

Traditional Medicine

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Eeyou-linuu
Nituhkuyin



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CONSEIL CRÉ DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX DE LA BAIE JAMES
CREE BOARD OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES OF JAMES BAY



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SWEETGRASS

Sweetgrass is one of our sacred medicines, symbolizing healing and peace. A grass with long soft leaves, it grows from 1 to 3 feet tall in Eeyou Istchee and other regions. Once gathered and dried, leaves are braided together for smudging at home, at work and in our ceremonies.

Combined with prayers, smudging brings us closer to the Creator. The smoke helps purify and protect our bodies, spirits and living spaces. Smudging also repels negative energies, including viruses.

Smudging your home with sweetgrass

- 1 Begin by saying a prayer aloud or silently, telling the Creator your reasons for smudging. While holding the sweetgrass braid, light one end. Let the flames die out so the end is tipped with orange-red embers and produces a fragrant smoke.
- 2 Using your hand or a feather, push smoke into all rooms in your home. Start at the front door and move clockwise around the house, allowing the smoke to drift into closets and cabinets. Follow the same procedure in the basement so that your entire living space is smudged.
- 3 Once finished, place the sweetgrass braid onto a heat-safe surface. When cool store in a safe place.

Smudging an individual with sweetgrass

- 1 Begin by saying a prayer aloud or silently, telling the Creator your reasons for smudging. While holding the sweetgrass braid, light one end. Let the flames die out so the end is tipped with orange-red embers and produces a fragrant smoke.
- 2 Using your hand or a feather, guide smoke towards the individual, from head to foot. Individuals may cup the smoke in their hands and bring it to their bodies from head to foot, inhaling if desired.
- 3 Once finished, place the sweetgrass braid onto a heat safe surface. When cool, store in a safe place.

Precautions when using Traditional Medicine

As with any medicine, exercise caution. Follow instructions and be careful when lighting the sweetgrass.

Do not use with people with breathing problems. Please ask a local knowledge keeper about moon time protocols.



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For more information on this medicine or to connect with a traditional healer/herbalist, contact the Nishiiyuu Department:

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