “I felt better informed about the food, nutrition or health issues I was calling about.”

- **100%** indicated yes (94%) or somewhat (6%) in response to the statement “I felt the dietitian explained things to me in a way I could understand.”

- **100%** of respondents would recommend the service to family and friends.

- **100%** of respondents would like to see the service become a permanent service for all Saskatchewan residents.

- **Data from a Health Professional Survey indicated strong satisfaction with the service:**

- **87%** indicated yes (81%) or maybe (6%) when asked if they would recommend the service to clients.

- **100%** indicated yes (81%) or maybe (19%) when asked if they would recommend the service to colleagues.

- **94%** indicated yes (88%) or maybe (6%) when asked if they would like to see the service become permanent for all Saskatchewan residents.

- **What the public and health professionals had to say:**

*“Love it! Hope this pilot is successful. In my mind, it certainly sounds like it will fill a gap in available services.”*

*“I really liked it (the service) because I could call in and didn't need an appointment. I didn't receive a recording. I think people need to know how important diet is to overall health and how helpful a dietitian can be.”*

*“The biggest thing for me was that the person was understanding and a good listener and sometimes that's all it takes. She was very knowledgeable and she confirmed what I was doing was correct. It's an added benefit for our health care.”*

*“It was very accessible, timely and helped me right in the exam room. It saved me and my client time.”*

*“I hope it continues into the future because it has the potential to help reduce health gaps.”*

*“Excellent program for individuals who may be limited to the support that they can receive.”*

EWS was a successful pilot project for First Nations communities in Saskatchewan that allowed the public and health professionals to access timely, high-quality RD services no matter where they lived. Data collected throughout demonstrated high satisfaction with the service and indicated that the evidence-based advice and information provided to clients lead to positive behavior changes and increased healthy eating knowledge. A permanent Dietitian Call Center would be responsive to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' call to action of closing gaps in health outcomes for First Nations Communities.