

Whatìgot'jì Medicine Tłıchq Dene Elders' Knowledge Databases



Tłıchq Traditional Knowledge Reports
Series 2



Dedats'eetsaa:
Tłıchq Research & Training Institute

Whatìgot'ìì Medicine Tłıchq Dene Elders' Knowledge Databases



Elders Joe and
Mary Madeline
Champlain, from
Whatì. Courtesy of
Tessa Macintosh

Tłıchq Traditional Knowledge Reports
Series 2



2024

Whatìgot'ìj Medicine

Tłıchq Dene Elders' Knowledge

Databases

Original report submitted to Lac La Martre¹ Band, 1994.

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¹ The community's name officially changed to Whatì in 2005 under the Tłıchq Agreement.

Whatìgot'jì Medicine Tłjchq Dene Elders' Knowledge Databases

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Series 2**



2024

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- Elder Pierre Beaverho, 1999 courtesy of Madelaine Chocolate Pasquayak
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- Łıwe | Fish, courtesy of Alice Legat




Elder Jimmy Nitsiza, from Whatì, discussing the benefits of diwe - dowe | tamarack, 2015. Courtesy of Alice Legat



Elder Elizabeth Chocolate, from Behchokò, preparing ɬwezqò | trout,
at Deèzàati, 1999. Courtesy of Allice Legat

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Gahwo | rabbit fur
and dzᵗweghà |
muskrat fur.
Unknown
photographer



Elder Melanie Lafferty and community researcher Albertine Eyakfwo, both from Behchokò, gathering gots'agoò | Labrador tea on Tidee, 2011.
Courtesy of Aalice Legat

Intro

These databases come from the Traditional Dene Medicine Project — a joint venture of the Whatì Band, the Dene Cultural Institute, and the Arctic Institute of North America. The project focused on Tłıchq traditional knowledge related to using and preparing local plants and animal parts for healing. The overall purpose was to:

- Find out how much traditional knowledge remains in the community and how people continue to use traditional ways for healing.
- Present the information in a way that is useful to community people who want to learn about natural and spiritual healing.

The original research took place in 1992 – 93. Joan Ryan was the principal investigator and Martha Johnson was the project director. They worked directly with the Whatì Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and community researchers Marie Adele Rabesca and Diane Romie.



Joan Ryan in Whatì in the 1950s. Unknown photographer

The medicine project was a participatory action research project. The community took ownership through the CAC. We acknowledge and thank the committee members: Joe Zoe Fish, Marie Klugie, Marie Adele Moosenose, Marie Madeline Nitsiza, and Benny Pomie. They were responsible to guide the research team.

- Decide what medicine topics to document.
- Identify plants and animal parts used for healing.
- Help develop the interview guide.
- Identify elders to interview — those with the most / best knowledge of how to use plants and animal parts for healing.

As is common in participatory action research, the verification process was an important part. This allowed for the knowledge recorded in the elders' interviews in Whatì to apply more generally to the Tł̥chq̓ region — to include the communities of Gamètì, Wekweètì, and Behchokò — and at the same time, recognize community / regional differences.



Community researchers Marie Adele Rabesca and Diane Romie at verification meeting.
Unknown photographer

The five databases are the results of that work. Separately and collectively, all the entries in each database are the traditional knowledge of Whatı elders, as recorded and translated during the original research, with some updates.

Database name	Notes on Sections
Ayı Wet'a Eyats'ııhtè - Ehzhats'ıhtè Causes of Illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on causes of illness. Collecting, preparing, and applying medicines including offerings; and spiritual healing.
Gohooaa Nıdè Ayı Wet'à Sıınadets'ehı Medical Conditions and Ways of Healing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on medical conditions. For each condition, lists plants and animals used for healing that condition. Includes combinations of plants and / or animals for that condition.
Tıch'aadıı, Chıı, eyıts'q ııwe Wet'à K'aat'ıı Adets'ehıı Animals, Birds, and Fish Used for Healing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on animals and animal parts. For each animal, lists the conditions that animal can help with healing. Where appropriate, gives details about specific animal parts involved with healing.
Dè gonàèdı Wet'à K'aat'ıı Adets'ehıı Healing from Earth's Plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on plants used for healing, including plant combinations. For each plant, lists the conditions that plant can help with healing. Where appropriate, gives details about specific plant parts involved with healing.
Ts'èko Gızaa Gòhtèe K'è Hotı Geeda Women's Reproductive Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on breast-feeding / breast milk, becoming pregnant, birthing, menstruation, healthy pregnancy, and umbilical cord.

Each database organizes the entries into different sections. All entries come directly from interviews with elders involved in the original project. Most entries have information about more than one topic. Each entry is first assigned to the section that seems most prominent. Many entries overlap from one database to another, and from one section to another. For this reason, many entries appear in more than one database; and some entries appear in more than one section in the same database. Some entries are in only one database.

These databases are not a field guide. They are a learning tool for Tłıchq, especially young people. Written information does not convey all the important meanings, descriptions, and careful and respectful ways to collect plants and prepare medicines. It is important to remember that when using plants and animals for healing it is critical to plead with the medicine and make an offering in the appropriate way. When a person wants to learn more about traditional healing, they need to spend time with Tłıchq elders.

To use the databases:

- Look at the Contents. A main Contents lists the five databases. And each database has their own Contents list.
- Use 'search' or 'find' functions on a computer or other device to find a particular word or term of interest — Tłıchq or English. Many terms appear multiple times.

Tłıchq and other Indigenous peoples use both Indigenous medical knowledge and practices and western biomedicine, separately and together. People make decisions based on available plant and animal parts, knowledge of their uses, the seriousness of the ailment or injury, available healer or nurse, and the location of the sick person (in the community or out on the land).

Biomedicine dominates the way western culture understands and explains health. Health is seen as a state where all body parts should function normally. If something goes wrong, body parts get repaired. Certain tests

decide what is wrong. Antibiotics and other medicines act as a cure. Or surgery can repair or replace body parts.

This view offers a particular way of how we relate to and deal with bodies and health — to look after them as systems that need care and proper maintenance.

In contrast, Indigenous medicine binds people to the land; to others (human and supernatural) with whom they share the land; to forces that bring health and disease, past to present, and present to future. The health of the land and all beings is interdependent. Knowing and using Indigenous medical knowledge helps to nurture and maintain these relationships and allow them to grow.



Tsəht'è | crowberries. Unknown photographer



K'ı t'èhtè | birch fungus, 2000. Courtesy of Madelaine Chocolate Pasquayak

Context and Conditions related to the 2024 Update Whatìgot'jì Medicine Databases

This report shares some important information about the particular resources that Tłıchq use (now and in the past) for specific medical conditions. It is not a 'how to' manual to find, make, and use medicines. At the same time, the databases are now ordered in a way to make it easier for people to find what they are looking for when using a search function on a computer.

We note that many of the concepts, terms, and explanations have inconsistencies and need further consideration and time. Much of the information in the report emerged from English translations of Tłıchq recordings. Western perspectives of medical conditions, and the associated language and understanding are very different than Tłıchq perspectives and understandings. During this update, we learned that it was most helpful for Tłıchq speakers / researchers to spend time with and listen to Elders (speaking Tłıchq), or listen to the original tapes in Tłıchq.

The differences in perspectives and understandings presented certain problems during the update. For example:

- Concepts of spiritual healing, spiritual power, and medicine power mean something different for every group of people. There is no simple English translation for ı̀k'òò; current translations are misleading. Concepts such as ı̀k'òò nàowoò and ınì nàowoò are complicated and require sophisticated knowledge of Tłıchq gowàechı̀ (speech or the way of talking / speaking).
- In some cases it seems that the recognition of one part of an animal or plant is different in Tłıchq than in the western perspective.
- Tłıchq researchers in training, not translators, transcribed the original tapes. English-speaking writers / researchers chose quotes from the English transcripts. Using quotes in this manner risks taking them out of context.

To help overcome these problems, we need to understand more thoroughly what Elders in Whatì were saying. We need to work closely with senior Elders who live / lived in the bush and have this expertise, and the Tłıchq speakers / writers / researchers who already have experience with this important information.

- Transcribe in Tłıchq all the audio tapes. Use people knowledgeable in the language. Tłıchq speakers / writers / researchers need to read and re-read the concepts to understand medicine that comes from the land.
- Discuss further the information and naming of processes, concepts, and terms.
- Tag key concepts to the audio files so Tłıchq citizens can listen to information from the person who gave it.

This work is essential to further update this document, and to help ensure that the information in the Whatìgot'ı̀ Medicine Databases is more correct, and categorized in a way consistent with Tłıchq understandings.

Note that each Tłıchq dialect has their own way to spell some of the terms in these databases. Sometimes only one Tłıchq spelling appears. This does not imply that one dialect is more important than any other; each is essential.

Ayü Wet'a Eyats'ìihlè - Ehzhats'ìlè

Causes of Illness

In this database, elders share knowledge about the relationships between causes of illness; collecting, preparing, and applying medicines including offerings; and spiritual healing. Each Tłchq dialect has their own way to spell some of the terms in this database. Sometimes only one Tłchq spelling appears. This does not imply that one dialect is more important than any other; each is essential.



Eghqkèè | Water plant root, 2000. Courtesy of Madelaine Chocolate Pasquayak

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Ayii Wet'a Eyats'iihtè - Ehzhats'itè | Causes of Illnesses

T'asii gogha nezj-le	Allergies
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One thing that causes the sickness was allergies.

Alexis Flunkie [29/04/93]

Some people have allergies. They may be allergic to wolves and beavers and bears, and we don't know anything about their allergies. A person may not explain anything about themselves to us, and another person does. When we are cooking, we can smell something cooking. But when they inhale that scent, it makes them sick. A long time ago that was the only kind of sickness there was.

Rosalie Zoe [01/03/93]

Nàowo nàqts'èzj	Breaking rules
-----------------	----------------

Some people who ate the head found it made them sick. Some people are not allowed to eat any type of animal head. In the past, people used to follow their spiritual guideline. If you ate any food that was on the floor where people walked over it, it made you sick too. This is what we were taught. If a person got sick from these things, they asked for a spiritual person's help. They persuaded him to practice his power when there was no doctor around. This is how people were affected by diseases in the past. It could be that because some people had heart problems, they didn't eat animal hearts.

That was how it was when a person ate food that was not good for them. When the spiritual person seeks the sick person, he finds out what is wrong with them. Then he says, "This is what is causing your illness." If they told a person not to eat the head or the heart, they just had to obey the spiritual person. Some people can't eat bear meat, or even beaver. That was how people roamed in this land. There are all kinds of fish, but some people got sick from eating fish as well. Once they ate what they didn't like, they started to get sick, and just got worse and worse until they became very ill. They died if they didn't get any help from the spiritual person.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/01/93]

Dàanì edets' edaa xè tadji nèhòkw'o

Changing lifestyle

We use all types of things, nowadays; we chew tobacco and smoke, we take sugar, tea, all these things. That's why we are always sick. But the old-timers were not like that. They said they didn't know anything, not even about tea, and that is the truth. They only drank water. And if they wanted tea, they only used Labrador tea. That's what they used for tea. But us, we're not like that, we take everything. That's why we're not healthy. If only we were like people were in the past.

They said that some people have weak blood because they take too much sugar. Ever since I was a young girl, since I lived with my parents, I never added sugar in my tea. Even my older sister never took sugar. That was how she was until she died.

It would be good if we only used bush medicine. It is our fault if we don't dress ourselves up really good and warm, and we catch a cold. My mother said people used to cook their meat until it burned and then ate it. They don't just cook the meat; they threw it on the fire and cooked it until it's burned. And then they ate it. That's why there was no sickness. But nowadays you people are too proud. You only want to eat something that is cooked well on top of the stove. Long ago it wasn't like that is what my mother said.

And I think she is right because now we don't like to eat something that is burnt. They used to throw caribou legs in the fire. That's what my late father used to do once in a while. He used to cook the feet, peel the legs, and put them in a big pail and bring it to boil. And after it boils, they drained the broth through something and then drank it. They drank it when they were eating too. That's how we never got sick and it's good they said. Now we don't do that. That is why we don't feel healthy.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

People didn't get sick much in the past. People moved around in the bush and ate food from the land. They were healthy. Since people eat store-bought food there is a lot more sickness.

Marie Adele Moosenose, Marie Adele Beaverho
[27/04/93]

Since the Europeans came, everything has changed. Even the food has changed. They brought in chicken, beef, all different sorts of food. And natives aren't used to that. But since we start to take these new foods, everyone seems to get sick. And this is what causes the sickness.

Dàanì edets' edaa xè ładjì nèhòkw'ò

Changing lifestyle

But in our ancestors' time, there wasn't any sickness because they ate only animal meat like caribou, moose, fish, and all other kinds of game. But the people from outside raised other animals for meat in the store that causes sickness for our people. This is what I've said before and I've told my husband as well.

We still experience our lives like the old timers used to do. We hardly buy food from the store. Whatever God has put on this earth, I am willing to eat that only. I really mean it. That is why we both live only on meat and fish. And we don't hardly eat junk food from the store.

Other people always buy chicken and meat from the store and they eat these things the most. That's why they get bad diseases that we can't name. These diseases have spread throughout the world and have killed many of our people. We have lost all our loved ones because of this disease; we lost our grandparents, or parents, children, and little ones. It was up to us to buy this food whether we want it or not. Because of this food the sickness came. And this is very true what I just said.

And all the pollution from above has created diseases for us too. In the past people ate all kinds of animals, meat, and its parts. But they never told anyone that you got this kind of disease.

Nowadays, the doctor tells a patient you have gallstones in your stomach. It causes pain. What do they mean by that? Sometimes I just sit and think about this word gallstone. The stone is not a food, so why should we eat them? Do we eat stone? I just wonder what they meant. And do you understand what they mean? To me it's very funny when they say you have a gallstone.

Long time before my parents' time there were no diseases, none at all. People only died when they got a growth of moss on their cheek. People lived until they got very, very old. This is what was said to us by the elders. But today there is nothing like it. People depend only on modern medicine. They no longer bother with bush medicine. If we remained in our late peoples' steps, maybe we wouldn't get into all these diseases.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

In the past we never heard of anybody dying from a bad chest cold. There was no such thing in the past because we used to work only in the bush. And when we were trapping for beaver, wherever we travelled, we always walked in, all the time. We didn't have any rubber boots. And sometimes our legs got really cold

Dàanì edets'edaa xè tadji nèhòkw'o

Changing lifestyle

from walking in the cold water. But we had no idea what a really bad cold was. That was how we used to work. And also when we travelled by canoe, we never complained about being cold.

We ate only fresh meat. In those days there was hardly any store-bought food. Mostly we cooked something on the open fire. We hardly boiled meat. Mostly we ate meat that was smoked well and cooked on the fire.

These days mostly we boil fish, but it wasn't like that then. Wherever we travelled we always carried frozen fish with us. And we cooked the fish like that while it's frozen. When it's cooked, we cut out the cooked part and eat it like that. Even the fish eggs were partially cooked. That is why for us there is no such thing as getting tired, even after we've been walking on the land all day long. I guess it's because we ate partially cooked meat. The animals have strong blood that makes us strong. There was no such thing as getting sick.

Even for myself, ever since I was able to trap on my own, I've done all the work that was taught to me by my relatives. I ate the way they had and I never had any kind of sickness.

Ever since people started getting social assistance and family allowance, and they started to buy all kinds of things like junk food in the store — because of all that, it seems like we can hardly do our work. We get short of breath too. We eat all kinds of food from the store. And we also say the store meats are good, so we buy the meat from the store.

And because of that we suffer sickness ourselves. These days we damage our health from eating store food. Some people can't seem to help themselves with anything, even before they get really old, like 60 years and over. With the store-bought food we feel miserable.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

When the first medicine was brought, many people were cured and that was really good. We hardly saw people with pneumonia or complaining about backache. Nowadays, even young people get backache. In those days long ago, young people always moved around and they remained strong and healthy. But today people just stay in one place and don't move around. That's why many of them get sick often.

Dàanì edets'edaa xè ładjì nèhòkw'o

Changing lifestyle

In early spring we travelled in the slush and our feet got really wet, even though we used snowshoes. But we never heard about pneumonia. Today, people get pneumonia easily because they don't get out of the house much.

In the past, old people worked in the bush and lived well without an old age pension, and they survived. When I was very small, we even travelled to the barren lands with them. I had worked with the late Wezoò's son Philip Dryneck when they were trapping out in the bush, and we took turns. Seedò nì (the late Seedò) had three dogs and camped overnight, and we used to travel with him. Sometimes Phillip and I took turns travelling with him. And we went along with the late grandfather John Whàrè (Whane). Old people like that loved to set traps in the warm weather and they caught two or three fur bearers but they didn't mind.

Councillor Pierre's older brother, who they called hump neck, travelled with three dogs to their trap line. They worked with only three dogs and they depended on those dogs because they carried all their belongings.

Many things have changed compared to the old days. That is why many people get sick. Elders don't travel anywhere in the bush. Only young people travel by skidoo; they travel too fast and over lots of bumps, so elders can't travel with them. Travelling by skidoo gives you a backache, even for young people.

As for myself I get treatment from the doctor. The first time I travelled by skidoo, I really enjoyed it because it was fast to get to anywhere. Then later I started to get a back problem. But things are different for today and we always sit in a warm place. People should not be sick; but because of these reasons people get sick often.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/01/93]

Long ago there was hardship and there was nothing that had to do with white man's things; their food and medicine. And when a person got sick, they just caught a cold and it's just that. But in this generation, it's not like that. White people brought lots of white man's food, like junk food. That's why recently lots of people have pneumonia. This is what they say.

These days there are all types of commercial food. Everything they want is in the stores. They have tobacco, and chewing tobacco, and all types of tobacco in the stores. Even our children or other small children all less than 10 years old chew snuff. And for that reason, when our relatives got sick and they went to see

Dàanì edets' edaa xè ładjì nèhòkw'o

Changing lifestyle

the doctor, they tell them they have cancer. But it's too late. The cancer had already spread in their body. But in the past, nobody knew nothing like that; nothing at all.

My children eat too much candy and their teeth are all rotten. I still have all my teeth; I haven't lost any teeth yet.

In my early years, we canoed in the bush where there were lots of caribou all winter long. There was hardly any sweet stuff. And we never saw a young child proudly stirring their cup of tea with sugar, drinking their tea like that.

That is why the old timers never had any rotten teeth; they only fell out by themselves. The old timers never complained about toothache. Like Jimmy's mother; she's about 100 years old and she still has all her teeth.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

In those days we never heard anyone complain about a toothache. These days people eat too many soft sweets and that's why they suffer much from toothaches. It wasn't like that before. I've never seen an elder with a missing tooth. And I never heard them complain about their toothache.

These days there are all types of diseases. Nowadays even small children wear eyeglasses. It wasn't like that in the past. Even an old man and old woman do their sewing under a small candlelight. I've seen them do that; I've seen them sew their moccasins. And when they put the thread through the needle they never said "do this for me". They had really good eyes.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

These days when we complain about pain all the time, that's because we don't have enough energy and our blood doesn't circulate. We just sit in one spot and don't move around too much. We don't even go far in the bush. That's why our blood just sits. We have nothing to bring ourselves back to our God.

If we worked in the bush the way our ancestors have done in the past and we continued to work in the bush, we may not feel the sickness all the time.

We're not like that. That's why our blood doesn't circulate. We just walk around in our house doing nothing. And we go in and out from our house, that's all we do. And we don't even move around; we don't feel the coldness in our body, and we're always warm.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Dàanì edets'edaa xè ładji nèhòkw'o

Changing lifestyle

Today there is little spiritual power around. There are some spiritual people still today. I don't know how many exactly or who has the power.

Elizabeth Mantla, Marie Adele Moosenose [27/04/93]

Yes, some people still practice their ɣk'qò. Since they don't talk about themselves, we don't know about them. My brother is one of them. Some people have spiritual power but we don't talk about them.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

Yes, some people have the spiritual power. Some people can seek the person's sickness when they dream for them. Whatever we have to give to them in exchange, we give it to them. There are a few people that have spiritual power here in Whatì. Some people are not recognized as spiritual persons because they don't cure sick people yet.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

I don't know much about this, but some still practice their power. That's what I think. We don't seem to keep track, so I don't really know what to say about this. There are women who practice their power, so there are the young women and men. Like in the past when a woman was in labour and having a difficult time. And when there was no doctor around, people tried everything to help her. But if they failed, they gave water to the woman in labour. And shortly after the woman drank the water, she gave birth. This is what has been said. It is like that in almost every community where people live, all down the Mackenzie River. There are still many people living among us who practice their power.

I don't know what their thoughts are, but in today's generation the children are taught in school and by television. So, they don't have any thoughts about being a spiritual person. And I don't know what spiritual secret the young people have. Because some of them do the same things as the young people did in the past.

They say that this child does not sleep well and he gets awakened by nightmares and cries. So, the people say that this is not just an ordinary act that is happening; it means something. This is what people used to say in the past and people are still saying this today.

And some young people have a strange dream and they talk about it with their parents or friends. I think some people still get strange dreams, even today. They

Dàanì edets'edaa xè tadji nèhòkw'o

Changing lifestyle

say there is no such thing as spiritual power, it's not true, because some people still practice their power.

Yes, some young people are like that. Some young people have power and they examine a sick person, and even cure their disease. It still carries on to this day. Young women, they have power too. We know about some people's secret powers, but we can't mention it. We are not to mention a person's name on this tape, but we know some people still practice their jk'qò.

Joe Zoe Fish [24/05/91]

The spiritual powers are weak today because the spiritual people receive money, slipper patterns, or bullets for examining the sick person. There are very few people that still practice their spiritual power like before.

The spiritual person saw anybody, it didn't matter who it was. One of my sons had a very bad headache. To get cured he paid the spiritual person thirty dollars. Since then, he felt much better.

We don't really know what will become of our young people in the future. Maybe they have a secret power hidden and no one knows about it. We notice some young people do give water to the sick person, and they are cured.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/07/93]

Well, there are about two people that still use their spiritual power here in Whatì.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

Dq ełek'eèniede

Curses

These days there are diseases like cancer. Long ago there was no such thing like that. And also there was no TB or bad colds. It was only the allergies that made a person sick. So a spiritual person seeks for them and takes away their illness. Whatever kind of animal had cast his illness, the spiritual person takes that away. And when he takes the sickness away, whatever it was is in the palm of his hand. That's how it was in the past.

And after they cured that person and took away the spirit of the animal that caused their sickness, that spiritual person told the people that they were sick for

Dq ełek'eèniède

Curses

a long time, and what caused the infection. He got some bush medicine for them and said what kind of bush medicine he used; he made that for us and we drank that medicine. It helped the infection to go away; and once it's gone then that's it. The person felt better and was back to health.

Rosalie Zoe (01/03/93)

People got sick from all kinds of cursing by another person, but the spiritual people were the ones who had to cure them all.

Alexis Flunkie [29/04/93]

In those days some people put curses on each other that could cause sickness. But if it was just a disease, they never complained about their health and their personal life, even if they were a spiritual person. If it's just a disease they cure each other. When a person was really sick, they lost lots of weight. And they are given water with a feather only.

Even when the person is really sick like that, a spiritual person predicted what was causing their sickness. It's just like when the doctor is checking them.

When the spiritual person took away their sickness, they felt better and they got better. That was how they used to cure each other. I suppose they knew what kind of disease it was. They never called for doctors. People only cured each other with their spiritual power. That's how I remember it.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

Jdaà nèk'e gots'q tàdaa

European diseases

Since the Europeans came to our country, we started to get all kinds of diseases. In some cases, the spiritual people can't cure them at all.

Alexis Flunkie [29/04/93]

White people cause sickness for the Dene.

Marie Adele Moosenose [27/04/93]

In those days, where we used to live, I never heard of anyone having a chest cold. People only travelled in cold weather. These days people get flu. But at that time there was nothing. When people gathered in Behchokò, that's when we

Jdaà nèk'e gots'q tàdaa

European diseases

heard that people had the flu. They used to complain and say there is no sickness when we lived in the bush. And some people were really sick with a cold and a headache, but they still they went back to the bush.

In the barrenlands there are no doctors. Even when a person was really sick, they helped each other over the portages. Some of them knew they won't make it to wherever they wanted to die. They even carried their wives over the portages. I saw them do that. They even carried their son over the portage, who was old enough to be married.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

Kwe'tjì nàèdi

Modern medicine

People get sick more by taking modern medicine.

Elizabeth Mantla [27/04/93]

As soon as we get a chest cold or fever, we rush to the nursing station. We won't get better, but we get medicine from them just to feel no pain. It seems like their medicine doesn't cure a person's disease, but just makes the person relax.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

Long ago when people discovered bush medicine, they shared with one another. And this way people knew what to collect when they got sick. At that time there was no modern medicine and people hardly had problems with their health.

And since doctors arrived, the modern medicine that they give to their patients doesn't seem to work at all. All they do is they switch to different medicine; and that causes us more sickness. We're always having different types of disease and feel miserable with it.

We should start making the bush brew again like our ancestors did in the past. We should gather about five or six women and a man to lead us in the bush to collect some plants for the disease. We should search for the plants, collect the ones that are good, and save them for healing. Together we should help others and share our work. Maybe if one of us was cured, we'd all feel good about it. We could do this now, but it seems like there is no one to lead us to the bush.

Elizabeth Mantla [09/10/92]

Kwe'tjì nàèdì

Modern medicine

Yes, even now they still use that bush medicine when we don't get better with the modern medicine. The doctors tell us, "Because you don't get better with modern medicine, maybe you should try the medicine the old timers used in the past."

Rosalie Zoe [01/03/93]

Nàts'ehstjì, Siìts'ehwìj, Nàèdì Edek'e Ats'ehwìj | Collecting, Preparing, Applying Medicines

Tich'aadì wets'q nàèdì ts'ehstjì

Collecting animal medicine

I'm not sure about women collecting medicine, if it has to do with animals. I don't think women can work on the animal. But men could collect them well. After we collect a small piece, women do whatever they do with it. It was said that women can't work on the bear. That was how the stories were told. When they butchered a bear, sometimes it could be eaten. Some parts can't be eaten, like bear fat grease. For this reason, the women were always watched and they had to watch themselves when they were around the animal.

They had fear for that animal because it has a great spirit. And if a person got attacked by its spirit, that person was not cured. That is why the women were always watched. That was the only animal like that. Women could butcher other animals, like caribou, if they watched out for their blood. They made sure to step over the blood and to not let the blood touch their feet. That is what they watched out for.

If a woman got attacked by the animal spirit, they didn't know what to do with her. This is why women really had to watch out for themselves when they are around dead animals. That was the way their relatives had talked to them.

But these days it's not like that. For the bear, the woman can't work on the bear. Only the men can butcher it. And if some part has to be collected for medicine, they can do that. After it's collected, the women can do whatever she needs to do, because it's just a small piece

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

Tich'aàdii wets'q nàèdì gha nàdats'eetì

Before taking from an animal, make a request

When you see a bear make sure you shoot it. And if you have shot a bear, plead to the animal first before you butcher it. Plead to the animal by saying this: "My sister-in-law has this sickness for a long time and is also coughing out blood." And then butcher it and take its bladder out.

This is what the old woman had advised Pierre, before he went out. As I was taking the bear bladder brew, granny told me to plead to it because this was my first taste of bear bladder. You really have to plead to it, for it was a living animal part and other animals hear your message.

Elizabeth Mantla [09/10/92]

We just talk to the animal, just like if we talk to someone; and then use the part as a medicine.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Wherever we have pain in our body, we get the same part from the animal. When we have pain in our legs then we got its marrow. We have to talk to it and give our message to it and then eat it. And that helps to cure our legs they said.

When we had a bad heart and we killed a bear, we used its heart. I don't know if it had to be cooked or it could be raw. And when some people said they have a bad heart, they cut out its heart and say to it, "You are a good medicine and you could cure me." This is what we said to it. We really had to plead and give our message to it. Then finally we ate it.

And when we had a sore arm, we took the animal arm and cooked it and ate it. And for that too we pleaded and gave our message to it; then we ate it. And if the pain had to go away, then it went away.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

Tich'aàdii wets'q nàèdì siìts'ehᑭ

Preparing animal medicine

Yes, they keep the animal parts for a long time after they are dry. Fish bladder and the bear bladder are all dried. And bear parts are collected. Because they are dried, they can be kept it for a long time, just like dried muskrat and the beaver pelts.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Tich'aadi wets'q nàedi sìts'ehç

Preparing animal medicine

We never lay our hands on that spinal cord. They always watch out for its back when they kill a bear. They also watch out for its legs; they never throw them in the fire. That animal is like that, even though we use the parts. But we have to watch out for its stomach; they never burn it. And its feet are okay. But the marrow, we never place the knife near it, never break the bone. And they never place the knife on the spinal cord, never cut it. They have to watch for that. They may chop the ribs out, but the rest they don't chop it.

When we skin the caribou, we chop it apart with the knife. We don't do that with the bear. We only chop out its ribs and not any other parts. We never chop it with the knife. It's just that animal that is like that.

It was said that we never throw bear legs in the fire. We may take the liver and cook it, and that is okay. But we never burn its legs. That was said a long time ago. Even my parents had talked about that.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

It was Marie Adele who told me these stories. When we burn the caribou antlers, they look white. And after we burn them and pound them with an axe, they look like powder. Then we make a brew and drink it. That's how the antlers were discovered. And that's why the Chinese buy antlers.

That's how the Chinese make lots of money out of antlers. Since we found out, we don't want to sell these antlers again. That's what Marie Adele said, Charlie's wife. Narcisse brought in some antlers to sell, but they said they didn't want to buy any more, so Narcisse took them back. And it's better for us to use it for its brew. This is how I heard about the antlers. I think that is true that they had discovered good medicine from the antlers.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Dègonàedi edek'e ats'ehç

Applying plant medicine

Because it's not modern medicine, they take the plants as they like. They drink the brew for three or four days. But for people that are not too bad, they drink the brew for two days. And sometimes they smear it on themselves too. And sometimes when the person is lucky, they are cured quickly, granny said.

Dègonàèdi edek'e ats'ehç

Applying plant medicine

If we feel that we have infection inside our body and make bush medicine, like spruce bough brew, we can feel the burning inside as we take that bush brew, she said. And if we like the brew, we keep taking it for more than a week. She said this helps to heal the infection inside our stomach.

But she said if we feel fine with it, we only take it for two or three days. And they let it boil for more than two hours if they want really strong bush brew.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

They didn't take it by hours; they drank it any time until it was all gone. That's what they did. Some people always had bush brew on top of the stove or by the fire. It's just like tea that they left by the stove, and whoever wanted to drink it, drank it. In those days there was no modern medicine.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

Every day they took plant brew about two times a day. They took it in the afternoon and in the evening; they could take it three times a day. That's what the old timers used to do.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

If they are to make the bush medicine, only that could be taken, I guess. That's the only kind of brew they could take. It's just the same as when you drink tea in a cup. Sometimes they took this bush brew for two whole days. And if they felt better, they stopped taking the brew.

If they got different diseases, they used other kinds of bush medicine since there are all kinds of them. And whatever was good for relieving the pain they gave to the sick person.

When my late grandparents weren't feeling well, they drank this bush brew for a couple of days until they got better.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

Dègonàèdii nàts'ehtsjj: dàht'e / dàanì
/ edjì

Collecting plant medicine: when /
how / where

When it comes to early summer and the plants start to grow, that's when people started to collect the bush plants with sap. Once they collected them, they boiled them really well and saved the brew. Otherwise, they dried and kept them. During early summer the bush sap is rich. That is why they used to collect and keep them during that time.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

It's about August I think that's when they collected plants. It was said that's when they have lots of sap.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

In early spring, about the first day of summer, that's when all the plants, roots, trees get really juicy; that is the right time to collect them. They knew what made good medicine and that was what they picked first and saved as well.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

When the trees are really full with the sap that was the time to collect them. We scraped them and collected the white part from inside. First, we offered a match or chewing tobacco, or the peel of one cigarette, and said, "This tree, you are a good medicine for me. With you I will get better." This is what we said. And if it was for a cold, then it was used for a cold. And if our stomach was sore, then we used it to rub on our stomach. And at the same time, we drank the herb juice. That's how we gathered trees.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

When they were on the land, they used various things. They used spruce cones, black currant plants, and dried birch bark. During the warm weather they used spruce sap and spruce gum, poplar bark and poplar sap. They also used the soft spruce gum.

Before the cold weather came, people gathered various herbs, plants, and barks and kept them in containers. They also picked the soft spruce gum that is used to heal cuts. They gathered these things and put them in containers for future use.

Marie Klugie [01/10/91]

Dègonàèdì nàts'ehtsìj: dàht'e / dàanì
/ edjì

Collecting plant medicine: when /
how / where

Sometimes when people had difficulty in their area, they came here to our area. For they knew some of their late relatives died well around here. And they thought, "If I come to see my late people's graveyard and collect some good bush plants beside their grave and make its brew, I probably will get better again." People from other places came to this area just to see people's graves and collect plants beside them. I guess this is what they meant.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [02/10/91]

If we wanted to keep medicine to use later, we put them in a plastic bag and tied it with a string. They collected all types of plants and used them in the winter, when it was hard to search around for these plants. This k'àk'oò (red willow) it's very good medicine for bladder infection. Only red willow brew can cure this infection. And Saskatoon berry, its stump is very good medicine. There are lots around the old fish lodge area.

But if they really wanted to collect plants, they had to be sure of where they collected them. Some areas are different. Some people who had the gift from the earth medicine knew where to get the plants and how to pull them out. But the person that doesn't know these plants very well and pulls them out by mistake will get sick from it; they won't get well at all.

And these types of earth medicine, like rat root and tamarack, grow just down the mouth of the river. It's too difficult for people to find and collect them, for there are none around here. My late uncle Firmie was the only one who knew about earth medicine and he used to pull them out. I saw him doing it when I was just a young girl, but now I'm old.

It's very dangerous to take rat root and modern medicine together. Rat root is about this long and it's green. You have to pull it out with its roots. Sometimes it's about this big and this long (hand gesture), and it has a yellowish colour. This is the best medicine.

Suppose we chopped our foot with an axe by accident. We chewed this rat root well and placed this on our foot. It was back to normal in a week's time. There is rat root around in this area and many other good plants too. There are many kinds of bush medicine and we have to be careful about collecting them.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [02/10/91]

Dègonàèdì nàts'ehtsìj: dàht'e / dàanì / edjì

Collecting plant medicine: when / how / where

Say for instance, if you wanted to collect certain herbs between here and Gamètì, then you just go ahead and collect what you need without asking anyone. If you knew of a good place for certain herbs then you might tell this to another person who may be interested in accompanying you to collect what they need. In the past, people shared everything in the land, so there was no problem or issue about whose country it was.

Alexis Flunkie [09/10/91]

There was no problem with collecting plants from anywhere on the land. No one made an issue of whose land it was. Whoever wanted to take and use different trees could do so. For instance, we go down always from here and we take rat roots from rivers between here and Marion Lake, where there are a lot of rat roots.

Philip Nitsiza [03/10/91]

When the plants start to grow in early summer is a very good time to collect tamarack juice, if you want to. Every plant starts to grow and all its roots too. For tamarack that has just grown, you first need to dig out the dirt around the plant, then pull the root. Then place your offering like matches, tobacco, shells of any kind. Then take it home and prepare it well; boil it to make the brew. If we take two, we must use the first one we took for the first treatment, because it received the offering first. To prepare it, we scrape the top off until it gets really clean. Then we chop it into chunks and put them in a pail to boil. We keep the other one for some other time.

The first one we took is really good for healing. Lots of people have used this when they were coughing a lot; it really helps people to stop coughing. It's good for any kind of sickness, such as sore throat, mouth infection, and other areas with sores. Tamarack has cured almost all the diseases.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Amèe dègonàèdii nàyehtsì

Who can collect plant medicine

Men or women, anybody can collect plants. Sometimes when we women are sick, our husband can collect plants for us. When I didn't feel well, he collected plants like water plant roots (eghòhkèè). He said these water plants are good to try. And so he went out to collect them for me.

He also collected tamarack and k'ichì (willow). Once he went out and collected some plants, he advised me what plant is good for pain. This is what he did when he went out to collect plants for me. This is your late uncle I'm talking about. He used to make all kinds of bush brew for me. He never chewed any tobacco but he used to tell me that he already offered it his gift. He said he offered it a stick match and pleaded to it too. As he was saying this, he made its brew for me. Not only men can do this, women can too.

Like when a man has problems passing water, women can collect plants for him and make the brew. This was what my late granny said. "When we made bush medicine long ago there was no such thing as a good cloth. We drained the brew through a cloth like mosquito bar. This way there was no dirt in the brew and that is how we drink bush medicine," she said. It's just the same with men and women collecting plant medicine.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

When a woman can't go anywhere because her child is crying too much and gives her a hard time, the men collected plants for her. Even in winter when the man was mushing his dogs, he collected some plants and brought them home. Men or women, anyone can collect plants.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

People who gathered plants freely gave them to people who didn't get the chance to gather. They gave out plants according to the ailment. They shared this medicine. The elderly ladies helped each other, gathering and sharing plants.

Marie Adele Moosenose [03/10/91]

People did not usually go together to collect herbs. Individual people usually collected these herbs by themselves.

In the past there was no one person in charge of the various traditional herbs. People picked herbs as they needed them, or when they got sick. If someone knew where to get some herbs that they felt could help someone, they collected

Amèe dègonàèdìl nàyehtsì

Who can collect plant medicine

those herbs. They brought the herbs back to the camp to be boiled, like tree bark, so the juices could be given to the sick person.

These traditional medicines were usually shared among the people who needed them. That is how it used to be. In the past people did not ask who is responsible for doing this or that in terms of tasks. Nowadays when we want to do something, we have to ask, under who's authority? Or who is in charge of this task? In the past, it was not like that at all. When people knew that certain people were ill, someone collected the bush medicine to help the sick person. That is how it was. That is how they helped one another.

Alexis Flunkie [09/10/91]

Dègonàèdìl wets'ats'eehdìl

Offering plant medicine

And it's true what they said about bush brew. Long ago, before the white people came, people had no idea about the white system, and there were no doctors. People looked around for the best plants to cure their disease and use them to make the brew for medicine.

Before they collected the bush plants, they had to offer their gift to it. As they offered their gift, they had to say, "I'm offering this gift so that you will be a good medicine and cure my sickness quickly."

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

All these plants, when we collected them, we offered them our gift and pleaded to them, in their place. They said it is good to do it this way. We kept the ones that were good medicine; and for any time when we have pain, we made the brew and drank it.

They said it's good when we collect plants in the spring. We don't just collect them; we have to offer our gift first. They say to the plant, "You will be a good medicine for me." This is what they say. And they placed one or three matchsticks in its place and then collected what they needed for their medicine.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

If we had to collect this nexochìì (roots), first we have to try to offer this chewing tobacco. And this is what we say. "I'm pleading with you about my sickness and I hope you will heal me with your medicine because we know that

Dègonàèdii wets'àts'eehdii

Offering plant medicine

you are a good medicine for this kind of disease.” After pulling its roots out we also take its cone, but we had to place matches or tobacco as an offering.

Same thing with tamarack. The small tamarack with its roots is pulled out in its place, and we offer more gifts, placing them on the ground. When this plant is satisfied with our gift we heal quickly.

Even nexochjì (roots) and rosehip thorns are good medicine. The reason for the thorn is that Jesus had this on his head. Whatever we have asked of thee it will be granted to us. We pulled it out or chopped off what we needed. If we had a penny or coin to offer, we did that. People had said that this thorn brew surely helped to cure the disease because Jesus had used this as the crown.

Yes, every plant has to be paid. And any bush medicine that is taken is exchanged as an offering.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

My father used to tell us this: “Whenever you collect a plant make sure you do your offering first.”

Even today when we collect them, we have to offer our gift, then pick them and make its brew out of it. The offering that we need to give is something like matches with tobacco and we plead as we collect them. We put our offering right under the stump if it's a spruce tree or tamarack, and we plead with all the other plants too.

Elizabeth Mantla

They offered the plant anything; it could be tobacco or a match. This is what my granny said; it could be offered anything. Well, it seems like only two things, I guess. That's the reason why when we collected plants, we had to offer it something first. As we pleaded to it, we said, “It is true that our God has put you on this earth. And we will be very grateful to you if you grant my wishes.” This is what we said to it. And if we had tobacco with us then we offered it tobacco. And if we wanted, we placed a matchstick down by the stem too.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

We have to make an offering to it first; we don't just collect them like that. We have to send our message through them. “I am going to be cured when I drink your brew.” This is what we say to it with our gift. We don't just take it, just like

Dègonàèdii wets'àts'eehdii

Offering plant medicine

that. Even if we collect some spruce gum, we offer it our gift. If we don't offer it our gift, we won't get better with it.

We offer it our gift to drink its brew and to be cured by it. Anything, we offer it anything. If we have chewing tobacco, we can even offer it small pieces of that. Or it could be a match.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

When the trees are really full with the sap; that is the time to collect them. We scraped them and the white part from inside is what we collected. First, we offered it a match or chewing tobacco, or peel off one cigarette and offered that. And we said, "This tree, you are a good medicine for me; with you I will get better." This is what we said.

And if it was to be for a cold, then it was for a cold. And if our stomach was sore then we used it to rub on our stomach. And at the same time, we drank the herb juice. That's how we gathered trees.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Dègonàèdii wets'àts'eehdii / Tich'aàdii
wets'q nàèdii gha nàdats'eetiOffering plant / animal
medicine

It is true when they say that if we wanted to smear something on our body, then we had to plead to it, animal or plant, because it can hear us. This is what my late mother said.

Even when we skinned the squirrel, we had to plead to it. They are like people. We could never smear something on our self without offering it something at the end of the stem.

Even when we collected spruce tree layer and soft spruce gum. We had to leave something at the end of the stem. We offered it our gift; we had to offer our gift to every plant. We never just picked plants like that; we had to plead to it. If we were lucky, we got better with it fast.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

All these plants that we talked about, we had to offer our gift and we also had to plead to it. As for animal parts, when they were ready to smear it on their body,

Dègonàèdì wets'ats'eehdì / Tich'aàdì
wets'q nàèdì gha nàdats'eetì

Offering plant / animal
medicine

they had to plead to it by saying, "With this may I get well and be cured quickly. And this is why I'm offering my gift to you for my wish."

The plant is paid anything when collected. But for animal parts we just have to plead to it. When we are about to smear the animal part on our body, we talk to it just as we talk to a person. That is how we are supposed to show respect to the animal.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

All the plants need to get paid for their use and their healing. But as for animals, they just need a few good words and if you are granted, you will be fine.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Dègonàèdì sìits'ehᑭ

Preparing plant medicine

My late granny Modzàni (the late Modzà) had a fireplace and she always had the fire going. And she had a hook that she used for cooking and to hold the kettle. Whenever we entered her place, we saw that she had a pole rack that looked like a drying rack. That's what they used to have in their homes before. After the plants were collected, she tied them together and hung them on the drying rack. She had this t'èhtè (brownish fungus) tied and hanging on the drying rack; also, detsᑭ t'èhtè (wooden fungus) and k'ì t'èhtè (birch fungus).

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

After collecting the plant, they took it home and peeled off the top part and the inside too. Then placed the plant in a pail, added water, and brought it to a boil. Once it was well boiled, they let it cool off and then drank it. This is how they recovered from their illness.

Marie Adele Champlain [02/03/93]

If it was not a woman, then a man could also prepare these bush medicines. A man could prepare various bush medicines based on his knowledge of the various herbs that he kept. The women also made various bush mixtures that they liked, and kept them. In the past the Dene people used these various traditional bush mixtures for medicine, since they did not have modern medicine.

Marie Klugie [01/10/91]

Ik'qò t'à sexè k'àat'ih | Ik'qò Healing

Ik'qò nàowoò gihchi gha

Acquire power

In the past a person heard a strange sound. It only meant for him to become a spiritual person. My father-in-law told me his stories. When he was very young, he knew what was going to happen to him. He said that when he was very young his father told him this: "My son, if you want to be a successful person, you will find success if you keep going out to the forest very often and sleep out there. And if you hear any strange sounds don't be afraid of it. If there is an exciting sound go to it."

"But only when you reach adulthood will you start to live to the spirits' example. But in the meantime, while you are just a young boy, get involved with them. And spend most of your time out in the bush just to please your spiritual power."

"But while you are at home and hear this beautiful sound, go and rest on top of the pole rack." This is what my father told me. And I heard this sound that was calling for me. As I reached my adulthood, my spiritual power encouraged me to do more. What they told me was a very good task. For if we heal just one person in the right way, it's very good.

Alexis Flunkie [29/04/93]

When a boy is young, a father will advise his son that he should be active. He tells his son that he should be out in the bush to seek his spiritual power. For in the future, the son will be dependent upon his spiritual power. During this time when the young man was seeking his spiritual power, he was always in the bush.

Some of these young men dream and receive spiritual power. That was how men got spiritual power in the past. As evening approaches, young men should not go out because they might walk over a woman's path. We don't live according to these rules anymore.

Marie Klugie, Marie Madeline Nitsiza, Celine Eyakfwo,
Rosa Romie [26/04/93]

My grandmother told me these stories about receiving spiritual power. If young boys and girls don't know that they are to be spiritual people, they are frightened when they have a vision.

In their dreams the animal comes towards them, talking to them and telling them that he is to be their spirit. They dream about their spiritual animal often,

Jk'qò nàowoò gihchì gha

Acquire power

until they become adults / married. That is when their spirit comes back to them, to tell them they are ready to use their power, and what kind of gift they should receive in exchange for the help of their spiritual power.

The spiritual animals tell them what sort of gift they should receive to heal someone. If the spiritual animal doesn't receive this gift they cannot heal. The spirit tells them that if they don't give enough, the spirit could attack the spiritual person and they will get sick and maybe die.

The spirit could talk to them from a tree or somewhere else, not just in a dream. This is the story my grandmother told me. The spirit also tells the person how they are to perform, what kind of song they have to sing.

The spiritual people received their power through the will of the Creator, as the 12 disciples received their power from Jesus. And they were like prophets.

Marie Adele Moosenose [27/04/93]

It's very true what they said about the spiritual power. Some people have spiritual power and other visions. These things are done through the will of God. In my young days, I didn't know if there had been a bad medicine man. This power was a gift to them from God, to benefit from. If this person did well, their will was granted. For this reason, God has made people to do his will. That is why these spiritual people challenged one another, to seek the sickness of other people, to examine them.

Sometimes if a woman was in labour and had trouble giving birth, that's when the spiritual person got involved and helped. They pulled a little tree out from the ground and peeled off the top until it got white. They told other women to place this tree stick underneath the woman giving birth.

That is not just an ordinary act, that's for sure. For as soon as they placed this tree stick, the child came right out. That is what they used to do.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

It was said that about this time of year, in the spring, when people were living in the bush, that the spirits travelled back this way. So, anyone that wanted to become a spiritual person slept in the bush, wherever they were trapping or hunting.

ḵ'qòè nàowòè gihchì gha	Acquire power
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And when a person travelled in a strange area, he tried to go near the big creature. That way its spirit might come to him and he might become a spiritual person.

And if someone wanted to become a spiritual person, they made a pole rack and slept on top of it. If they thought that's not enough, they went up on the biggest mountain and slept there, far away from people.

When the spirit talked to them, it's just like when we talk together. That's how the spirit talked to them. Wherever the voice is coming from, he tried to find the sound. And once he reached where the voice was coming from, the spirit talked to him. The spirit explained everything to him about curing a sick person. How to care for the sick; how to act; what to do to help the sick; what else he needed to help the sick. The spirit explained all this to him. In springtime, that's how they became a spiritual person.

Sometimes a small child had a spirit. And sometimes when that happened, it came from the relatives. When the father wanted his son to have a spiritual power, the father shared his power with his son, to make him a spiritual person. That's why when the father had a spiritual power, the son had spiritual power too. When the father had a power, he shared it with his son. That's how the son became a spiritual person. That's what they meant when they said small children have a spirit. It's because parents share their spiritual power with their children.

When they reached 20 years and older, that's when they started to use their power; when they're ready to use it. It was up to the people to know that he had the power to heal; when he helped other people with his power. It was not up to him to tell the people that he had the spiritual power to heal. He never said that. It was up to the people to know. When he started to help other people, that was how he became a spiritual person.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

A person gets the spiritual power through the dream. They usually get instruction from their spiritual power. When a person is sick, they know about it through their dream. This way they examine a sick person and things were done only by their spiritual power. And that is why a sick person survives. The spiritual person removes any kind of disease from the sick person. The disease is like a black bug or a worm.

Ìk'qò nàowoò gihchì gha

Acquire power

But the people of the past used to wait for the right time. When that time approached, the spiritual person practiced his power. Like a young person whose name was Badòqniì; it wasn't the time for him to use his power. But he sang his spiritual song every day and didn't last very long in this world.

Elders used to say to young people, "Don't mention your secret power. If you are to live in this world for a while, maybe you will benefit from this spiritual gift."

Elizabeth Mantla [06/07/93]

When a person was to become a spiritual person, they started having dreams about their spirit when they were still very young. And their spirit gave them all kinds of information about what to do and how to handle them. And the person followed everything that was said to them. They followed the rules on and on and on, until they reached the age of 50.

And that's when their spirit advised them that they could use their spiritual power to heal. They had dreamed about their spirit since they were young, so they knew about their spiritual power. But they had to wait a long time, until age 50 years, to be ready to cure people.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

Someone doesn't just become a spiritual person. They had to dream. In their dreams they saw an animal.

Elizabeth Mantla [27/04/93]

Ayii wet'à k'aàt'ìì atēgehᑭᑭ

Conditions cured

If it was a common sickness, the spiritual person could cure it. But more serious diseases could not be cured. Long ago, these kinds of white man's diseases didn't exist, or no one knew what the disease was.

There were rarely sick people in the past. People died from some kind of growth on their face when they got old. It's just recently that people started getting sick because of their unhealthy lifestyles.

Elizabeth Mantla, Marie Adele Moosenose, Annie Simpson, Dora Alexis, Marie Adele Beaverho [27/04/93]

Ayii wet'à k'aàt'ii afegeh

Conditions cured

Work on broken bones was done by the person who thought he could to fix it, and who knew much about bones. That was the way the spiritual people fixed other people's broken bones. Through their spiritual power, they removed all the small broken bones and the poison in the blood. People had very strong spiritual power in the past. They died only when they got very, very old. There was no sickness in the past. The spiritual people examined anybody: adults, small children, and babies.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

A long time ago, if a pregnant woman fell down and hurt herself; I have no idea if they performed surgery. But at that stage they used their spiritual power to deliver the baby. And if a woman had a hard time delivering her baby, the spiritual person helped her by giving her some otter chin broth. It was said that otter chin broth was very good. It helped the baby to come quickly. That is why a spiritual person gave some of that otter chin broth to a woman.

These days they say that some spiritual people down south can cure cancer. I guess that's why some people with cancer get cured. I guess that's why they sometimes go down south to get cured. The word was going around that they discovered a woman down south who could cure cancer disease.

In those days in the past, some people put curses on each other that could cause sickness. But if it was just a disease, they never complained about their health and personal life. Even if they are a spiritual person. If it was just a disease, they cured each other. When a person was really sick, they lost lots of weight. And they are given water with a feather. And a spiritual person predicts what caused their sickness. It's just like the doctor checking them. When the spiritual person took away their sickness, if they feel better then they get better. That was how they used to cure each other. I suppose they knew what kind of disease it was.

They never called for doctors. People cured each other with their spiritual power. That's how I remember it. When a person had broken bones, or cut feet, or a big cut on their hands, it had to be the spiritual person who cured them. They were like doctors; they even stopped the bleeding.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

When a person had broken a bone, someone with spiritual power used an animal bone to replace the broken bone, and to bring this person back to their normal health. This is the kind of person that lived on this earth.

Ayii wet'à k'aàt'ii afegehɔɔ

Conditions cured

Yes, a spiritual power that's what they used. Nowadays doctors don't really know their spiritual power. But in the past, people really knew their spiritual power. They used it to replace the broken bone with an animal bone. The spiritual person replaced the broken bone, and it went back to its normal shape.

I suppose they meant these people roamed the world. This is the story that they told each other, and they passed it on.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

As for when a person had a broken bone, they did something for it. But if that didn't help, they let the spiritual person seek for this person to help them get better soon.

Another thing they could do for a broken bone was place the tamarack layer on the broken bone until it's completely healed.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

I really don't know what kinds of diseases people had in the past. Maybe they were sick with tuberculosis or cancer. They treated this sick person with almost everything, such as bush plants or burning fur and roots. They had sympathy for one another. And if there was no healing, they took the person to a place where a spiritual gifted man lived. And the spiritual person examined the sick person, but this person died just the same. The spiritual people cured other people who suffered allergies; they were fine afterwards. That was how people helped one another. It was the same, until today.

If a person was sick, they told one another to have them sent down south to be healed by a spiritual person down there. But if the spiritual person failed in healing that person, the person died just the same. That's how it was in the past, and it's still the same until today.

If a child was not sick but had some kind of disease, they asked someone who has spiritual power to help. And if this person knew what was wrong with the child, they cured them. That's how people recovered from sickness. But if a person had a fever or the flu, they went to the doctor.

Long ago people really talked a lot and pleaded for the sick person. If a person was ill, they never stopped talking about them until they got help from the gifted person. Right here in Whatì I just can't say anything about a person's identity. We

Ayii wet'à k'aàt'ii afegehꞵ	Conditions cured
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cannot name a person or say anything about a person's behaviour in this interview. But we know some of the young people's identities.

At one time I had a bad headache. I don't really know how I looked. But people kept bugging me about getting a spiritual person to examine me, for I was really sick. I was thinking to myself, "What for?" But I followed them to the old man's place. As we entered, they told him about my condition and persuaded him to practice his medicine on me. He examined me and took something from me that looked like a worm. He told me, "This is what was causing your pain. Someone brought this curse on you," he said to me. From there on I felt much relieved. And never felt bad after that.

These spiritual things are still practiced today and we see this. There are very good medicine people down south and we send our relatives there. But this sick person died just the same. Sometimes we spend so much money just to find a cure for our loved ones. A person may be taken to other places to be cured. But once they got back home, they got sick again. The diseases destroyed the body and killed them.

It was like that in the past but it wasn't this bad because people had strong spiritual power and used it to cure disease. In this way many people got cured from their illnesses. Even old men used their power to cure people's diseases. We can't say that ɬk'qò was useless, for it was useful before the doctor's time.

If a person was very sick, people asked if a healer dressed as a jester was available to have a ceremony. People brought the person to the jester and he pursued their sickness and used his axe to cure it. In this way people recovered from their illness. We witnessed this kind of thing many times during our young days.

Some people lay in a blanket and there was no hope for them. But just imagine, these people survived well. I guess this disease was what we call tuberculosis. But people got cured from it. There are people who can practice their ɬk'qò today. They still use their power to heal tuberculosis.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/01/93]

Usually, only medicine men handled people with broken legs and placed different bones back together. As medicine men, they know lots of things; they do have their own ɬk'qò.

Ayii wet'à k'aàt'ii afegehɔɔ

Conditions cured

If a person had a broken leg and it was not too big or serious, then it was replaced with a different type. That's how they made that person feel better and well once again. They usually cut wherever the leg was broken, placed a different one there, and rubbed their medicine on top of it.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

If a woman was having a hard time during labour and not giving birth yet, they went directly to the person who knew about the child. The women that are keeping her got too tired.

Today, it's very good that we have doctors. When we enter in the hospital we sit down on the bed and someone watches us. Before, it wasn't like that. Maybe five or six women took turns to take care of a woman until she gave birth to her child.

This woman kneeled down for so long, probably until she gave birth. They placed the rack for her so she could rest on it, and the women sat behind her and watched. The woman in labour got a lot of support from other women; that was how people used to treat one another. When this woman had no more strength, she told the others, "Could one of you go and tell this spiritual person about my labour and contractions, that still nothing is happening. Could you go and tell them to cut me a stick, for I can't take any more."

And they did that for her. They changed the pole rack. The one that was chopped down by the spiritual person was placed across from the other stand and the woman laid on it. The spiritual person told the others that once the child was born to get rid of that stick where no one could get at it. Shortly after changing the pole rack this woman gave birth easily. This is what they said; it was done by the spiritual person. And the people of the past had lived by the spiritual power too.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

I cut off my finger once, by accident. And it was hanging like this (shows his finger). They put it back together like this. They wrapped it with a bone, like a cast. It was wrapped like that for about three months. They cleaned the wound with eehkwo broth at first; that's why I never felt any pain, because I was losing lots of blood. It was the spiritual person who did the dressing. That's why my finger grew back together. In the past, before the doctors, people depended only on a spiritual person.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

Ayii wet'à k'aàt'ii afegehᑭᑭ	Conditions cured
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In the past, some people performed surgery, depending on how sick the person was. The person with a serious boil got surgery by a special person that knew how to cut it open. I don't know how they did this. I guess only the person that has spiritual power was able to do this.

I remember one elder saying, "I'm keeping this knife to cut the person's skin." He was hiding a knife and he took it out to show it to me. I'm not sure which person he worked on with his knife. I think it was Louie Whane's late father. But it's been a long time, so I don't really know too well. They cut the person's skin open if they had a very serious infection. If the person didn't know how to perform surgery, he caused more sickness for the other person.

I remember one time a man had a boil right on his chin. When he couldn't take it anymore, they cut it open with a razor blade. This person's head swelled up and he died not too long after. I know this very well. The spiritual person was the one to perform the surgery; this is what was said. This is what the old man said when he took the knife out from the knife case. He said he was keeping it to do surgery on someone. "When a person is really sick and I do surgery on this person, they won't feel anything."

I know very well he meant before the time of doctors, many years back. When a person was really sick or got a broken bone, the spiritual person cut the skin open with a knife and removed the broken bone.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/01/93]

ᑭ'òᑭ ᑭadᑭ ᑭàᑭà ᑭòᑭᑭ	Different types of spiritual power
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There are many kinds of spiritual power. It is found throughout the universe. ᑭ'òᑭ is found in plants and animals, and is good for healing.

Once a year the spiritual person dressed up as a jester (dzèhkw'ᑭ) or a chìcho (hawk). And as they performed, they could heal a sick person. Sometimes when they performed as a chìcho, there were three or four people performing at the same time.

They could be dangerous because of their strong power. Young girls just out of their isolation did not go near them. If women wanted to go there, they must change their clothes.

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Different types of spiritual power

Before they performed, all metal objects must be removed onto an island. That was the time when my late uncle, the late father of Bètsotà (Andrew Zoe) and Alexis Flunkie's late grandfather were performing.

There were four people performing. It was really scary to watch. If they were healing a sick person, the people performing made the sick person walk ahead of them towards a tree. One of the spiritual people threw a spear. And depending on where it fell, it showed how long the person had to live.

My mother and Marie Klugie's mother were tested in this way, and it proved true in terms of how long they had to live. Marie Klugie said that her mother died really young. The children were not old enough to do chores. The spiritual person could predict the future in terms of how long a person has to live.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [26/04/93]

My late father told me once that there are two types of spiritual power. If we don't treat it right it is no good. When we talk about bad spiritual, that means it puts a curse on people. That's what we mean by bad spiritual power; it can kill people. If we treat spiritual power the right way, our Creator helps us to do right.

My late father said this. We could gain something good for our soul if we help people the right way. In this world there are two types of spiritual people. The bad spiritual person has all the power to destroy a person's life. That is why he puts a curse on people. But the other is a good spiritual person.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

There were many kinds of spiritual medicine. Eyeèko (old man) had spiritual power. When he healed a sick person, he used an eagle feather. He started by waving the eagle feather really fast and singing. Then he stuck it in the ground. If it went into the ground the person died. If it floated up, the person lived. They even had an eagle spirit given to them.

Way before our time people had all kinds of spirits. They could be trees and animals. If a person had the spirit of a tree and the tree fell over, it meant that they will die. It could be any kind of tree. The spirit stayed on top of the tree and talked to the person from there.

My husband told of a spiritual person from Fort Simpson who had spiritual power from a small tree. There was a man whose wife was sick for many years. The husband didn't know what to do. He had taken her to all kinds of spiritual

Ìk'qò ìadìlì xàaà gòhìlì

Different types of spiritual power

people, but they all failed to cure her. So, they took her to this spiritual person. While he was curing her, he took the small tree and he placed the tree beside her. And the tree was shaking. But he too failed to heal this woman. No matter how strong their power was, sometimes they failed.

In the past, when our father told us stories about spiritual power, he told of how strong spiritual power was to heal people.

There was good and bad spiritual power. Long ago people used their spiritual power well. A woman (Margaret) from Ross River came to Behchokò once. She stayed at Phillip's house. She showed the cloth to the people. The embroidery was based on a vision that she had about the good and the bad spiritual power.

Marie Adele Moosenose [27/04/93]

If a person had a very serious disease, the spiritual person couldn't help them at all. These people died. But some spiritual people always challenged one another for the ill person.

There are different types of spiritual power. Depends on which kind of spiritual gift they had. The one who thinks he could challenge the sickness was persuaded by the other people. They hit him hard and said this to him. "You think you could challenge this person's illness. Try with all your power, but if it fails then this person will die."

The spiritual person started their action by singing and calling for their spiritual gift. They said this as they sang. "We are like great doctors for this disease and we can do it." The spiritual person who took the disease out of the sick person really shook. They really had great power for the disease and other problems, like curses. But if a person was sick with fever, chest cold, or stomach cramps, the spiritual people couldn't heal these kinds of sickness. Some people with serious diseases died. But spiritual people could work on curses and cured many other things. Spiritual people examined anybody: adults, small children, and babies.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

In the past, if the spiritual person had to examine a sick person, they didn't act on their own. They didn't perform any kind of healing, not until someone tells them to. Once they received words from someone, they called on their spiritual power. And their power entered them and they became a different person. They are a different person until they are done healing the sick person.

Ìk'qò ìadìlì xàaà gòhì

Different types of spiritual power

They even practiced as spiritual jesters and became a different person in that too. Since they were using their strong power, and if they were using an animal's power, they waited for the advice. People noticed this spiritual person was communicating with their spiritual power. This is what we call ìk'qò elì — a gifted man.

If a person does not have any experience with spiritual power, they won't know anything about it. The gifted man was the only one to communicate with his spiritual power.

They had the power for all needs. For instance, when a jester (dzèhkw'ì) examined a sick person, he became a different person and speechless. He said only one or two words as he pleaded. As long as he was the jester, he didn't talk. People who knew about the spiritual jesters had their own ceremonies. We witnessed it all in the past.

Long ago in the past some people cursed one another with their spiritual power. Some medicine men were very jealous of other people; they ruined these peoples' lives with their spiritual power. They even put a curse on a person so he couldn't walk. They practiced their spiritual power for almost everything. They could do anything to a person they had spiritual power for, such as blindfolding a person's mind. Or if they noticed that a person was lucky in hunting, they cursed this person through their spiritual power and took away the hunter's luck. Then things got difficult for this hunter, for no animal came close because of the curse.

Our late relatives and old people told stories like these in the past. Even women practiced their power on a sick person. I have seen this myself. It is still the same to this day. But if a spiritual person doesn't get their prize, they can't practice their power on the sick person. When the spiritual person got their prize and their power entered them, that is when they started to move and examined the sick person.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/01/93]

There are many types of spiritual power that they have talked about. When they seek the sick person, some spiritual people explained to them what his spirit tells him. The spirit told the sick person what their dreams were, their animal spirit.

Suppose a person was attacked by the dead person's spirit. There are special spiritual people for that kind of cure; that person was the right spiritual person to

łk'qò ładłl xàaà gòhtł

Different types of spiritual power

cure the sick person. This is how they spoke to each other. Some of the people had the spiritual power of an animal, such as otter or lynx.

Some people are like that, have bad spiritual power. Some people are meant to be a spiritual healer and they treat their spirit power well. If a person was attacked and got really sick from an animal spirit, and if we cured them through our spiritual power, our Creator rewarded us. This was said in the past. The spiritual power was given to us through our Creator. It is a special gift and we have to work with it in a very good way. This is what they used to tell each other in their stories.

But if we don't use the spiritual power in the right way, and put evil curses on other people all the time, it is like we killed someone. Then our spiritual power becomes our enemy. Our spiritual is a gift to us, so we have to do well by our spirit, or it takes our life. And if we don't obey, our spirit threatens us. And once our spirit has cursed others, it continues on and on. This is how the old timers used to tell their stories.

There was no other way they could stop this bad curse. How could it be stopped? It was an evil doing. It's just like it already killed someone. The person's spirit wanted to continue to threaten other people. It just wants to do more killing. The spirit told the person, "If you don't obey me, I will take your life instead." This person didn't want to die, so he listened to his spirit and he planned to curse other people. He continued to do that, and in the end the person's spiritual power became his enemy.

These days I don't think there is anything like that strong spiritual power. Long time ago, when the world was new, they had strong spiritual powers. These days, the white people have established everything on this earth and lots of things have changed. The traditional ways are dying down. Spiritual powers are not that powerful anymore because the white people have brought so many things onto this earth.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

Some spiritual powers are stronger than others. The proof is when a spiritual person overcomes another spiritual person. But these people with a strong power never perform any healing unless people persuaded them with strong words. Sometimes a couple of spiritual men helped one another through their power, so that their test never failed. They knew if the person had a curse or other disease. Today there is no such thing as a strong spiritual power.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/07/93]

Asì gìghaṛàh

Gift offerings for healing

Suppose a man or woman got sick. The spiritual people challenged one another, to see who had a strongest power. These people who practiced their power never asked for money. But they may receive bullets or tobacco.

Long ago when the spiritual person examined the sick people, they received a twist of tobacco or a pattern of moose hide. In this way the spiritual person easily took the disease away from the person. The spiritual person may have taken the disease or pushed it far out into the forest. Before the doctor's time that was how people lived on this land.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

I do not know of anyone healing for money in the past. Today, if people heal for money, their power is not very strong. The late Firmin Pomie (Bomè) used to heal for a can of snuff. These days spiritual people are paid money or patterns for moccasins.

Elizabeth Mantla [27/04/93]

A bit of chewing tobacco about this small (one inch) with two bullets. For this, the spiritual person sought the sick person. This was in the past.

Alexis Flunkie [29/04/93]

They even used to heal for a small piece of chewing tobacco. The spiritual person was given tobacco or snuff. Sometimes they received bullets, but they were never paid money.

Dora Alexis, Marie Adele Moosenose [27/04/93]

We heard that some people received money and booze for healing someone's disease. The spiritual power does not ask for money.

Louie Simpson [29/04/93]

At that time, when people had spiritual power, we didn't have store-bought fish nets. Just willow nets. Some people used to get willow nets for exchange. Sometimes they got a moose hide pattern for a slipper. Some people got a beaver pelt or other fur pelts. Some people got bullets, tobacco, or sugar. That was what the old timers used get in exchange for healing the sick person.

Sometimes the spiritual person had two or three medicines they used to help sick people. I remember that. Even my late father was a spiritual person. When he

Asìì gìghazàh

Gift offerings for healing

healed a sick person for exchange, he used to get one cup of sugar and two bullets, that's all. That was how he used to heal someone. I remember that.

These days some people still do that. Before they start to heal a person, they sleep for them and dream about them, to see what kind of sickness they have. The next day they tell the sick person about their sickness. Then they start to heal them.

Sometimes people gave them rat root in exchange; sometimes with some green leaves that we collected in the barren lands. Sometimes we gave them some bullets, just bullets. Sometimes we gave them a pattern for caribou hide slippers, or working moosehide moccasins that were already made.

These days everything has to be with money. That's why they ask for money too. So, we give them money to heal.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

Long ago if a sick person was to be seen by someone with ɬk'qò, this spiritual man received any type of fur for healing a sick person. If not fur, then it could be bullets or tobacco.

Just recently these rules started to change, because people are changing in today's world. Now, when a person dreams about the sick person and examines them with his spiritual power, he receives money. Some people have said this. Some spiritual people examined sick people for liquor only, and others for money. Others received any type of skin, like a moose or caribou hide for slippers or moccasins.

Joe Zoe Fish [24/05/91]

People never paid a big price for their cure. Only tobacco or a fur pelt from the sick person. I never witnessed a big price paid to the healer. Tobacco was given the most. But if the healer asked for something, he got it. Usually, they healed people. But if their power failed them, they let the people know.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/07/93]

In those days when they wanted a spiritual person to heal the sick, they asked the spiritual person what kind of gift they wanted. Sometimes they gave three bullets and a pattern of caribou hide, that's all. Just two types of things, that's all.

The spiritual person told the sick person, "I will dream for you first. And tomorrow I will tell you how I dream. And if I have to examine you, I will." This is

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what the spiritual person told the sick person. "I will sleep one night for you, and then I will tell you about my dream. Then I can examine you."

We offered them three bullets and a pattern of hide slipper. Just two types of things, and that's how the spiritual person cures the sick person.

These days we are in the white generation and lots of things have changed. There are all kinds of aircraft and we have roads everywhere. And white people have put all types of government things on our land. Because of all these things, when the gifted man goes to seek for the sick person, the medicine person asked if the sick person's relatives could get him a bottle of liquor. This is what the medicine person said to the people. Or they ask for money. These days the medicine person doesn't seek for the sick unless they get a bottle. And towards the end of their performance, they ask for money again.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

Dq k'aàt'ìì gha jkqò t'a wek'aàhota

Healing methods

It happened way out somewhere in the Dehcho area. These spiritual people with strong powers replaced a person's broken leg, people named Joe and Paul. A person had a broken leg and it was replaced by these two men. This is what we heard through the stories. With their spiritual power they blew out the broken pieces, and used the caribou calf's leg to replace the man's broken bone. When the bone was back in the same place, this person walked back to his camp without pain. This was done without surgery.

This is just to make other people laugh. Sometimes when a spiritual person heals a sick person, another person walks in and teases this spiritual person. But this doesn't harm anyone or make the spiritual person angry.

A person who doesn't confess about their sickness won't survive. And they could be spiritual people.

When Louie got sick, a man performed his spiritual power on him. He did this because he was pleased with his pay. If one of the spiritual people got sick, another spiritual person searched for his sickness and cured it.

Louie Simpson [29/04/93]

Dq k'aat'ii gha jkqò t'a wek'aàhota

Healing methods

Sometimes when a spiritual person was healing a sick person, he did that by having both hands over the person's head. Sometimes we walked in and grabbed both arms of the sick person and ran out with them. And the spiritual person was still be sitting there with both hands in the air. When we were outside, we just laughed. But this didn't make the spiritual person angry.

People got sick from all kinds of curses, but the spiritual people were the ones who had to cure them all. One thing that causes the sickness was allergies. Since the Europeans came to our country, we got all kinds of diseases. In some cases, the spiritual people can't cure them at all.

Alexis Flunkie [29/04/93]

In the past, there weren't any diseases like tuberculosis and cancer. When a person had pain somewhere, they applied grease on their skin. And if they had a chest cold, they applied grease on their chest. And in a few hours' time, they felt much better.

If a spiritual person got sick from eating some kind of food and didn't get any better, they took him to another spiritual person who stayed a couple of miles away. And this spiritual person searched for his health. If they failed in their task, another person with stronger powers challenged the man's disease. And the sick person then recovered.

Philip Zoe [29/04/93]

The spiritual person 'looked' at the person to determine what the problem was. Many children that the spiritual person helped were cured. He also cured my granddaughter. She was taken to his house and placed in his lap. He blew on top of her head and cured her.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [26/04/93]

When my father, brother, and other men were trapping, my brother had pain in his legs. My mother persuaded me to go to Joseph's house where they were playing cards, to see if (Madò) Menton was there. I looked for him because my brother was sick and I needed Madò to talk to the spiritual person, Marie's father, because of his persistent voice. By his strong words he forced the spiritual person to take action.

The spiritual person's power was related to the wolf. He asked the people for the gift of a dog in exchange for his healing power. They tied the dog outside the

Dq k'aat'ii gha jkqò t'a wek'aàhota

Healing methods

tent. Then he started to sing. My brother was really in pain — couldn't walk. He was placed in front of the spiritual person. He sang and told the people he'd circle around him twice. Depending on how far around he got, it determined if the boy was cured. Because he made it around, he told the people his son will survive. About five days later, the boy was walking again.

After this happened, if a child was sick, it was brought to her father. These children all got well. He helped a lot of young people in Whatì.

Marie Klugie [26/04/93]

My daughter was sick once. I brought her to see the spiritual person and he cured her.

Rosa Romie [26/04/93]

Suppose a man or woman got sick from something. The spiritual people challenged one another to see who had a strongest power. These people who practiced their power never asked for money, but they may have received bullets or tobacco.

Long ago when the spiritual person examined the sick people, they received a twist of tobacco or a pattern of moosehide. In this way, this spiritual person easily took the disease away from the person. The spiritual person may have taken the disease or pushed it far out into the forest. Before the doctor's time, that was how people lived on this land.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

Before they started performing, their spirit sang inside the spiritual person. The spirit advised the person what they should sing, what kind of gift they should receive. When they took the disease out of the person, they pulled out a bug or a worm that caused the disease. It appeared in their hand and they showed this to the other people around, so they could see what kind of disease the person had. Sometimes they didn't sing. They healed the sick person just by looking at them.

It was possible for a spiritual person to just give the sick person a drink of water to cure them. Some people sang when they cured, others didn't.

A spiritual person could give a sick person a cup of water to cure them. They might tell the sick person that they dreamed about them. Through their dream they saw what kind of sickness it was, and what type of cure to use, such as bush medicine.

Dq k'aàt'ii gha jkqò t'a wek'aàhota

Healing methods

A person who was paralyzed could be cured by a spiritual person. It is true when they say that this spiritual power comes from the will of the Creator.

Today, no matter how much money is paid to spiritual people, sick people don't get cured.

Elizabeth Mantla, Marie Adele Moosenose, Annie Simpson, Dora Alexis, Marie Adele Beaverho [27/04/93]

When a person had a broken bone, the spiritual person made their legs numb so they don't feel the pain. And with his power, the spiritual person made the broken bone grow back together. That was what they used to do. And then they used the birch bark to wrap the bone, and left it wrapped like that until the broken bone healed. The birch bark helped the wound to heal quickly.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

Sometimes this spiritual person dreamed about the sick person. And when their spiritual power contacted them through their dream, that is when they knew what was wrong with the sick person. They cured a sick person through their spiritual power. A curse on a person or their disease was cured. For a person with an allergy, spiritual people didn't use their hands; they used their spiritual power to cure a person.

Other people communicated with the wind too. If they wanted the wind to blow, these people called upon the wind. They had songs for the wind and they had knowledge for ducks too. Surely these people had power, for they could take anything, even if it was way far out. There were people with power to search for animals or a lost person.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/01/93]

If a person had an accident in the time before modern medicine, they went to a spiritual person. In those days lots of people had spiritual power. That's when lots of elders were living. Almost all the people had spiritual power. And with their spiritual power they helped each other to survive.

My late father-in-law (Bomè) Firman used to live at the end of this lake. And Alexis Flunkie's late father Jean Flunkie (Wedàetsia) used to live among the caribou. That's when they said his dogs mushed him through the woods and he got hit by a stick over his knee, on his thigh, and above his buttock. A big stick

Dq k'aàt'ii gha jkqò t'a wek'aàhota

Healing methods

went in his legs between his knee and his buttock. That's how the stick went through his legs.

When he got back, he was unconscious. Because he was unconscious, they asked my late father-in-law Firmen for his spiritual power. And just like that he started to perform and sang his song. And as he sang his song over that person, he took out the stick. Then he took out all the slivers and cleaned the wound with water. Tamarack layer is good for our wounds, so they placed it on both sides of his wound to help it heal fast. It sucks out all the bad blood and mucus. And that same winter, before spring, they said he was up and walking around fine.

After they tried all types of bush medicine and a person was still very ill, then they went for a spiritual person. People lived far apart in the bush, like from Whatì to Gamètì. When a person was very ill and they heard there was a spiritual person living out there, they put that sick person on the toboggan and mushed out to that spiritual person. And once they got there, they brought that sick person into the spiritual person's house. But first the spiritual person had to sleep for him before he practiced his spiritual power on that sick person.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

The spiritual person was the one to see the person's broken bone. My late father shot his hand. He was shot between two fingers; his skin burst open and the bone was mashed into pieces. This man, the late Tobie, had practiced his strong power and he was the one to heal my father. Through his spiritual power he took out the small pieces of broken bones and with his mouth he sucked the blood poisons out. After doing this, he replaced a bone out of nowhere. And my father's finger was back to normal, except one of his fingers bent a little. Even though he was shot between two fingers, he still could work with his hand.

There were no doctors but his hand was healed by this spiritual person. And he used his hand to work until the day he died. We have heard that spiritual people set the broken bones back into place.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/01/93]

When I was sick my grandmother asked one of the spiritual people to think about me when he went to sleep. And that through his dream, his spirit described my sickness to him. The next evening this old man and other people came to our tent. He removed something from me that looked like a bee. My granny was surprised because they were always careful with things.

Dq k'aàt'ii gha jkqò t'a wek'aàhota

Healing methods

Some spiritual people have power for healing little children. Sometimes the spiritual person beat the drum for the sick child. This was what the old spiritual man did for my son. He told us that this little boy had an allergy to bears. That's why he keeps vomiting and can't eat. This man told us that since this child was male, he wanted to get a net from the parents.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/07/93]

The spiritual person was like a doctor; he always did the right thing. He advised us how to take our bush brew. And if we didn't follow his advice, it meant we didn't live long. This is what they used to tell their people. "Whatever bush brew I've made for you, keep taking it. And once you're well, don't take anything that will make you sick again."

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [02/10/91]

Long ago there were some people that had the spiritual power. And when a person had a problem eating, the spiritual person told the other people. Then the spiritual person went to seek for this person. He told the other people that it was caused by a wolf. He said, "This person ate the meat that was already eaten by the wolf." Then the spiritual person started checking him with his power.

When a person has spiritual power, they cured each other by giving meat to each other. If they didn't want to cook it on the fire, they boiled it, and shared a piece of meat. First the spiritual person ate a little bit of it. Then the other person ate the rest. This helped the sick person to eat well again and to start feeling better. This had to do with spiritual power; they started eating well and felt a lot better.

After they were checked by the spiritual person, they started using the plant medicine. That was why people were healthy. Long ago I can remember people really lived well by spiritual power, and they were healthy. But these days there's nothing like that. There's no such thing as spiritual power.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

A person living in fear causes sickness for themselves. The spiritual person searched for people with this kind of sickness. Sometimes they got cured. But if not, they were treated with all kinds of bush brew. With the help of the spiritual person, they got better, but only for a short time. This kind of sickness comes and goes, and the person could die with it.

Dq k'aat'ii gha jkqò t'a wek'aàhota

Healing methods

Yes, living in fear causes sickness. The person wants to eat, but there is no taste to the food. And if this person keeps on living like this, there won't be any cure. They won't be very sick, but slowly their health fades, and they don't have any appetite.

My late uncle's daughter died of this disease. She was like this for a whole year and by summer she died. She was treated with all kinds of bush brew. You know how strict my step-mother-in-law was. When someone was sick, she was always there for them. She even tried to make a good bush brew for them but sometimes it didn't work.

The only time this sick girl felt better was when the spiritual person sought her sickness. But a couple of days later she was the same again. They really tried everything for her, but she didn't survive. She died of this disease. She couldn't eat even though she was hungry.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Long ago the old timers used only bush medicine. They got medicine from trees. From tamarack tree they collected lots of tamarack layer. They chewed the inside layer and placed it on their wound. And that helped to stop the bleeding and to healed their wound quickly. That was what they used to do.

Or when a big sliver got in their hands, sometimes they got a spiritual person to help take the sliver out, from anywhere in their body. When they got help from the spiritual person, they healed quickly. In no time the person was back doing their chores again.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

The sap from the inside wood is also good for the cuts, you know. When you split the wood, you find the very best sap in it, I'm telling you. That is why sometimes I collected them when one of my sons or grandchildren got a cut. I placed this wood sap on their cut and it two days it was healed. My sister said this wood sap is very good medicine.

When my late father was just a young man, he badly cut his leg by accident. It was right here (hand gesture). He chopped his bone too. The spiritual person was the only one who could take all the bone pieces from the deep cuts. Then he placed the wood sap or tamarack on the cut.

Dq k'aat'ii gha jkqò t'a wek'aàhota

Healing methods

Of course, these medicine men were very good for fixing bones. They poured water over the cuts so all little pieces that were inside drained out. Then after it's all clean inside, they put tamarack layer on the cut, and kept doing this often, on and on. To close the wound, they used wood sap because this is very good medicine.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

There are times when one of his relatives asked a spiritual person to help and check an ill person. The relatives asked the spiritual person to prepare and give a bush mixture to the sick person. The spiritual person prepared a special bush mixture and gave it to the sick person. And the person sometimes recovered from his illness.

Marie Klugie [01/10/91]

In most cases people used bush brew for a sick person. Sometimes they were cured right away with it, and sometimes it didn't work. Just like now when we get medicine from the doctor. Sometimes it works on us but sometimes it doesn't. This bush brew is the same thing. They tested to see if the bush brew worked on the person. If it doesn't work, then they asked the spiritual person to help.

It's very true that people were cured by people with spiritual power. When a person was seriously ill with a disease, the spiritual person searched for their sickness. In this way he found out what caused it. And sometimes the cure made this person sick, so the spiritual person made bush brew for the sick person and they got better with it.

Annie Simpson 09/10/92

Dq k'ets'edii jè xàaa

Special healing

No one came close to the special ritual person, for they are dangerous. There were about three to five who knew about this kind of spiritual power. If you are to be in the play you cannot have any type of metal on yourself.

Yes, they did heal a person or else seek their future. They examined the person by moving their axe slowly over the person's body. As far as I know, women were never involved as a spiritual jester.

Alexis Flunkie [29/04/93]

Dq k'ets'edii jè xàaa

Special healing

They knew if there is a tiny piece of metal under the ground. If you put a needle about six feet under the ground, they removed it like nothing. That's how powerful they were.

There was lots of excitement. Young men rang the jingle bells at each end. And they ran back and forth to wherever the sound was coming from. Around that big tank was where he used to perform the ritual play for the people. I guess there was some metal in the water. As soon as they heard the sound of metal in the water, they rushed towards the lake and walked right into the water. But when they got out of the water their clothes weren't wet at all. They are not just ordinary people.

They don't like two kinds of things: metal and the colour red. If they saw red, they tore it off. If a person didn't know about this game but participated, he got sick the very next day. Then another spiritual person healed him.

Any male that knows about this spiritual power was in the play. The women may have known the spiritual power. But if they didn't talk about themselves, no one knew about them. No women participated as a jester.

Louie Simpson [29/04/93]

Gots'agoò |
Labrador tea.
Courtesy of Tessa
Macintosh





Elder Jimmy B. Rabesca, from Whatì, and Rita Wetrade, from Gamètì,
discussing benefits of goò | pine at ʔedèezhì, 2012.
Courtesy of Alice Legat

Gohoʔaa Njɔ̀dè Ayì Wet' à Siinadets'ehɔ̀

Medical Conditions and Ways of Healing

In this database, elders share knowledge about plants and animals (including combinations) used for healing different medical conditions. Each Tɬchɔ̀ dialect has their own way to spell some of the terms in this database. Sometimes only one Tɬchɔ̀ spelling appears. This does not imply that one dialect is more important than any other; each is essential.



Ritalene Gon, Elder Melanie Lafferty, Rita Wetrade, Albertine Eyakfwo, and Elder Annie Apples excited to see K'òògots'òqdzɪ — a type of willow good for heart problems, that they had never seen in this area (a small island called Whahtlaàmɬhk'è on Tideè), 2011. Courtesy of Alices Legat.

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Ìiwet'sii | fish guts, 2016. Courtesy of Camilla Nitsiza

Gokwò ta eyah / Gokw'òò tàda | Aches and Pains / Arthritis

Sahwodzazii

Bear marrow

When they had a very bad aching bone in their body, they didn't eat the bear's marrow. But they smeared it on their body and they felt better.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

They boiled the meat and then took all the marrow out of the bone. They saved the marrow and used it for their sore leg, feet, arm, or back pain. Before we applied it on our body, we had to plead with it. After that we applied the marrow all over our body. By the second day our wish was answered. The marrow was very good for aching bones when you rub it in well.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Sahloo

Bear tail ashes

The ashes from the bear tail are very good. When they had pain in their body, they applied the ashes on the skin. It helped to relieve the pain.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Tsà wetsè

Beaver tail

When they killed a beaver, they wet the tail and put it on the fire and kept turning it. When the skin was burned a little and looked like this (curled), they peeled it off and put it aside. They kept collecting all the burnt skin.

When we felt aching all over our body, we smeared that on each other and that is very, very good. It was good for skin rash too. When someone had skin rash, they smeared it all over their body.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/02]

K'àhdzàa

Dry willow

In the old days people always travelled by foot. That's why some got arthritis in their joints. When that happened, you heard the sound; it sounded like ts'aa tsaa. When it sounded like that, they collected the dry willow. They split it in half and carved it well. Then placed it on the person's joint and rolled it just as if you were twisting something. After that was done, the person didn't feel any pain again.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

ɬiwet'òò

Fish bladder

There were a lot of suckers too, and it was really good to collect their bladders. It could be applied on a sore leg; this is what they used before. People collected fish parts, for they have good medicine. Once it's collected, they tied them together and hung them to be dried. It was the same with the trout bladders. They saved these too. When a person complained about the pain, they soaked this bladder in water and rubbed it on the body.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Dechɪta gonàèdì - detsɪta gonàèdì

Bush medicine

My father and brother used these medicines and their juices that they knew about. That's why they were healthy.

My father and my mother gave me some medicine that I used before, when I was a young man, long ago.

Either my chest, my leg, anywhere. If I had pain in my leg or arm, or my mouth was sore, they gave some of their medicine for treatment, which I usually used for a cure. Then I felt fine afterward.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Wohgwàdò / Ts'iwàdò

Juniper boughs / Spruce boughs

When some elders said they have sore arms or legs, they just mixed spruce bough and juniper; then smeared its brew on themselves. Or else they used salt water. They boiled salt with water and smeared it on their arms and legs. When they did that, it helped to take away the pain.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Dzqweghà / Dzqek'a

Muskrat fur / Muskrat fat

The muskrat fur ashes brew was also good to take when you had pain. When people had pain in their body, they heated up the muskrat skin and placed it on their body. It helped relieve the pain.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Muskrat fat can also be used on the back. It was said that people were eager to get them. In springtime, lots of people go out trapping for muskrat. They collected lots of fat and hung them on the willow to be dried. And they kept them.

It was good for when they had pain anywhere in their body. They smeared that fat on them. It was good. Like when we skin muskrats, the smell is really strong. That is what they meant, and it was really good.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gqòroo

Pine boughs

Pine tree boughs are also really good. The juice is just like the tree that they made it from. It's very strong. They also chewed on pine tree boughs, and the bark too. They used to rub it on each other. It was really good.

It's good if a person has pain and rubs the juice on their body where it's sore. Some parts can be chewed and swallowed.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Dzèhkw'ò / K'ɪ wet'ì

Soft spruce gum / Birch bark

Some people collected soft spruce gum. They smeared it on a hide and placed it on their back if they had back pain. Wherever they had pain, they placed it on their pain.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

When our arm suddenly got a pain, we peeled off birch bark. You heated it up. When you cracked your leg or arm, you wrapped the birch bark on the pain and tied it up. That was how we used it. Later, when the sore starts to heal, we looked for spruce gum — the kind that looks like yellow and liquid, that was the kind we used to put it on all our sores. It's just like a bandage. It holds the skin together and works like a medicine as well.

Celine Eyakfwo [04/10/91]

Edahbàa

Wild roses

Thorn branches are good for just about anything; for any pain or sores on your body. Like when doctors give us medicine. They often ask, "Where is the pain?" It's just like that. It's good for any pain in your body. That's how it is.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Wohgwɔ̀dzì - wohgwjì

Juniper berries

We also took some juniper berries. We picked almost half of the bag. It's very good to chew on and swallow the juice, until there is no taste to it. It's also very good to make brew from and drink it, for it stops the back pain. Because of that, I am still working today. Even though I do lots of work, I feel fine. I drank this juniper juice for almost over a year now.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Kw'ahnq Xàgohdee | Bee Sting**K'i wet'ii**

Birch bark

When we get a bee sting and it gets swollen, we use this new growing birch tree — when the birch is greenish, a green trembling tree. They used the peel and chew it, then smeared it on the swelling. It was said that when they smeared it on the swelling, then it went away.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Godoo at'ii / Godoo ts'eekeh | Bleeding / Coughing blood²**Saht'òò / Łiwet'òò**

Bear bladder / Trout bladder

It is true that they really go for bear bladder, because it is really good medicine. When we are bleeding — like when we cough out blood — first we make hot water and add a small piece of bear bladder. Then we stir it until it dissolves; we keep stirring it. Even though we use small pieces, the brew is very strong. And we drink it like that. We continue to drink about one cup once in a while, and that stops the bleeding. That bear bladder brew it is really good to use when we cough out blood.

That is why they always ask for that bear bladder. For myself, I think they say that because it's good for TB (tuberculosis), that's what I think. When we are bleeding, it goes away sometimes. It can take a long while for it to go away.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Trout bladder is good for coughing out blood, and also bear bladder. If we don't feel good, we could take these bladders by drinking them or smearing them on our body. And it will relieve the pain. These two are the same type of medicine and they are both good.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

² Note: Godoo is a general term for someone's blood. Wedoo — his blood — is used for someone specific. [Marie Adele Rabesca and Mary Siemens, March 2022]

Saht'òò / ɬiwet'òò

Bear bladder / Trout bladder

Bear bladder is good when someone has a bleeding nose. They say they never go without it; they always have bear bladders. Whoever has bear bladder shared it and cut out a small piece for each other. They mix it in a cup of water and stir it.

Because it's bear bladder, it looks like black pepper, and that's how they drink it. My mouth was bleeding once and they treated me with that. I drink that once in a while. It's very strong, just like black pepper.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

Bear bladder is good medicine if we have a sore stomach, if we have a bad heart, or when we are bleeding. Then we add a small piece of bear bladder to the water. We just drink it like that.

It is really good for bleeding too. One time people were driving around in a truck. I don't know what happened to them, an accident, but one person was bleeding badly inside. They added a small piece of bear bladder to water for him and let him drink one cup. It was like the bleeding was cut off, like that. It just suddenly stopped his bleeding.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

When a bear was killed, they butchered it well and made dry meat out of it. They cut out the bear bladder, dried it, and kept it. They also collected the bear's feet and hands, and boiled them. When a person coughed out blood, they mixed warm water with the bear bladder. Once it dissolved, the person drank it and they felt better.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

They said when a person coughed out blood, bear bladder was very good for it. And bear bladder is also very good for cuts.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

When a person is bleeding from their lungs, you can see blood just pouring out like this (hand gesture) from their throat. They always kept bear bladders because it was their medicine. When person was bleeding from their lungs, they didn't know what to do to help their bleeding. But bear bladder, even half a teaspoon, is good and it is really strong.

They gave it to the person to swallow and the bleeding stopped, as if it was cut off. The bleeding stopped; there was no more bleeding. And this bear bladder is

Saht'òò / ɛiwet'òò

Bear bladder / Trout bladder

really good medicine for that. That is why even people down south found out about it and they are eager to get them.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

He went out there and he shot a bear, and did exactly what the old woman had told him to do. He brought the bear's bladder back to me in a plastic bag. I said, "Granny, what should I do with this thing." I was afraid because I was coughing out blood. She said to me, "Just warm up the water and put some of this stuff in it, and drink it. Every time your throat is itchy, keep drinking this liquid," she told me. "But if your throat is okay don't bother taking this," she said.

She advised me to take this liquid in the morning and at bedtime. The bottle was about this size (hand gesture). The old woman told me to take it until I finished the whole bottle. Before I did all that, I put half of the water in the bottle. While the bladder was fresh, I added it to the water.

I followed granny's advice and kept drinking this liquid bladder until Christmas came around, when I started to feel better. I was completely healthy until I got another sickness.

Elizabeth Mantla [09/10/92]

Bear bladder is good for coughing up blood. Once they killed the bear, they butchered it and saved the bladder. When a person coughs out blood, they soaked the bladder in water and let the person drink it. And once the person drank this, they were fine. They say this is really good for coughing out blood.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Bear bladder is very good when we spit blood. They save the bladder and dry them well. When someone spits blood, they give them a little piece to dissolve in lukewarm water; then they drank it.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Its bladder is good when we have a bleeding nose. We make its brew really strong and drink it like that. That helps to stop our bleeding.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Bear bladder is very good for bleeding. Put a spoonful of bear bladder in water, and let them drink that. It won't start bleeding again.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Wohgwɪchɪ / Wohgwɪdzɪ

Puff ball / Juniper berry

It looks like a tiny puffy ball; it is found on the ground. They are called wohgwɪchɪ and look like powder. When someone had a nose bleed, they smeared this powder in their nose. Sometimes they burned the powder and inhaled it in their nose. This stops the bleeding.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

When we have a nosebleed, we put some puff ball in our nose. And that helps to stop our nose bleed.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

When we touch these puff balls on the ground, a little smoke comes out of it. They said it's good when we have a nosebleed. When we are bleeding badly, we let our blood drip on the puff ball or we smear it on our nose. This helps to stop our nosebleed.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Edzɔ / Ts'iwà / Diwek'a /
EehkwooBlack spruce / White spruce / Tamarack
inside layer / Medicinal water plant

It was said a long time ago some people had accidents with guns. They say some people shot their shoulder blade or their fingers by accident. And when they are losing lots of blood, right away they put some soft spruce gum on the wound, granny said.

Or else they got tamarack inside layer and chewed on it, then placed it on the wound. Or they got eehkwoo and placed it on the wound to help stop the bleeding, granny said.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Spruce tree cone brew is good when we are bleeding, or when a child has an infection in their mouth, or when a person has lots of sores. Its brew is very strong. We wash their sores with the brew. Spruce bough brew is good too for stomach and mouth infections. Both of them are good for infections in the mouth.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Edzɔ / Ts'iwà / Diwek'a /
Eehkwoo

Black spruce / White spruce / Tamarack
inside layer / Medicinal water plant

Black spruce trees have cones on them. That's what they make herb juice from, the cones. That too is good for a person who is bleeding. When my granny was bleeding lots and she couldn't take it anymore, we made herb juice from black spruce tree cones, and let her drink it. Then her bleeding just stopped. After that she never bled again until she passed away.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

K'i t'èhtè / T'èhtè dek'o / Detsɔ
t'èhtè

Birch fungus / Red fungus / Wooden
fungus

Long ago people didn't know much about the animal parts. But if the person was bleeding, they used this — k'i t'èhtè (birch fungus) and t'èhtè dek'o (red fungus) that are very good when a person bleeds.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

This brown fungus, it's from a birch tree. We just chop it and it's yellowish. That is good for when a person is bleeding from the nose or mouth. They make the person drink the herb juice.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

They used birch fungus for bleeding. One that is just growing is really good. They used its juice; they boiled it; they made all kinds of medicine from it.

If a person had a bleeding problem, they gave you some wooden fungus brew to swallow. Before you went to sleep, they gave you some more of this. Long go, that's what they used to do when a person had a bleeding problem.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Whehts'òò / Xe | Boil / Pus

Sahloo / Kw'iahnq̄t'oh / Diwe - dowe
/ K'ɪ weti

Bear tail ashes / Beehive / Tamarack /
Birch layer

The bear tail is also good. We burned the tail and used the charred ashes when someone had a boil. Sometimes when we got a boil it went away and moved to a different part of the body. If that happened, we smeared the bear tail ashes on it. It was said that with this, the boil doesn't move to different places; it just goes away.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Bear's tail is good for boils. When we got a boil, we burned the hair from the bear's tail. And plead to it by saying, "Hurry up and break open." Then we smeared the ashes on the skin.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Beehive, that's what they used for boils. They lit the beehive and burned it until it turned to ashes. Then they added a bit of water to the ashes. When they smeared it on a swollen area, it felt like burning and hot. Then the boil went away. And if it had to break open, it broke open.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

People used to say the beehive is very good for swelling or a boil. And if that failed, they tried the bear tail. Most people burned the bear tail and saved the ashes. When a person had a swelling, they applied the ashes on the skin. And when the pus reached the skin surface, it opened up the infection.

Or else they sliced the sunlight soap very thin and placed that on the sore. Overnight it opened up the infection. The remaining pus and boil were cleaned out with a dry twig. Then they chewed tamarack layer and placed it on the infection, and it healed up in no time.

They used this tamarack layer for about four to five days, applying it twice a day on the sores, morning and night. The dressing was changed very often; the pus was all collected by the tamarack. By the 10th day it was back to normal again.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Sahloo / Kw'iahnq't'oh / Diwe - dowe
/ K'j weti

Bear tail ashes / Beehive / Tamarack /
Birch layer

When someone had a boil, it was said birch layer ashes are good, and beehive too. If they smeared beehive on the boil, it broke open. Then all the pus in the boil came out.

They burned beehive first, then smeared the ashes on themselves. It was the same with birch layer. They burned it, then smeared the ashes on themselves.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

If a person started to get a boil and it got infected, they used a pilot biscuit. They chewed some of the biscuit and added butter and salt, then placed that on the infection to suck out the clot. They kept applying this on their skin. Their skin became very tender and they poked it with an awl or needle and all the pus drained out.

If the boil was big and left a hole, they threaded the sinew in the hole. Once the clot caught the sinew, they pulled it out very slowly. The person never had a boil again. This is what has been said.

They also used tamarack layer; they boiled it. When it cooled, they chewed it and place it on the infection. Even if the infection was deep in the skin, it healed up with this tamarack layer in no time. Tamarack is the best medicine.

In the past, when people had skin disease, they only used tamarack. Nowadays people don't seem to care much about tamarack layer. When a person had a boil, they used either a pilot biscuit or tamarack. Using only tamarack layer still helps to open up and heal the infection, even if the wound is big.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Dehkw'i / Diwe - dowe

Dry twigs / Tamarack

When you get a boil, it looks white. Around the surface it looks red, but in the centre when it breaks open, it looks like a needle hole. The boil that's inside the surface breaks open. This is very serious. When they remove a boil, it's very tough because they use this dry twig that brings much pain. You know those twigs from the tree. That's what they use to get all the pus inside the surface out.

Dehkw'ì / Diwe - dowe

Dry twigs / Tamarack

Oh, my sister, that was the worst part that I saw. They cleaned the inside well. They took out all the pus and placed it on the cloth. This boil looked just like white paper and long too. With this twig they really cleaned out every bit of germ.

And before throwing the stuff away they said, "I'm burning you so that you won't come back to me again. And I want you to burn forever." And slowly the wound started to heal. This disease won't come back to the person again. That's what I've witnessed of people's infections. I was really afraid of it as I watched them take the boil from the skin.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

Long ago, when there were no doctors in our community, people always talked about tamarack. At that time my son Richard had a big boil on his skin. The nurses said he had to fly out to Rae tomorrow. So, I went to get tamarack. It was full with sap, so I peeled it. I boiled it first and then I chewed it. The boil was on his neck, so I placed the tamarack on his neck. During the night he woke up and he said, "Mother, what is this dripping on me?" It was the pus with blood draining out from the infection. And from then on, we used that tamarack on him. He didn't take off to Rae the next day. And ever since that day until now that boil has never returned.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Jnì t'à k'aàt'ii alegeh?

Spiritual healing

In the past, some special people used to perform surgery, depending on how sick a person was. A person with a serious boil got surgery from a special person who knew how to cut it open. I don't know how they did this. I guess only the person that has spiritual power was able to do this. But I remember one elder saying, "I'm keeping this knife to cut the person's skin." He was hiding a knife and he took it out to show it to me. I'm not sure what person he worked on with his knife. I think it was Louie Whane's late father, but it's been a long time, so I don't really know. If a person had a very serious infection, they cut their skin open. If the person didn't know how to perform surgery, he caused more sickness for the other person.

I remember at one time a man had a boil right on his chin. They cut it open with a razor blade when he just couldn't take it anymore. This person's head

swelled up and he died not too long afterward. I know this very well. The spiritual person was the one to perform the surgery and this is what was said. This is what the old man said when he took the knife from the knife case. He said he was keeping it to do surgery on a person. "When a person is really sick and I do surgery on them, they won't feel anything."

I know very well he meant many years before the time of doctors. When a person was very sick or had a broken bone, the spiritual person cut the skin open with a knife and removed the broken bone.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/01/93]

Dlòò wetsò

Squirrel feces

When a person gets a boil, it's hard as a rock and it hurts. I remember my mother used squirrel feces. When they smear squirrel feces on the boil it feels warm. They smear it on the boil about three times, and that breaks the boil. And it opened, they used plant brew.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

They applied squirrel feces on the skin and wrapped it well with a cloth. When using squirrel feces on a boil, it quickly opened the infection and sucked the mucus and pus out.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Ekw'òò Nàetòò | Broken Bones

Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì / Detsjì / K'ì wet'ì
/ Diwe / Jnì t'à k'aàt'ì alegehɔ

Spruce cones / Wood sap / Birch
bark / Tamarack / Spiritual healing

Work on broken bones was done by the person who thought he could fix it, and knew much about bones. That was the way the spiritual people fixed broken bones. Through their spiritual power they removed all the small broken bones and the poison in the blood. People had very strong spiritual power in the past. They died only when they got very, very old. There was no sickness in the past.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì / Detsjti / K'i wet'ì
/ Diwe / Jnì t'à k'aàt'ù alegehç

Spruce cones / Wood sap / Birch
bark / Tamarack / Spiritual healing

It happened way out somewhere in the Dehcho area. Two spiritual people with strong power, named Joe and Paul, replaced a person's broken leg. A person had a broken leg and it was replaced by these two men. This is what we heard through the stories. With their spiritual power, they blew out the broken pieces and used the caribou calf's leg to replace the broken bone. When the bone was put back in the same place, this person walked back to his camp without pain. And this was done without surgery.

Louie Simpson [29/04/93]

The spiritual person was the one to see the person's broken bone. My late father shot his hand between the two fingers, and his skin burst open. The bone was mashed to pieces. This man, the late Tobie, had strong power, and he was the one to heal my father. Through his spiritual power he took out the small pieces of broken bones and with his mouth he sucked the blood poisons out.

After doing this, he replaced a bone out of nowhere, and my father's finger was back to normal. But one of his fingers bent a little. Even though he was shot between the two fingers, he still worked with his hand. There were no doctors, but his hand was healed by this spiritual person. And he used his hand to work until the day he died. We have heard that spiritual people set broken bones back into place.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/01/93]

Usually, only medicine men handled people with broken legs and placed different bones back together. Medicine men knew lots of things; they had their own jk'qò. If a person had a broken leg and it was not too serious, then it was replaced with a different type. That's how they made that person feel better; and well once again. They usually cut where the leg was broken, placed different one there, and rub their medicine on top of it.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

When a person had a broken bone, the spiritual person made their legs numb so they won't feel the pain. And with his power, the spiritual person made the broken bone grow back together. That was what they used to do. And they used the birch bark to wrap the bone, leaving it wrapped like that until the broken bone healed. The birch bark helped to heal the wound quickly.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì / Detsjti / K'i wet'ì
/ Diwe / Jni t'à k'aat'ii alegehɔ

Spruce cones / Wood sap / Birch
bark / Tamarack / Spiritual healing

If a person broke a bone, the relative went to a person with spiritual power and pleaded with them. And the person with spiritual power rubbed tobacco over the broken bone and used birch bark to cover the leg and wrap it well with a cloth. The person had to keep their leg straight and be careful. They used spruce cone brew and wood sap to wash the leg. They spread this wood sap on the broken bone, if it wasn't too seriously broken. By the 10th or 12th day, this person could walk normally again.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

When a person had a broken bone and they didn't feel much pain in the leg, they did something for it. But if it didn't help, they let the spiritual person seek this person to help them get better soon.

Another thing they could do for the broken bone was place a tamarack layer on it until it was completely healed.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Whenever a person had broken a bone, someone with spiritual power used an animal bone to replace the broken bone. And they brought this person back to their normal health. This is the kind of person who lived on this earth.

Yes, they used a spiritual power. Nowadays, doctors don't really know their spiritual power. But in the past people really knew their spiritual power. They used it to replace the broken bone with the animal bone. The spiritual person replaced the broken bone, and it went back to its normal shape. I suppose they meant these people roamed the world. This is the story they told each other, and they passed it on.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

K'i wet'ì / Daàht'j / Diwe - doo - dowe

Birch bark / Freezing / Tamarack

They used birch bark peel as a bandage for a broken bone. The bark is also a medicine. It helps to relieve the pain. The bone heals back to normal. Since there was no doctor, they used this bark peel as a bandage. They won't take it off until the bone is cured.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

K'i wet'ii / Daàht'ɔ / Diwe - doo - dowe

Birch bark / Freezing / Tamarack

When a person was working in the bush, they sometimes had an accident. They could sprain their ankle or break a bone. When their leg was broken, other people looked at it to see how it was broken or cracked. First, they tried to put the bone back in place with their hands. Then they wrapped it with birch bark and tied it really well with something.

They didn't cut the person. They used their hands to place the broken bone. They froze the skin with snow or ice. Once it was frozen, the person didn't feel anything where the broken bone was. Finally, they wrapped it with birch layer. Sometimes they left it on for about two weeks; then they took it off.

It's just like here when we break a bone. The doctors put a cast on it. And that's what they did with the birch layer. Or they could use a stick too. They carved it well and put it around the broken bone and tied it in place.

Rosalie Zoe [01/03/93]

When a person breaks their leg or arm, or sprains their ankle, they take birch bark and wrap it around the limb to support the bone. This is left on for a year or until it heals, and changed when worn out.

If a person's bone is out of joint, they put it back in place. When there is a lot of swelling from a sprain, they break a piece of glass or a sharp rock, then poke the injured limb to make it bleed to take away the swelling.

Marie Klugie, Marie Madeline Nitsiza, Celine Eyakfwo,
Rosa Romie [26/04/93]

This happened to my granny Modzàni once. She was mushing her dogs, then suddenly she must have fallen off the sled. The dogs dragged her because the drag rope was wrapped around her wrist. That was how she ruptured her wrist. We didn't know what to do for her. So, we peeled these birch trees, placed it around her wrist, and tied it real tight.

It was said when we do this it helps to heal the broken bone quickly. These stories were told by my late granny K'etitia.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

At the time of no doctors, when they fixed a broken arm, the first thing they did, before they took the person home, was to wrap it with something. They peeled off the birch layer and wrapped it around the leg and took them home. Once they were home, they got bush medicine, like tamarack layer. They chewed

K'i wet'ii / Daàht'ì / Diwe - doo - dowe

Birch bark / Freezing / Tamarack

on the tamarack layer and placed it on their leg. And every day they changed the dressing. That helps to heal the wound quickly and to stop the bleeding.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

Gokwò Whet'ee | Body Burns / Skin Burns

Lidì tazee - lidì tahzee

Loose tea

In the past, when a child burned their hand, this is what they used, as I remember. There was no modern medicine; no tea bags, just ground tea. They put some ground tea in their mouth, chewed it for a while, placed it on the burn, and wrapped it with a cloth. That way the child didn't get any infection on their hand.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Diwe - dowe

Tamarack

They collected tamarack inside layer for a burn. After they washed the burn, they placed the tamarack layer on it. They did the same thing when someone was burned with boiling water. When the hot water hit them, their skin peeled off. That's what they used, tamarack layer.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

K'ik'a

Birch inside Layer

When a child was burned with hot water, my mother said once, they get birch inside layer. The inside layer feels like salt when they rub it. She said, "We peel it and we collect the inside layer. And we boil it. We let it boil for a long time. Its brew gets really strong and it looks stronger than tea. And if we smeared it on the child's body about twice, the burn went away. And that is the best bush brew."

This was what my mother said when she told us the stories. "That heals a person's wound quickly," she said. "We wash the person's wound with this brew,

K'ik'a

Birch inside Layer

and that helps the scab to come off easily. You can see the new skin growing. That is the best medicine." That's what my late mother said.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gòò Tàda | Cancer

Ekwò wets'ò edzaàwàh

Caribou leg skin

We burn the whole caribou leg skin, with its feet. When some parts of the fur are not burned, we scrape off the ashes and burn it again. We do the same with the foot parts. When it's all burned, we smash the foot parts and boil them with the ashes. And we drink the brew like that. It was said that is the best medicine that has been discovered.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

I know they used caribou legs and burned them to collect the charred fur ashes. They collected lots and they made the brew. They drank it whenever they could. That brew was good for anything, even for serious diseases.

Nowadays, some people are sick with all kinds of diseases. Whoever still uses this medicine could be cured by it. It's been said that it was good for all kinds of diseases. And what we call this cancer? That is a serious disease. But if we used these medicines, we could get better.

Charred fur from caribou or moose legs can be used. We throw them in the fire and collect the charred fur ashes. It tastes really sour. It can't be eaten, but they take it in a brew.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

They said the brew from leg skin ashes is good for cancer. Many people died of this disease. That is why they burn the leg skin and use it as a medicine. When they noticed a person was not doing well, they treated them with this leg skin ashes brew. It's been over five years and I'm still taking this ashes brew. Every day I take one cup; it's very strong stuff. That's why I can't take it too much in one day. We mixed the ashes and water together, and let it boil for one hour. That's the

Ekwò wets'ò edzaàwàh

Caribou leg skin

way we made leg skin ashes brew. You could do the same thing with the bone ashes.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Dehko / Łòts'eeko | Chest Cold / Whooping Cough

Dechįta gonàèì - detsįta gonàèdì

Bush medicine

People lived until they were really old, until their throat wore out; and then they died. That was how it was; that's what my late mother said. They used all types of bush medicine. That was why they were never sick. It is true when they say it is really good. Even when I catch a cold, I use bush medicine. When I drink bush medicine, I can feel it going down. It feels like it is burning. At the same time, we chew spruce gum. This helps to cough out mucus and stop the coughing.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gots'agoò

Labrador tea

Labrador tea is also very good too. It has a tiny larch on it that is good medicine; this is what has been said. We collect them and save them because it's very good for a cold.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Labrador tea has red berries. That is good for a cold too.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Degok'at'ii

Ground roots

These ground roots are also good for a cold.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Gqò

Pine

We do the same thing with the pine tree as we do with the other trees. We can make brew from its branches or from the peel. First, we scrape off the peel. Then we make the brew; then we add the branches to it. We chop them first; we cut them small. We add the branches because the brew is not that strong.

First, we chop it into small pieces. Then we add the peel and the boughs. The brew is good for anything, such as a cold or chest pain. It was recently said that Paul Drybone had TB (tuberculosis) and he drank that herb juice, and that was why he got better.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Dzqdiì

Muskrat root

They collected rat root too. It kind of floats on the water. I think it's found somewhere in a quicksand area. Its habitat is the water, where it grows with lots of other plants. I think in a small pond.

Whenever a person caught a cold, they chewed it in their mouth. Or when they had a headache, they smelled its smoke too. They smelled it the same way they smell the modern medicine. But first they light it and then they smell its smoke.

I don't know, but I think when they had a cold, they chewed it and swallowed the sap. I think it is strange. They also said it's a good medicine.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

Ts'iwàzòò / Wohgwìzòò

Spruce boughs / Juniper boughs

Even nowadays, when we have a bad cold, we use bush brew and we get better quickly with it. We collect spruce boughs and boil them with water. The steam helps us to breathe better. They say that the disease is afraid of the spruce boughs. There are lots of plants that have good medicine, but we never bother with them.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

If they knew a woman had a chest cold, they said to one another, "We should steam her." Then they rushed out and gathered a lot of spruce boughs. They put

Ts'wààòò / Wohgwàòò

Spruce boughs / Juniper boughs

the boughs in a canvas and crushed them with an axe. After that they put the spruce boughs in a tub and added water, then let it boil for a while. Then they took the tub off the stove. They put really hot stones in the tub to get more steam and placed it right under the person.

Sometimes we get chest cold because of the weather. Inhaling spruce bough steam can heal your cold. To get more steam, you keep adding more hot stones and spruce boughs. So, when you enter a sick person's tent you smell spruce bough.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Soft spruce gum is good too. We bring that soft spruce gum to a boil. Then we make soft spruce gum brew. It is good too.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

My granny said that spruce boughs could be mixed with juniper. Long before the doctors arrived, when a person had a cold for a long time and a chest infection, they mixed spruce bough and juniper together, and made its brew. And they drank the brew like that. This helped to loosen the mucus in their chest.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

They collected all that juniper. They tied it into a bundle and hung it in their warehouse. And about this time in winter, when people caught a cold, they used that to make herb juice.

When a person had a cold, they got lots of spruce boughs, and they brought them inside the tent. They put them in a pail to boil, then drained it through a cloth into a different pail. That's how they made a potion.

When a person caught a cold, they chopped the spruce tree inside layer and just chewed it like that.

They collected the spruce tree boughs, chopped them, put them in a pot, and boiled it. They used the herb juice to wash their leg. They also heated the herb juice and put it beside them so they can breathe the steam. At the same time, they make them drink the herb juice.

Long ago, when a person caught a cold, they used to keep a flat rock to heat up and to put under their feet, under the thigh. They put the rock in a canvas underneath them, to help a person when they had a cold.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Ts'wàzòò / Wohgwàzòò

Spruce boughs / Juniper boughs

It's the same for juniper; it's good for a cold. If we need some, we really have to dig all around and pull it out with the dirt. After getting the roots out, we place our offering like tobacco and sugar cubes. This is the only offering that we could give to this juniper.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

In the past, when we were really sick with a cold, people used soft spruce gum. Some of this soft spruce gum was clear, just like water in colour. People cut it and placed it in a piece of cloth, since they had no paper then. Then they boiled the soft spruce gum and drank the juices for their colds.

Alexis Flunkie [09/10/91]

Sometimes if a person catches a cold and gets sick, people cut spruce branches, put them in a pot with water, and bring it to a boil. If a person catches a cold, they heat them up with the steam of boiling water. They put the pot of steaming boiling water under the person and cover them with a blanket. The person stays under it, in the steam and gets heated until they can hardly breathe under the blanket. They get better from the steam of spruce branches.

Joe Zoe Fish [24/05/91]

Titàtseè / Jk'qò

Steaming / Spiritual power

In the past, when someone had a bad chest cold or pneumonia, the people steamed them with hot water. They covered the person with a blanket and steamed them by adding hot stones to the water. In this way the person was cured. After doing this, the person changed their clothes and felt much better.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

When a person caught a bad flu, they steamed them and gave them whatever bush brew they thought was best. But if there was no change and the person was still sick, medicine men tried to help. There were three types of medicine people, each stronger than the other. But no matter how strong their power was, if this person had to die, they died.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

K'ik'a

Birch inside layer

Juniper berries are also good for a chest cold. Birch layer is good too. When we collect birch layer, first we scrape off the peel, then get the inside layer. That too is good for a chest cold.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Tsàlè - tsàlì

Beaver castor

Whenever we came up with this misery sickness, we cut this sac and inside there is a liquid just like grease; and it's very good for a chest cold or flu. My late father used to keep a lot of this stuff to take. When they got a sore or bruise, they just applied this grease to their skin, for it is only grease. They also said this is very good for sore legs.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

It'ò

Cranberries

Cranberries are also very good for colds. We chew the red berries. It is good medicine for colds and we collect lots and save them for winter. Our granny said to us, "My grandchild, this is very good when you bring them to a boil. It's very good for a bad cold." You can also just eat them. When a person has whooping cough and takes this, it can stop the bad cold and the coughing.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Cranberries are also good for a cold.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Even cranberries are good for a cold. They say that they have good vitamins.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Tsɔht'è / Diwe - dowe

Crowberry / Tamarack

Crowberries were also mixed with any other kind of bush brew, and we were cured by them.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

A long time in the past we knew about this bush brew that people used quite well. Long ago, way out on the mountainside, it was after Easter when the snow was melting. They decided to move back here. There was hardly any snow on the trail, but still they travelled.

That was when my late uncle Wilin's late father's wife was sick, probably with a chest cold. She couldn't talk very well because her throat was sore. We were small and not able of doing anything, and so worthless then.

My father used to tell us this, "Whenever you collect a plant, make sure you do your offering first." My father brought in this crowberry and tamarack in a packsack. We lived together in one tent with my late uncle Wilin's father and his wife who was very sick.

Since my father had collected the crowberry and tamarack, they put them in a large pail of water and brought it to a boil. After it's boiled a long time, they let it cool off. The sick woman drank this brew very often.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

Dahghoòchj - dahghoòtsj / [ts] - [ch]

Gooseberry stem / Rosehips

I used rose hips or gooseberry stem sometimes. When I made its brew and drank the brew I felt better. It also helped me stop coughing. I haven't coughed since my sister died last year because I used that bush medicine all the time. I think it's the best medicine, so I used only that.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Dzeti

Spruce gum brew

When they had whooping cough, they mixed spruce gum brew and drank that. It took a while — about a week — to stop the coughing.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

K'ɔ̀jɔ̀ - k'ɛ̀ɛ̀dzɛ - k'ɛ̀ɛ̀jɛ

Saskatoon berries

As we walked along my mother filled a pail with Saskatoon berries. And when we came to a place where we were about to bed for the night, my mother took this pail of Saskatoon berries, added a little bit of water, and brought it to a boil. She said this is very good for whooping cough, since my late grandfather was really coughing.

She took two empty cans, covered them with a cloth, and poured in the berries' liquid. It looked very red. She took it to my grandfather. He drank this at the camp and when he went to bed. My mother saved what was left over because it is good for coughing.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Saht'òò / ɬiwet'òò

Bear bladder / Trout bladder

And when the bear was killed, they butchered it well and made drymeat out of it. They cut out the bear bladder, dried it, and kept it. They also collected the bear's feet and hands, and boiled them. When a person coughs out blood, they mixed warm water with a piece of bear bladder. Once it dissolved, the person drank it and they felt better.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

They said when a person coughed out blood, this bear bladder was very good for it. And bear bladder was also very good for cuts.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Trout bladder is good for coughing out blood and so is bear bladder. If we don't feel good, we could take these bladders by drinking them, or else smear them on our body. It will relieve the pain. These two are the same type of medicine and they are both good.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

He went out there, shot a bear, and did exactly what the old woman had told him to do. He brought back to me the bear's bladder in a plastic bag to.

So, I said, "Granny, what should I do with this thing?" I was afraid because I was coughing out blood. She said to me, "Just warm up the water and put some of this

Sahtl'òò / ɬiwetl'òò

Bear bladder / Trout bladder

stuff in it, and drink it. Every time your throat is itchy, keep on drinking this liquid," she told me. "But if your throat is okay, don't bother taking this," she said. She advised me to take this liquid in the morning and at bedtime.

The bottle was about this size (hand gesture) and the old woman told me to take it until I finished the whole bottle. Before I did all that, I put half of the water in the bottle. And while the bladder was fresh, I added it to the water.

I followed granny's advice and kept drinking this liquid bladder until Christmas came around, when I started to feel better. And I was completely healthy until I got another sickness.

Elizabeth Mantla [09/10/92]

K'itì / K'ik'a

Birch sap / Birch inside layer

In spring, when the tree sap is dripping and they go for birch tree sap, they just chop a hole in the tree and place a birch bark basket under it to collect some sap. When the basket is full, they just drink the sap like that. It tastes really good; that's what Victor said. When they collect birch sap, they don't use a small tree; they use an old tree. When we say an old tree, it's an old tree like an old man — it's a big old, old tree. That's the kind of tree that has the best sap and it's strong too.

One time when I was coughing day and night, my uncle Victor told me that I was coughing too much. I told him I tried bush brew, but it stays the same. And he said that he'd get some birch for me. He went out and came back with a big pack full.

He peeled it off first, to collect the inside parts for me. He told me to break them into small pieces and put them in a big pail of water. And when it's boiled, drink the brew. When I made its brew, I made it really strong; it was just red. It was strong. I felt it burn my mouth when I drank it. But they told me to keep drinking that brew, so I kept drinking it. After two weeks I stopped coughing. And ever since I stopped, I never coughed again, and two years have passed now.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Chekoa etse nat'è-le | Child can't stop crying

Dzɔ̀weghà

Muskrat fur

In the past when the child cried because it was horrified, they burned the muskrat hair and applied the ashes all over the child's body. Right away the child stopped crying.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Muskrat and beaver are similar. My father said they are first cousins. It was said that if a baby was really crying after it was born, they told each other to burn muskrat fur and smear its ashes on the baby's stomach.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Dechɔ̀ti

Plant brew

When a small baby had a sore stomach and cried, when children were crying, they tried any plant brew and smeared it on their stomach. They did whatever they could with what they had. Finally, the child stopped crying.

If a child had diarrhea, they gave them whatever plant medicine they had. For a very small child, they smeared the medicine on them. They continued doing that, and then the child had regular bowel movements again.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Tatsò wechoò

Raven feathers

It was said, a long time ago, if a baby never stopped crying after it was born, they kill a crow or raven, burn its feathers, and smear the ashes on the baby's stomach. And that made the baby stop crying, it was said.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Ti goɔ̀dɔ̀ at'ɪ | Diarrhea

Dihwets'ii / Dihtsò	Grouse intestines / Grouse feces
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In the past, when a child had diarrhea, the parent boiled the grouse feces. The child drank the broth once it cooled off. When the child drank the broth, it stopped the diarrhea. I know this very well.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

They dried grouse intestines and kept them. When a child had diarrhea for a long time, they made its brew and gave some to the child to drink. This is what my granny said. They also smeared some around the rectal area, and that stopped the diarrhea right away.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

The intestine of the grouse was used for rubbing on stomach pain. If we kept doing this, the pain often went away later, and you didn't often feel any pain.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

When a child had too much watery diarrhea, they got intestines from the grouse and added it to water. They let the child drink it like that. This helped to stop the child's diarrhea, it was said.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

When elders or small children have diarrhea for a long time, they said it was no good because this can cause infection inside their stomach. This is the reason why we always kept grouse intestines.

I suppose they meant grouse guts. They dried them and kept them. And if they had that, they made its brew and drank it. Sometimes for about two or three Sundays they took that brew. Even an elder drank this brew when they had diarrhea. Granny also said that they smeared its brew all around the stomach and rectal area. And this helps the diarrhea to go away.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

For anyone that had diarrhea for a while, this grouse shit was used. Other than that, people tried other kinds of bush medicine. When nothing worked on the person, they sent a young person to hunt for grouse and bring them home. The women quickly skinned the grouse and took the intestines out. They put the grouse intestines into a cup and made this person drink it all. Once this was done,

Dihwets'ii / Dihtsò

Grouse intestines / Grouse feces

the person got completely well. That is why people always saved grouse intestines.

People don't really hunt for grouse today because they hardly go anywhere. In the past people always hunted for the grouse. We don't seem to save the grouse intestines anymore. When children have stomach cramps, we give them modern medicine, but it doesn't help. Before we used to treat them with grouse intestines, but not anymore.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Łots'ì

Soot

A long time ago, when there were no doctors, our family was living alone, only us. One morning I woke up with a deep pain in my stomach, and it didn't get any better. I just couldn't eat anything for many days. I often went out to pass urine and diarrhea with some mucus and blood. My mother tried all sorts of plants and other things for me, but I didn't get any better. And I didn't have any taste for food at all. I was sick more than two weeks. Anything that went in my mouth tasted like wet moss. My step-mother-in-law didn't know what else to do for me.

After trying every sort of thing, my step-mother-in-law took the stovepipe apart, collected some soot, heated the water a bit, and added the ashes to the water. She let the ashes dissolve in the water. Once it was well dissolved, she used a cloth to drain this soot brew over and over; then poured it into a cup. She told me to take a deep breath and drink this down. "We will see what happens," she said to me.

She had drained it so many times, it looked just like plain water. "Because you're passing very bad stuff just like a liquid, this should make the change," she said to me. "If it doesn't, I won't know what else to do for you." I took one more cup before I went to bed and, thank goodness, I felt much better the next day. After taking this soot brew, by the second day I just felt so healthy. The soot from the pipe looked like black cinder; that was what she used. And this stuff really cured my disease. By the second day I was fine.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Dechɪ̀tì

Plant brew

When a small baby had a sore stomach and cried, when children were crying, they tried any plant brew and smeared it on their stomach. They did whatever they could with what they had. Finally, the child stopped crying.

If a child had diarrhea, they gave them whatever plant medicine they had. For a very small child, they smeared the medicine on them. They continued doing that, and then the child had regular bowel movements again.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

K'ɪ̀ajìechjì

Saskatoon berry stem

For a child's diarrhea, they boiled the Saskatoon stems with a tiny bud. After it was well done and cooled off, they made the child drink this. They collected these and saved them because it is good medicine.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Godziìhkw'qò Eya | Earache

Ekwqwedzeèbàa

Caribou ear

When they had an earache, they used caribou ear ashes. They didn't put it in the ear; they smeared it around the ear. We pleaded to it when we smeared it, as we smeared it around our ear. When we did that, our earache went away. It was good to plead to it first.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Ts'èt'ìkatsò

Tobacco smoke pipe residue

Tobacco smoke pipe residue is also good for a sore ear. At that time, they used to smoke. They put some pipe residue on our ears and we got better with that.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Eehkwoo	Medicinal water plant
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If a person has an earache and there are sores, I think eehkwoo is the right kind of medicine for it. People of the past were never out of bush medicine; even eehkwoo was kept. When a person was really suffering from an earache, they used this eehkwoo, and a hot stone was placed under the ear, wrapped in old clothing.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Mòlaetleh / Yiihwhi	Store lard / Heat
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When we lived in the bush, a child might have an earache. Then our mother did this for us; she got lard and smeared it around our ear. For some people they got a thin rock and warmed it. Then they put it in a cloth and told us to lay our head on it. And when we laid our head on it, it helped to warm our ear and this helped our earache.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Dlòo wetsò	Squirrel feces
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They killed a squirrel and used its feces for an earache. They removed the intestine and squeezed out the contents. They pleaded with the squirrel part before they applied the feces around the ear. For the squirrel skin, they dried it and heated up the skin, and placed that on the ear. Once the ear was treated like this, it relieved the pain.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Edoo tàdaa – Dɔ edoo at'ɪ | Epilepsy

Ehɔɔ wekò dechɪ yetlà

Ashes from a tree split by lightning

When a person had epilepsy, we collected wood from a tree that was split open by lightning. We burned it and smeared its charred ashes on the person's sinus. I think some people boiled it and drank its brew.

They didn't say for how long they used it. I guess they only used it until they got better. They continued to use it, but I don't think that goes away quickly.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

Dlòò weghaloò / Dlòò wedzeè

Squirrel fur / Squirrel heart

A squirrel is good for a person who has a seizure. Just like my grandchild Sue Ellen, who has a seizure once in a while. If someone had a seizure like this, they killed a squirrel and took out its heart. The person or child who ate the raw heart, won't get this disease again. They also smeared squirrel hair ashes on their body and that helped too. Squirrel broth is also good to drink.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

It was said, long ago, when a person had a seizure, this is good for it. Long ago, my granny was the kind of person that had a seizure once in a while. We tried squirrel fur charred ashes for her and made its brew. When we burned the fur, it was just black. We smeared that on her with the brew. This helped her to stop moving during a seizure.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Dechì eyìts'ò ts'òtɪa

Stick and blanket

A person having a seizure — this happened to a person in front of me once. I think it was Paul Quitte's sister Elizabeth. That used to happen to her. She was older than us, so she's an elder. I guess she's had seizures since she was born. At that time, when she had a seizure, there were about 10 people holding her down. They covered her with a blanket and sat on that blanket. But she still managed to get up. That went on and on; and then they got a stick.

Dechì eyits'ò ts'òtfla

Stick and blanket

They put that stick in her mouth to make sure she didn't bite off her tongue. They also cooled her off with a wet cloth. They just did that; there were no doctors then. They just did that until a person regained consciousness. Or if that didn't happen, they asked a spiritual man to look at them. He checked them, and that person got better.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Gokwì eyah | Headache

Tsàwò / Tsà'wekwìtòò

Beaver pelt / Beaver scalp

Beaver head is good for a headache. If we got a bad headache, we brought the beaver scalp close to the fire. Once the scalp is warm, we placed that on our forehead. By doing this, the headache went away. This story was told by the elders and I had heard it too.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

My late father talked about the beaver and drying beaver pelts. Sometimes when we travelled in the bush, some people got a rash all over their body. If we didn't have any other kind of animal fur, we used beaver fur. We smeared its fur ashes on ourselves. Long ago it was like that. It was said a long time ago, when people had a headache or bad sinuses, they warmed a beaver fur and heated their head with it, to take away their headache.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

They warmed the beaver skin and placed that on their head. They burned the hair and sniffed it through their nose. This relieved the pain quickly.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

If they got a headache, they used something like charred fur. What kind of animal charred I'm not sure, but I think it was beaver fur. They used the beaver scalp and burned its hair and smelled the incense. Since there was no medication, this was what they used for a headache. Even the matchbox was used. If they kept on doing this, they often felt much better the next day.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Tìtso wekwìwhò / Tìtso wekwìghòò

Loon scalp / Loon brain

As for loon scalp, they used it if a person had a very bad headache. They burned the feathers and rubbed the ashes on their forehead and in their hair too.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Long ago, this was said about the loon. They mentioned about its brain. They cut out the scalp and dried it or burned it for its charred ashes. They also warmed the brain and smeared it on their head. It was said, this made their headache go away.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Dzòwekwìghòò

Muskrat brain

When we had a really bad headache, we used to plead to the muskrat's brain. Even though that animal is small, it has a strong mind. We had to plead to its brain and then eat the brain. And if it could help a person's headache, then it did.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Dzòdii

Muskrat root

If a person had a very bad headache, a beaver scalp was placed on their head. If this didn't help, they burned rat root and inhaled the smoke in their nose. By doing this, a person was relieved of their headache. Other people said that this person was cured by the rat root. It may work for some people but some rat root may not work for some people.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

When a person had a headache in summer, they used to collect rat root. I remember they used to collect and save them. When a person had a headache, they used rat root first. They broke it in half, burned it, and inhaled its incense in both nostrils. They did that as if they were smelling an aspirin. I remember that's what they used to do when a person had a headache.

Dzɔ̀dii

Muskrat root

I remember they used to say to one another that it's good to collect plants in warm summer weather and in the springtime, when all the plants are growing. That's when it has lots of sap.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

They collected rat root too. It kind of floats on the water. I think it's found somewhere in a quicksand area. Its habitat is the water, where it grows with lots of other plants. I think in a small pond.

Whenever a person caught a cold, they chewed it in their mouth. Or when they had a headache, they smelled its smoke too. They smelled it the same way they smell the modern medicine. But first they light it and then they smell its smoke.

I don't know, but I think when they had a cold, they chewed it and swallowed the sap. I think it is strange. They also said it's a good medicine.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

When some elders had a headache, for a long time they used rat root. There is no rat root around this area. They burned the tip of the rat root and breathed in the smoke. This way their headache went away.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

In the past this is what people said. It is not good to take aspirin too close to rat root. I don't know why. But when someone got a headache, they light up this rat root and sniff it. They did the same for a head cold. And they said this was very good for a headache.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

They say it's very dangerous to take rat root and modern medicine at the same time. It kind of attacks a person. Rat root is very strong. When we take modern medicine, we can't take this rat root shortly after.

If we had a sore stomach, we just chew rat root. And when a person had a headache, they light the dried rat root and smell its incense. When a person did that, the headache went away.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

K'àhdzàa

Dry willow

There are also willows. It's called dry willow, small dry willows. I witnessed long ago that people used to do this. When a person had a really bad headache, they got a dry willow and put it in the fire, just the tip. Then they took it out and waited for it to stop burning. Then they smelled its incense. This helped to clear the headache.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

K'jàjìe - k'èédzìe - k'èèjìe

Saskatoon berries

The stem of Saskatoon berries has a little black bud that is very good for a bad headache. And it's good for a sore stomach too. They crush this bud, put them in a pail, and add water to let it boil. Then they drink its juice after it's well boiled and has cooled off. This drink will make them vomit. After this they feel better.

Or when person has diarrhea, this is a very good medicine for stomach pain. As soon as it reaches the inside stomach, it collects all the bad mucus and drains it out, either by vomiting or by having diarrhea. If it was the mucus that got them sick, they feel much better once they pass it out.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Ts'iwàòò / Dzqdiì

Spruce boughs / Muskrat root

One time we were canoeing at the mouth of Idaà Lake. But we were not capable of working and we were useless. That's when my father started to get a headache. The pain got worse, so they asked for the spiritual person to help him. But there was no cure.

Then my late grandfather said, "We hardly come around this area. That is why we are strangers here." We moved back to our destination, travelling through the night. In the early morning light, we arrived to the place where we were going. And during that day my grandfather said, "What is wrong with my son. He is the only son who does all the work for me and I depend on him. For he is the oldest one in the family. And he has these headaches that don't seem to go away."

My mother boiled a strong tea and after it cooled off, she washed my father's head with it. But he didn't get any better. So, my mother collected spruce boughs,

Ts'iwàṽòò / Dzqdiì

Spruce boughs / Muskrat root

put them in the pail with water, and brought them to a boil. Once the bush brew was cooled off, she drained it through a cloth many times. She washed his head twice and did the same thing with his legs. Then she placed a couple of stones in the fire to heat up my father's foot. And she put the other hot stone in the water to steam my father.

When my father was all steamed up, he started to vomit. It was yellow mucus and looked something like fish bladder. After that my mother removed the blanket from my father. He was sweating from the steam, so he wrapped himself with a towel. Then my father said to my mother, "My wife, you have tried your best for me, but nothing seems to help. But with this spruce bough brew, I finally begin to feel relief from the pain." The phlegm that came from his mouth looked just like fish bladder. We never heard my father complain about headaches after that.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

When someone had a very bad headache, they chop a lot of spruce boughs and boil them in a pail of water. They cover the person and steam them until they got very sweaty.

If this didn't help, they tried rat root. They lit the rat root and covered the person's head, so they can smell the burning root. An hour later they were fine. Rat root is very good, and I do have some myself.

It's been said that rat root is dangerous to mix with modern medicine. This rat root has its stories. Modern medicine and rat root are very different kinds of medicine. We cannot have them together; it's forbidden. Even if we get a very bad pain in the head, we can't take rat root if we take modern medicine. Since I'm taking modern medicine, I don't bother about having rat root.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Godzeè t' à Gohòɔqɔ | Heart Problems

T'ooladzè

Poplar cones

When my late father had a sharp pain in his chest, they used that poplar on him. It's sticky like gum at the end of it. My mother collected lots of that and boiled it. She made him drink its brew. She also smeared it on him. She did that for him and that's how he got better. They said it's the strongest herb brew; stronger than any other bush brew.

When we place it in our mouth, it's just like a deep healer ointment. It's hot; that is the best too. When we have a sharp chest pain, we smear it on us. We place the boiled ones where we have the sharp pain.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Eghohkèè

Water plant root

This looks like rat root but it's big and they call it eghohkèè. I think they said it's good for someone with shortness of breath. They also used it for the inside of their body and if they had a bad heart. I don't know how they used it, but after they collected it, I think they boiled it and drank its brew.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

K'ì t'èhtè

Birch fungus

If a person had a heart problem — when there was no modern medicine — they used a brownish fungus from the birch. They boiled this in a pail and drank its brew, once it cooled off. This was very good for heart and breathing problems. The person with a heart problem was treated and was well again.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

K'ògots'òqhdzìi

Willow cone

There is something that hangs off the willow that they offer — willow cone. They chop it out and make its herb juice. If a person has a heart problem, they drink its herb juice. They say it's good for their blood too.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Willow cone is very good for a person who has heart failure; a fast-beating heart. They save these willow cones and use them to make the juice. A person with a bad heart drinks this very often.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Ts'ìikwe ts'et'ìi

Pipe tobacco

When we have sharp pain in the chest, they boil tobacco, pipe tobacco, and then they smear it on themselves.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Ts'ìwàòò

Spruce boughs

For sharp pain in the chest, they used spruce bough brew. They put the spruce boughs in a pail, added water, and let it boil for some time. The person drank this often and it made them feel better. There was only bush medicine.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Sahwedzeè / Sahwet'òò

Bear heart / Bear bladder

When we had a bad heart, we killed a bear and used its heart. I don't know if it had to be cooked or it could be raw. If a person had a bad heart, they cut out the bear's heart and say to it, "You are good medicine and you could cure me." This is what we said to it. We had to really plead and give our message to it. Then finally we ate it.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

Sahwedzeè / Sahwet'òò

Bear heart / Bear bladder

Dried bear heart is good too. When we have a bad heart rate, we eat a small piece of that dried bear heart. We plead to it too, and we feel better again.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Bear bladder is good medicine if we have a sore stomach, or a bad heart, or when we're bleeding. Then we put a small piece of bear bladder in water, and drink it like that.

It is really good for bleeding. One time people were driving around in a truck. I don't know what happened to them, an accident, but one person was bleeding badly, inside. They added a small piece of bear bladder to water, and let him drink one cup of that. It was like his bleeding was cut off. It just suddenly stopped.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Tìtso wedzeè

Loon heart

When someone has a bad heart, the loon's heart is good for it. When they have a bad heart, sometimes they say they have a bad heart rate. Then they kill a loon and take out the heart. And while the heart is still moving and raw, they swallow it like that. If we swallow the loon's heart like that, then our heart is the same as the loon's heart. That's how it is.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Loon heart is good for a person who has a heart problem. We have to eat the raw heart; if we do it will cure us. This is what has been said.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

When a person had a bad heart or heart rate, we killed a loon and right away took out the heart and ate it raw. They said it is good when we do that.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Dzɔ wedzèè

Muskrat heart

Muskrat is also good for a person with a bad heart. They swallow the muskrat's heart while it's still alive. They said that is good. This is what my late father said when he told us his stories.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Gah weloo

Rabbit urine

When they felt pain in their heart and lungs, they drank rabbit urine. When they drank that, it was good. They got better. They tried all kinds of animal medicine.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Dlòò wedzèè

Squirrel heart

They also said that the squirrel heart is good too, when a person has a bad heart. They take out the heart and eat it raw.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

ɩwezqò wedzèè / ɩwewòò /
ɩwet'òòTrout heart / Trout liver / Trout
bladder

There are stories about big trout, and there are three parts that are good. When you have a heart problem, the trout heart is good for that, but you have to plead to it first. So is the big trout bladder. As for the liver, you have to boil them and drink its broth. Never throw the broth away. But you have to plead to it before you drink its broth. And for the liver, if you want to eat it raw, it's up to you, but you have to plead to it too.

Elizabeth Mantla [09/10/92]

ɔ̀iwɛzɔ̀ɔ̀ wɛdzɛɛ / ɔ̀iwewòò /
ɔ̀iwet'òò

Trout heart / Trout liver / Trout
bladder

These days, people sometimes say they have a bad heart. Whether it's an elder man or woman, it's the same when they have a bad heart. When we have fishnets set in the water and we catch a trout, they tell us to swallow the heart while it's still alive. When they did that, it helped their heart get better.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Long ago, they said that trout liver is good. And the heart is good too, for someone with an irregular heart rate. When we clean the fish and a person has a bad heart rate, they take out the heart while the trout is still alive and the person swallows it while it's still moving. If they swallow the fish heart, they said, it helps relieve the pain and they feel a lot better.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Dɔ̀ne Wetsɔ̀ɔ̀ eyiɔ̀ts'ɔ̀ Wewɔ̀ɔ̀ Wet'a Wehoꝯà | Kidney and Liver Problems

Sahwets'òò

Bear kidney

They also said bear kidney is good. When someone has TB (tuberculosis) in their kidney, they eat bear kidney.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Sahwewòò

Bear liver

Like us, bears have a liver inside their body. When a person's liver is infected, they eat that bear liver. They plead to it and then they eat it. That is good too.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Got'ò lghàà | Mastitis

Sahloo / Diwe - dowe	Bear tail ashes / Tamarack
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As for the bear tail, you burn it, collect the ashes, and save them. If a woman's breast got infected, they used bear tail ashes. The bear ashes open up the infection and suck out the mucus. Very often they rub a burned bear's tail on a boil. Once it got red, they put on more ashes. It opens the infection and gets all the pus and blood out.

After this, they get a dry twig and clean out all the pus left inside the infection. Once the pus is cleaned out, they chew tamarack layer until it gets really smooth, and place it over the sores, without boiling the layer. Every day they changed the dressing, and at night too. I guess this tamarack layer sucks out all the pus with blood. Until the sore healed, they used this birch layer often. It healed the infection and left its scar.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Diwe - dowe / Dehkw'i	Tamarack / Dry twigs
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When someone had a breast infection, this is what they did if they were far out in the bush. There was no modern medicine, even for our sores.

They make tamarack bush medicine. With that potion they washed her breast infection. When there was pus, they chewed the tamarack bark and placed it on the infection. This took all the pus out.

For some women, a boil on their breast is very painful. That was how I saw it. The boil could be hard as a rock. When it was like that, they placed tamarack bark on it. If it didn't break the boil open, someone got a needle or an awl.

They sharpened the awl with a file and burned it. With this they broke the boil open, and all the pus and blood came out. It was the tamarack bark that healed the wound. I have raised my children with breast milk and this used to happen to my breast. When I had infection, I used that; I used tamarack layer and the infection healed. That was how it was. Tamarack layer was used for all kinds of sickness.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Diwe - dowe / Dehkw'i

Tamarack / Dry twigs

Before the Rae Rock Mine opened, my breast got infected. There were no doctors and no modern medicine, not even ointment to apply. Because of my breast infection, this old woman Monique came to help me. "My grandchild, you can't always change your children and carry them to the swing; you have an infected breast." This is what she said. "There should be someone in this village who knows about boils."

Later, Bernadette's mother and some other women came to our place to check my breast. They told me that it had started to turn into a boil; that the surface was still kind of hard. Once it got tender, they'd place something on it. They told me, in the meantime, "Use something to hold your breast up. Don't use your arm on that side too much. Use your other arm to change your child. The father can place the child on the swing for you." My breast was getting worse and I couldn't take it anymore.

They kept checking on my breast and told me when it gets tender, they will put something on it. When the old lady came to check, it was big and very painful. She went to get the other women and to see Bernadette's mother. They came to check my breast and told me, "Now we will plead to the tamarack. We need something from a tree with sap. While the tree stands, we have to plead to it at every stem. We start collecting only after pleading to it. Any plant with sap is collected first. We don't chop it down with the axe."

The old lady said, "We are going to collect tamarack for her." They left and returned by evening with tamarack. The old lady peeled the top part, cut out a piece of the layer, and placed that on the sore. They wrapped a cloth around my neck and under my arm to hold my breast up like this. (Shows how they wrapped her breast). The infection was right under the breast.

Then she said, "My grandchild, when you get a swollen breast it's just like a pain in the heart. And when it's ready to open, it will show, for you will feel itchiness. And when this is happening let us know." And they placed tamarack layer on my sore. "On the second night and by the third day, you will feel itchy," she said. "That's the sign that the boil will break open soon. So just watch for that." About the third and fourth day, the itchiness got worse.

This old lady Monique had her own tent, but she always came around just for a visit and to check on me. We had our own tent too. "Granny," I said to her, "I'm really in pain because of my breast. It feels like something is about to come out and it's very itchy."

Diwe - dowe / Dehkw'i

Tamarack / Dry twigs

"I will tell the other women," she said. She went out and came back with the other women. They checked my breast and saw it was very tender and ready to break open. When they touched the infected part, there was a bit of pus. The old woman placed a moss pad under my breast. As she slowly removed the tamarack layer, the mucus with blood and pus started to pour out. After it was all gone, I felt relief. I felt the emptiness in my breast; I felt much better. "Even though all the mucus with pus has poured out, it's not enough," said the old woman. "The boil is still there."

"The dry twig from the tree easily catches the boil," the old woman said. There were two dry twigs to use if the boil didn't drain completely. She placed the dry twig right on my wound and twisted it inside until it caught on the thread of the boil. That's how she removed the whole boil. It looked like muscle. She put it on the cloth with the mucus blood and pus stain, and tied it up. She told the others to put lots of wood in the stove. As the fire started, she had the cloth ready to throw in the fire. Before she threw it, she said, "She (Elizabeth) has suffered long enough with this and may it never return to her again. For this, I'm throwing it in the fire to be burned." To this day, nothing like that has ever returned.

Elizabeth Mantla [09/10/92]

Tamarack is very good for chest cold, coughing, and sore throat. It is also good to boil it and use the juice to clean infection. You can chew it like spruce gum and swallow its juice. A layer of tamarack can be placed on a boil and the next day it will break open. It often collects all the pus.

About two weeks after my son was born, my late husband said, "We will go hunting for caribou." I had an infection on my breast but I went along, with my two little ones. The pain was getting worse but I didn't want to complain. I worked with it and we stayed on the land for almost a month and a half. My husband went to Rae with the meat. I don't think I ate as much food as I liked to; the infection was getting very painful. Sunday came and we prayed at an elder's place. We ate together and I went back to our tent. Our oldest daughter was about three years old, and my son was only weeks old. Since I had no mirror, I took a tin can cover to see where my infection was.

First thing, I took a scarf and tied it around my chest, above and beneath the sore. Then I took a dry twig and placed it right where I saw something white, and twisted it. I guess the pus stuck to the dry twig. I pulled the pus out and couldn't

Diwe - dowe / Dehkw'i

Tamarack / Dry twigs

do it a second time. But I felt a little less pain and had a small bit of meat and bannock with tea. I went to sleep after I fed my baby.

Early on Monday morning my husband came back and he asked, "What's wrong with you? You look so pale." I told him about the infection on my breast. He said, "I will get you tamarack," and he did after he slept. He said, "Peel the top off, take the layer and chew on it until it gets really soft, and place that on the sore." I did that and continued until all the pus was gone. After that I used a birch fungus to heal the wound. It sure worked well and I am fine to this day.

Marie A. Rabesca [05/26/2022]

Gowà Gok'qò | Mouth Infection

Ekwò wets'o eda

Caribou antlers

Caribou antlers are very good when a person has an infection in their mouth. They throw them in the fire, scrape off the burned part, and let it boil. Its broth is very good to take.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Tsòht'è weghàà / Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì / Eehkwoo

Crowberry branch / Spruce cones / Medicinal water plant

When my grandchild had an infection in his mouth, I told his mother to try cone brew. She put a little bit in his mouth but was too strong for him, and he didn't like the taste. So, we said, "We'll just try brew from crowberry branches." Then the infection in his mouth went away.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

When a child had an infection in their mouth, we used crowberry boughs and spruce cones. We mixed them together and made its brew. First, we washed the infection in their mouth. Then we let the child drink the brew.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Tsqht'è weghàà / Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzìì /
Eehkwoo

Crowberry branch / Spruce cones
/ Medicinal water plant

Mouth infection is treated with spruce cone brew. They boil the cones and let it cool off. After that they gargle it in their mouth. People said this was very good medicine. This one also has to receive its pay before taking it.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Spruce cone brew is good when we are bleeding, when a child has an infection in their mouth, and when a person has lots of sores. Its brew is very strong. We wash the sores with the brew. Spruce bough brew is also good for stomach and mouth infections.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

When they had mouth infection, they used brew made from brown dishwater plants (eehkwoo), or crowberries, or tree cones. My grandchild had a mouth infection. His grandmother gave him some tree cone brew. Every day his mother washed his mouth and gave him some brew to drink. With that, the infection was gone right away.

They used brew to wash the infection in their mouth. Once they washed their mouth with the brew, the infection went away. So, tree cone brew is the best too.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

For a mouth infection, spruce tree cone is good. Also, black crowberry roots. Whiskey jack berries / bearberries (j'hk'adzìì, j'hk'ajìì) are also very good for a mouth infection. They mash the berries and put them in the child's mouth.

When a child has a mouth infection, they can cry a lot when the infection is very bad. There's pus too and because of that they can't eat.

They make very strong spruce cone herb juice and put some in the child's mouth with a spoon or feather. Or they get a piece of cloth and dip it into the herb juice, and wipe the inside of the child's mouth. This gets all the pus out. They put some herb juice in their mouth even if they are crying. Then the child's mouth gets better.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Dahghoòchjì - dahghoòtsjì / [tɕ] - [tɕh]

Gooseberry stem / Rosehips

It was said that gooseberry stem is good for mouth infection. And when we have a sore stomach, we drink its brew. It was said that this was good medicine for a person with shortness of breath. That is why people go for the gooseberry stem. It is good medicine and they used it all the time.

It's the same with rose hips. As we make its brew, we talk to it and plead to it, and then we take it.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

ɬiwet'òò

Fish bladder

When they caught fish, they collect fish bladder. They said it is good for anything, like mouth infections and sore throat.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Tehgòò – tèeht'aà / K'ík'a

Lily pad / Birch inner bark

Tehgòò is really good for mouth infection and sore throat. When you take two cups of the juice the sore slows down.

Birch bark has a white upper part with catkins. Its juice is very good too. Once it's boiled it tastes like milk. The juice is like thick creamy milk. They use this to wash the infection or sore.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

]hk'adzì -]hk'ajì

Whiskey jack berries (bearberries)

When a child gets a mouth infection, they use whiskey jack berries too. They always saved them. In the fall when we went berry picking, our parents told us to pick whiskey jack berries too. This berry juice is good for a little baby who has a sore throat or sore gums. They gave the baby some berry juice in the mouth with the teaspoon. They said this cures the sore in no time.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

}hk'adzii - }hk'ajii

Whiskey jack berries (bearberries)

Whiskey jack berry is very good for mouth infection. One time my grandchild had mouth infection. We had treated her with all types of bush medicine such as spruce bough and crowberry, but nothing seemed to cure it. So, I told them to search for whiskey jack berry. They are usually found by birch trees.

They collected about half a bag of berries. I told her mother, "Don't pay attention to her crying. Just go ahead and apply this stuff in her mouth." The mother applied the berry juice and the very next day she was okay. We always used to have these berries in on hand. When there is lots of snow it's hard to find them.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Whiskey jack berries are good too. We don't have to make its brew; we just squish them and apply it inside the child's mouth.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Gots'ii ta Gòokw'òà | Pinworms

Łots'ì / Dłłts'ia - dłłts'ea

Soot / Black pepper

My granny said, "When a person complains about a sore stomach [and] when we eat something, I guess the pinworms eat it all. Because it eats everything we eat; that's why we feel hungry all the time. And every time we eat, we have stomach pain because we have pinworms." That's what she said. And when we were like that, we got the black soot from the stovepipe. We got a pot or bowl and boiled it for a long time. Then we strained it through some cloth and drank the brew.

The worms look like a fish spinal cord; the backbone spinal cord and they're white. That's how wide some worms are and that's what we passed. I guess she knows about it and that's why she said that. And what else did she say? I think it was black pepper. They drank its broth and it is really strong. They said that when we drink its broth, that also helps to pass out worms.

But pipe soot is the best. That's what she said. I guess she's right.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Łots'ì / Dɔ̀ɔts'ia - dɔ̀ɔts'ea	Soot / Black pepper
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When they wanted to collect stovepipe ash, they used a knife. They spread out a canvas and when they had lots, they boiled it. It's black and very strong. After they boiled it, they strained it through a tea towel. And when we drank that, it helped to pass the pinworms.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Long ago we didn't know anything about the pinworms. When a person said they had stomach pain, they took the stovepipe charred soot. Because we only burned wood, the pipe got full of charred soot. Our relatives took the stovepipe down when the fire went out. They collected lots of pipe charred soot and boiled it in a pot. They let it boil for a long time. Then they let it cool off and strained it through some cloth many times until it is clear. Then finally we drank its brew. Later on, we passed the pinworms all out. It was said this takes away the pinworms.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

The ashes from the stovepipe were used, but not too much. They take just enough in a dishpan, add a bit of water, and heat it. This too was very good to get rid of pinworms. That's what was said. If you took about two cups of this ash brew, all the pinworms were destroyed and you passed them all. It's very true when they say the stove ash is good.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Dzɔ̀dii	Muskrat root
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Rat root is good for stomach infections. Also helps us when we have pinworms.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Long ago, when there were no white people and someone had a pinworm, people crushed the rat root, put it in a little pot with water, and brought it to a boil. Once it was well boiled and cooled, the person with a stomach ache drank it, and passed out all the pinworms.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Ts'ejii k'e Gohɔʒɔɔ | Respiratory Problems

Sahwedzèhdeè / Sahwet'òò	Bear lung / Bear bladder
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The bear lung is like that too when someone has TB. When we killed a bear, we took the parts that we needed and dried them.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

That too, with the taste of bear bladder, they'll finally get better as time goes along.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Lɔgazoa	Traditional bush tobacco
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This thing they call lɔgazoa, it grows in the bush and its leaves are about this tall. It's blackish and sort of flat, and has yellowish berries on it. When it grows about this tall, the berries start to grow. They say that it's good for our insides; our respiratory system.

If a man's insides weren't so good, he chewed two of its berries and swallowed them. As for the leaves, they'd gathered them and kept them. They wrap them up and preserve them. If a man's insides weren't very well, they find a tin can and boil that to make its juices. It turns yellowish and they preserve that. If they hear that a man's insides weren't good, they make him drink that like tea for quite some time. They know that his insides get better if he does that.

Helen Rabesca [01/10/91]

Wedze	Balsam poplar catkins
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This balsam poplar catkin is very good for breathing problems. But I don't know much about the tree itself.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Eghohkèè

Water plant root

This looks like rat root but it's big and they call it eghohkèè. They collect it and I think they also said it's good for someone with shortness of breath. They also used it for the inside of their body and if they had a bad heart. I don't know how they used it, but I think they boiled it and drank its brew.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

[ts] - [ch] / Dahghoòchj - dahghoòtsj

Rosehips / Gooseberry stem

It was said that gooseberry stem is good for mouth infection. And when we had a sore stomach, we drank its brew. It was said that this was good medicine that had been discovered. It was also good for a person with shortness of breath. That's why people go for gooseberry stem; it's good medicine and they used it all the time.

It's the same thing with rosehips; they are both the same. As we made its brew, we talked to it and pleaded to it, and then we took it.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gots'agoòti

Labrador tea

We used to travel in the wilderness; that was when my mother had a sharp pain in her chest. That was when I told my mother, "How about if we make you an herb juice?" She said, "My daughter, I can't hardly breathe very well so do something for me." While my father went out trekking somewhere, I wandered off into the bush. There were many trees and I came upon one huge tree and right at the end of the tree, Labrador tea was sticking out about this long (hand gesture).

Since I had my snowshoes on, I started to kick the snow all around the Labrador tea. After I cleared the snow, I took the axe and chopped the root off with the dirt. I didn't have any tobacco, but I always have matches in my pocket because I always make fire in the morning. So, I offered the matches and said this. "There is no one around and my father is out somewhere. My mother is sick. I am the only one that stays with my mother and she's got a very bad pain in her chest. I don't know what to do for her. That's why I am pleading to you. It was said that your

Gots'agoòtì

Labrador tea

juice is good for healing. I just wish my mother is healed by your juice. For this I am offering you this."

So, I took the Labrador tea with its root and went home. When I got back, my mother told me to prepare the plant for her quickly. I broke the Labrador with its leaves into a pail with water and brought it to a boil. It was twice as strong as the tea. My mother said to me, "Pour some of its juice in a cup for me my daughter, for I can't hardly breathe well."

I poured some juice and gave it to her. I guess she was pleading before taking it and she said her prayers before she drank the juice. She took the sap very often and rubbed it on herself too, because the pain was close to her heart. It's true sister, I tell you that two cups of Labrador tea juice healed my mother, well before the sun set. I mean Labrador roots, for she had a cold with the sharp pain in the chest. Since then, she stopped coughing too.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Kwechì - kwetsì

Rock tripe

This lichen from the rocks is good for breathing problems. Just to give you an example. When we have a breathing problem, we usually take lots of pills. But sometimes that doesn't cure us. This lichen from the rocks is a medicine too. We treat ourselves with different kinds of bush brew. And when we find the right kind, we stick with it until we are well recovered. They said that this lichen from the rocks is good too.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Degok'at'ii

Ground roots

When a person has trouble breathing, they use the things that we call ground roots. This is very good for breathing problems and weakness.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Gqò

Pine

When we have shortness of breath, what was it? Pine trees, where there are pine trees. The peel (dahchiwo) is the size of our hands. That's what we chopped out; then we boiled it and drank its brew.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

Gah weloo

Rabbit urine

When we felt pain in our heart and lungs, they drank rabbit urine. When they drank that, it was good. They got better with that; they tried all kinds of animal medicine.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Ts'iwàɔ̀òò / Titatsee

Spruce boughs / Steaming

In the past when someone was sick, with sharp pain through the chest, and could hardly breathe, they chopped off the spruce boughs. They put them in the tub, added water, and boiled it for a long time. After it's well boiled, they let it cool off. On the other hand, they threw some stones in the fire. When the stones were really hot, they put them in the tub with the spruce boughs, which made lots of steam.

They covered the tub with a thin cloth and put it under the person. They steamed this person until they got really sweaty. As the person sweated, they kept changing the towel that they used to wipe the person with. After sweating, they changed the person's clothes and covered them with a blanket. They placed a heated stone at their feet. With this treatment, the person felt much better the next day. And they made this person stay inside at least for a week.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Gqòt'èhtè / K'ìleh t'èhtè

Pine tree fungus / Trembling aspen fungus

They said that the fungus that is attached to the trembling aspen tree is good for shortness of breath. It was said that we chopped it out and dried it. Also, pine tree fungus; they are both good. That's what the Yellowknife people said — that it's good for shortness of breath. And that's a good thing that has been discovered.

When we had shortness of breath, we cut it into small pieces and boiled it to make a brew. We let it boil for a long time and drank it after it cooled off. That helped us breathe normally again.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

]hk'adzì -]hk'ajì

Whiskey jack berries (bearberries)

Whiskey jack berries are good for shortness of breath. But I don't think people eat them anymore. They are soft like gum.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

K'itì / K'ì t'èhtè

Birch sap / Birch fungus

Birch sap is good for a person who has trouble breathing.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

When there was no modern medicine, if a person had a heart problem, they used a brownish fungus from the birch. They boiled this in a pail and drank its brew, once it cooled off. This was very good for heart and breathing problems. The person with a heart problem was treated and got well again.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Tìtso wekwìghòò

Loon brain

They warmed a loon's brain and smeared it on their sinus and around their eyes.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

Gokwò Ek'jì Làanì | Skin Rash

Tsàwò / Tsà wetsà

Beaver fur / Beaver tail

My late father talked about the beaver and drying beaver pelts. Sometimes when we travelled in the bush, some people got a rash all over their body. If we didn't have any other kind of fur, we can use beaver fur. We smeared its fur ashes on our self. Long ago it was like that when people had a headache or bad sinuses. It was said a long time ago, that they warmed a beaver fur and heated their head with it. This took away their headache.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

When they killed a beaver, they wet the tail and put it on the fire like this and kept turning it. When the skin was burned a little and looked like this (curled), they peeled it off and put it aside. They kept collecting all the burnt skin.

They smeared that on each other when they were aching all over their body. And that was very, very good. It's good for skin rash too. When someone had skin rash, they smeared it all over their body.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

When a person gets a rash all over their body, burned beaver tail skin is good for it. They smeared the ashes on their rash.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Dihwets'ìì

Grouse intestines

There is a type of disease that causes aching skin. For that, grouse intestines are good. They get grouse intestines and mix it like this; then smear it where they have the pain on their skin.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Ekwòwedzehdeè

Caribou lung

Caribou lung is really good to smear on the skin. I once did that myself. I had this disease in the past that seemed to come back every year in the same season. For many summers I had this disease. Then my late father told me to try caribou lung. I used only caribou lung for a long time until it finally went away. To this day I never got that disease again.

We cooked it first. When it was juicy, we smeared the juice on our skin. We used this juice over and over on our skin. And when the caribou lung got cold, we cooked it again and got its juice to smear on our chapped skin.

When I used the juice from the caribou lung, I smeared it on my skin just twice, and I was cured. From that day on I never had that skin problem again.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Tłjwetsò

Dog feces

They collected and boiled white dog feces, which has been around for a long time. It doesn't smell and they drank its brew. It is what they used to do. I remember them using all these things. White dog feces is good when people have a rash all over. I don't know how they used it, but it's white dog feces and it's frozen. They picked it after it's been around for a long time. They used an old tin can to make its brew. And when we had a rash, we smeared it on us. We used a feather to smear it on our rash, even when the rash is on our face or hands. We did that once in a while.

Long ago when I was small, I used to play around. At that time, lots of small children had a rash and sores all over their body. Even on their face they had big scabs, and on their hands too. At that time our relatives rushed around to look for dog feces, to make the brew, to smear on us. I overheard them say that they had discovered something good. So, I think that this is a good thing for people that have a rash. Even now, it is good for whoever has that rash to use it. I think they are cured fast.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

An incident was told about a girl whose skin rash was cured by washing it with a brew made from boiled, white (old), dog feces.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Tłjwetsò

Dog feces

Dog feces is good when we get a rash all over our body. Pierre's wife said this once. "Long ago the doctor told me that I had cancer. So, I tried all kinds of fur-charred brew. I also made dog feces brew and smeared it all over my legs. I strained it through a cloth and I drank its brew too. And since then, I feel fine."

"When we boiled the feces, it looks like soap," she said, "but I strained the brew through some cloth into a different pail. And because my sores didn't go away, I smeared it on my sores. I used to feel pain in my hands from my sores but after using that I didn't feel that much pain anymore."

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Tł'ok'àhwhii / Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzìi /
Tsqht'è weghààCattail / Spruce cones / Crowberry
branches

Spruce cones, crowberry, and cattails are very good too. They said these three things are very good for mouth infection. They collected lots of cattails and applied its ashes on the skin infection. And if this didn't work, they mixed spruce cones and crowberry together, boiled them for a long time, removed it from the stove, and let it cool. The brew looks like tea. They washed the child's body with this brew twice. All the sores were gone.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

My brother-in-law Bruneau, his brother Pierre, and his wife Margaret were all living there too. This girl Elizabeth had sores all over her body and was pitiful. This woman, Monique — the young sister of Paul Rabesca's late mother — said to Elizabeth's mother, "Your daughter is pitiful, full of sores, and you should hurry up to make bush brew for her. The weather is cold and if she catches cold too, it won't be any good."

She also said, "Collect the spruce cones from the little tree that is just growing, for they are very strong. Mix this with crowberry stem and bring them to a boil. If you use this brew to wash all her sores, it will be good." In a birch basket they collected lots of crowberry stem and fresh cones from spruce trees. They made the brew to wash the girl's body. It looked black.

This woman told the girl not to use any type of soap on her skin; to only use the bush brew. So, she washed herself with bush brew, nothing else. She kept doing

T'ok'áhwhii / Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzìi /
Tsqht'è weghàà

Cattail / Spruce cones / Crowberry
branches

this on and on. I saw Elizabeth was cured without taking any kind of modern medicine.

At the same time, I had a breast infection. We both used the same kind of bush brew and were cured with it. They say it's good to stick to only one kind of bush medicine if you get better by taking it.

Elizabeth Mantla [09/10/92]

It was said that cattails are good when a person or a child has a rash all over their body. They burned the cattails and smeared it on their rash.

As for cattail leaves, they boiled them and washed the child's rash with its brew. Crowberry branches and spruce cone mixed together is also good. This is the truth, because this happened to my grandchildren in the summer. We mixed the crowberry branches with spruce cones and we boiled them. When it cooled off, we used its brew to wash the child's rash.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

They used spruce cone brew for a skin infection. They boiled them until it got really strong. When a person had sores on their head, they used spruce cone brew to wash their head.

And when it got kind of dry, they applied lard on the sores. Since there was no ointment, only lard was used for sores, besides bush medicine. Otherwise, they used any grease that was taken from an animal.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Spruce tree cone brew is good when we are bleeding, when a child has a mouth infection, and when a person has lots of sores. Its brew is very strong. We wash their sores with the brew.

Spruce bough is good too. They make its brew for stomach and mouth infections. Both [brews] are good for infections in the mouth.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

By the shores, there are long tall grasses with cattails at the end. They collect them when a person has lots of sores. It is good to collect them before freeze-up, because we don't know what situation we'll be in. We collect these cattails in case our children get sores.

Tʼok'áhwhii / Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzìi /
Tsqht'è weghàà

Cattail / Spruce cones / Crowberry
branches

When a child or another person had lots of sores, we burned the cattails to ashes, then mixed it with water, and stirred it with our hands like we're mixing flour. Then we smeared it on them. We did that for two days and all their sores cleared up. This is what my late mother said to us long ago. At the tip of the plant, the cattail looks like a cotton swab.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Cattail is very good for when a person has sores on their body, and maybe infections as well. They burn it and use the ashes. The elder women never leave without it because it's very good ointment. They never had any kind of skin treatment for the children before. So that is why they carried these dry plants in a bag to wherever they went.

When a child has a wet moss pad and walks with it for a long time, they can get a rash. When this happened, they used cattail ashes as an ointment. They burned the cattail and rubbed these ashes on the child's skin rash. The skin was black. Then they put the moss pad on again. The next time they changed the moss pad, the rash was gone.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Kw'iahnq̄t'oh

Beehive

When we had a skin infection or chapped hands, we burned a beehive and rubbed the ashes on the sore skin. By the next day, the sores were gone.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Kw'ah

Moss

In the past they said it was good when women raised their children in moss pads. They said the moss is like a bush medicine. When we raised a child, we had to make sure that the moss was well cleaned before changing the pad. This way, the child didn't get a rash, even though they wore the moss pad all day. Same thing when we travelled somewhere with the dog team.

Kw'ah

Moss

Once you came to a camp, you changed the child's moss pad. When you didn't have any dry ones, you dried some while camping. When you got to the overnight camp, the child's skin didn't show any rash; none at all.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

When we were raising our children with the moss diapers, they never had any rash, none at all. But that probably happened to children with parents who didn't look after them very well.

During summer, people gathered lots of moss. It was a poor situation. They pulled out moss, even us young girls, we pulled out moss with them. Sometimes we got fed up with pulling out the moss.

They made spruce tree tipis to dry and store the moss in. At freeze-up, the men mushed their dogs back there to bring us some dry moss that is ready to use. That's what they did.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Tehgòò - tèeht'aà / Ts'arikwòò

Lily pad / Frog legs

Only bush brew was used. Sometimes it was pine tree or tehgòò. They used this bush brew to wash the skin. After that they used other bush brews to wash the chapped or itchy skin.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

The water plant with a short leaf and a tiny cone is called tehgòò. It is very good. My daughter Mary Jane's head was covered up with sores. Her father was still alive when this happened. He said, "My daughter's hair is long and I don't want to cut it." I kept washing her hair twice a day with spruce cone and crowberry brew, but the infection didn't go away. I told him we should try tehgòò.

It was snowing outside but I told my husband he could find some of these in the little pond not too far away. I told him, "When you come to a trail, turn to your left. And when you come among the birch trees, go down to the clear area. That's the good place to find them.

So, he went out and filled his packsack, and came back with it. I chopped them into little pieces, put them in a pail, and added water. I let it boil all day to make

Tehgòò - tèeht'aà / Ts'arikwòò

Lily pad / Frog legs

its brew; then took it off the stove to let it cool off. I was pregnant at that time and my husband told me that I should watch myself, not to get kicked by my daughter; we were washing her head and he was helping me.

She was crying her heart out as we washed her head. It was covered with pus and blood as we washed her hair in the big dish. When she was crying. I just couldn't take it anymore and I cried for her. I pitied my daughter. We hadn't given her a licking, but she was really crying her heart out. I told my husband that I just couldn't stand the sound of her crying. And he said to me, "Let her cry, it's okay."

So, I continued to wash her hair with tehgòò brew twice a day. Less than a week later my daughter's head was all healed. This tehgòò is very good indeed.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Sometimes when a person gets really bad scabies on their body, they treat this person with tehgòò. This is very good for all kinds of diseases; for skin infections.

It's almost the same as when the doctor gives medication. If people who get skin infections don't wash their sores well until they bleed, the infection won't heal quickly. But if they wash their sores well until they bleed, then the infection heals quickly. And after removing the scabs and using the bush brew, it just gets kind of dry. Sometimes it lasts for a week and other times it doesn't. Depends how well the person gets treatment. That's how it is. Even today some people don't like to clean the sores well.

The bush medicine didn't work for some people who tried it. They asked the person with a spiritual power for help. That's what they did.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Ekwòhdzj

Rotten wood

When babies got a rash in those days, there was no such thing as baby powder. We got rotten wood and pounded it to make it into powder. Then we smeared it on the child's skin.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Ekwòhdzjì

Rotten wood

Rotten wood was good for the umbilical cord, when a child was born. At that time there was no baby powder. They put some rotten wood on a canvas and smashed it until it looked like flour. When a child had a rash, they smeared it on it.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Wohgwìchjì

Puff ball

That puff ball was good for our sores. When we had a rash around our neck and we smeared that on the rash, it went away. That was good too.

Bruno was like that; he had a skin rash and did nothing for one year. We used only that on him and he got better. That was good. Even though we don't have pimples, our skin gets chapped and aches. When we smear that puff ball on our skin, it's good.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Bebia got'òò

Breast milk

Nowadays children are bottle fed. But in the past, women raised their children with breast-feeding. When a child had a rash and they didn't know what to do, the mother got some of her milk and smeared it on the rash.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Godaà Eyah / Nahwhì | Sore Eyes / Snow Blindness

Ekwò wenatì

Caribou tears

My fate father once said, "Caribou tears are good when we have sore eyes. When we smear caribou tears in our eyes, that clears them." This was said a long time ago. His grandmother told him these stories a long time ago.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Gah weloo

Rabbit urine

Rabbit urine is very good for a sore eye. When you have a very sore eye, you put a wee tiny drop into your eye. By doing this your eye will be fine.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Ts'ihdi - ełqhdì

Ants

The old women liked to save everything. They even saved frozen ants because they knew they're good for something. When one of their sons had a sore eye, they took these ants in a cloth to his place. The son covered himself with a blanket while the parents burned the ants so the smoke went into his eye. Once they did this, his eye got well again.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Sahwenatì / Sahwedaà

Bear tears / Bear eyes

When someone had a bad eye, they took some of the bear tears too. The person opened their eyes wide with their hand and used a feather to drop the tears into their eyes. That was something really, really good. The person had no more problems with their eyes, none at all.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Tsàwedaà / Tsà wetsà

Beaver eyes / Beaver tail

When they skinned a beaver, they took out the eyes. They told us to swallow the eyes while they're still raw. We couldn't eat it, but we downed it with water. With that our eyes were strong and good. This is what my father told us.

In springtime, some people got snow blindness on the candle ice. They couldn't see and their eyes were sore. Beaver tail peel is good for that. They burned it in a basin and let the smoke go in their eyes. And they could see again.

Tsàwedaà / Tsà wetsà

Beaver eyes / Beaver tail

One time my brother got snow blindness and he was really crying because his eyes hurt. My father burned beaver tail peel and let the smoke go in my brother's eyes. Then he was better again. That's why they collected beaver tail and kept them.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

When I was very young, they mentioned beaver eyes. My father used to kill beaver and my mother skinned them. After skinning the beaver, she cut out the eyes. Then she said, "Where did the children go? I want them to eat the beaver eyes." This meant that even when we get old, our eyesight is still good. That is how our mother taught us. Even today we still eat beaver eyes. We have reached our old age but never complained about our eyesight. Maybe this is what they meant.

Beaver tail skin is also good for sore eyes. If we got snow blindness it felt like tiny insects got in our eyes. And if it stayed like that, we covered ourselves with a blanket and lit the tail skin to get the smoke. Once we did this our eyes got well again.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

When a person got snow blindness, we used beaver tail peel. That is what eats up the white film (nahwhj) in their eyes. They burned that beaver tail peel and let the smoke go into their eyes. Then they could see better. That's a good medicine for snow blindness.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

łiwetl'òò

Fish bladder

It is true that whitefish and trout bladders are good for our eyes; these two things are good. And when we have a sore stomach, trout bladder is good. We just add it to water and drink it like that. And if we have cold sores, we can use this fish bladder for that too. We just smear it on our sores and that is good. I guess they are right, because their brew is really strong.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Łiwetf'òò

Fish bladder

There is a story about the big trout that concerns God's own will. It is a story about a very old blind man who received his eyesight from the big trout bladder. It happened like this. A young man was walking by the sea when a stranger approached to him from nowhere. The stranger told the young man to kill the big trout and use the liquid from the bladder for his father's eyes, so that he can see again. After the young man went home, he did exactly what the stranger told him to do. And the father saw well again. This is a true story. Trout bladder is very good medicine, but we don't seem to bother with it much.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

If we have a sore eye, they say trout bladder is very good.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Sometimes when we had a sore stomach, it was good to drink trout bladder brew. And when we had sore eyes, we put a little bit of bladder in water, and tested it first to see if it's a little bit too strong. We put a little bit in our eyes and the pain went away.

Long ago when people used to travel by dogs, there was snow blindness. A small film developed in the eyes. At that time, there was no such thing as sunglasses. When a person got snow blindness, they couldn't even look at the fire because it burned their eyes. Then another person took the film out of their eyes, they said; it's looks and feels like lice. If their eyes were still red, they tried whitefish bladder. If they used that about two times in their eyes, it went away and they felt better.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Tìtso wenatì / Tìtso wekwìwhò

Loon tears / Loon scalp

Sometimes when a person killed a loon, they saved the scalp. And if someone complained about their eyesight, they warmed the loon scalp and placed it on their forehead. And the ashes are good for a headache.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

When we have sore eyes, they said that the loon's tears are good. I don't know how they used it but I guess they used it often.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

Tìtso wenatì / Tìtso wekwìwhò

Loon tears / Loon scalp

When a person had a bad eye, they got loon tears. If our eyes were very bad, we used a feather to get some loon tears. We opened our eyes wide and put some drops in, and that was good. This was said because the loon had brought back the person's eyes.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

A long time ago, it was the loon that gave back a person's eyes. This person was blind and he was all alone, and he was really thirsty for water. He heard the loon calling from the lake and he crawled to the water. He didn't know where he was going. It was only by feeling the ground with his hands. Then he felt the water with his hands. "Hey loon, I cannot see. You sound like you can see well. Come and swim toward me. I will be very grateful to you, if you can bring back my eyes."

A long time ago, whatever people said or thought, things can happen their way. So, the loon swam toward him. I guess in those days animals used to talk. That's what they said. As the loon swam to the blind person, he said to him, "Get on my back." And without knowing the way, he felt with his hands and got on the loon's back. The loon told him to hang on real tight and dove down in the water with him. The loon came out in the middle of the lake with him and he asked the old man, "How do you feel?" And he said, "I can barely see." And the loon said, "I'm going to dive with you one more time, so hang on real tight." And he dove in the water with him again.

They were close to shore when they came out of the water. Again, the loon asked, "How do you feel?" And the person said, "I can see clearly now." So, I guess the loon took him back to shore. And when he got to shore, he told the loon, "Thank you, for have brought back my eyes." And that's why they said the loon's eyes and tears are good for our eyes.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Loon tears are very good for sore eyes. So is trout bladder. That's why they saved them and had them handy.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

It was said that loon eyes and tears are good when we have sore eyes. It's like this; we get some of its tears and put a drop in our eyes.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Dɔ̀ nàwet' àa

Surgery

In those days, a person could get sore eyes from snow blindness when they travelled back from the barren lands. They didn't have sunglasses; they covered their head with a handkerchief and they looked through it as they travelled. When they camped overnight, they said they couldn't even look at the fire because it burned their eyes. That's how serious it was. When a person's eyes are very serious, they feel like they're full of very small bugs, smaller than a grain of salt. It looks like small insect eggs. My late mother used to help them with that, to make their eyes better.

Some people went through difficult times when they had sore eyes. Sometimes their eyelid got swollen thick. When we say that, we mean the tissue inside of the eyelid that is normally very thin. Some people say that when it gets too thick, they cut that part out; the tissue inside the eyelid. That's what they used to do for each other.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

Gots'òkà

Cloudberry

That stuff that we called edaba is a five-petal flower of cloudberry (gots'òkà). My late granny never ran out of five-petal flower that grew on the cloudberry stump. When we had a sore eye, this five-petal flower was very good for it. My late granny said this to us.

The right time to collect them is when the five-petal flower is growing. When you collected enough it was good to save them. When your eye was sore, this was very good for it. That's what my late granny used to say.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

K' àhdzàa

Dry willow

If they had a sore eye or nose, they used dry willow on a feather, and dipped it into our eye, which was very good. Mother used to do that in front of me. They also gathered some.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gookaa

Green alder

We used this plant we call gookaa. There are plants like that on the land. If there was lots of snow on them, we kicked the snow away and gathered them.

We made weti (juice) from it and put those extracts on our eyes when they're infected. We prepared it properly and made sure there was no debris in there. Then we put that medicine on our eyes.

Helen Rabesca [01/10/91]

I have mentioned the water root that was good for pain around the waist. The top end of gookachi is a tiny cone and it is very good for sore eyes. We went out walking to look for this water plant. When we found some, we packed them home.

And as I prepared these, I thought about how I had treated my eye with this plant. One time my husband got very angry with me for no reason. I got two black eyes and could hardly see. My aunt came to see me and she was very upset.

She told me that she will get some plants and make brew out of it for me. "If you don't get treated you won't see well," she said to me. So, she went out to collect this plant with its roots. She made its brew and put that in my eyes. About two days later my eyes were back to normal. My memories all came back to me when I was chopping this water plant. How badly I was treated by my husband, but I never left him.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Dahghoèchjì - dahghoòtsjì

Gooseberry stem

When we have sore eyes, I think that we should try gooseberry stem brew. Even Jesus' head was wrapped with thorns. If we plead to the gooseberry stem and use its brew in our eyes, it is good. Sometimes our eyes feel weak. If we use gooseberry stem brew, maybe our eyes become like a child's eyes again. I just think we should try it. All these plants on this earth, our God has created for us. So, if we plead to them, we could get better with them.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Dahghoòchjì - dahghoòtsjì

Gooseberry stem

Gooseberry herb juice is good for a sore stomach and sore eyes. This happened to my daughter Georgina, long ago. These young people were learning to be forest fighters. At that time, Charlie was still alive. He was spreading mosquito spray on the girls, and it went into Georgina's eyes. Both her eyes were just red. The nurse said that she had to fly out on Sunday. This happened on Friday.

Her eyes were really sore when she came in. She couldn't even go out to the washroom. I went out to the end of the airstrip to get some gooseberries. I collected the thorns only. I took a knife with me and cut out about five small ones. And when I got back, I scraped it with a knife, chopped it into small pieces, and boiled it until it just turned yellow.

I strained it through a cloth and put some in her eyes. I kept doing that. Her eyes were red, but they cleared a little just before bedtime. I kept doing that all night and by the next day her eyes were better.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

[tsj] - [chj]

Rosehips

These red things look like red flowers; they grow on rose hips. When we make wild rose brew, we put a little drop in our eyes and this helps our eyes.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

My mother said that wild roses are good when a person's eyes are getting white. We make this wild rose herb juice and we put it in their eyes. Then that person's eyes get better.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Tehgòò - tèeht' àà

Lily pad

This water plant is very good for sore eyes. This is what has been said before.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Ts'iwààò

Spruce boughs

They used spruce bough for sore eyes — the kind that are just starting to grow, the new ones. They gathered them, made the juice, and kept it handy. It was a really strong. That's how they used to prepare it. They used a duck feather, wet it, opened their eyes wide, and put in the drop of medicine. It upset the eye, but when they woke up the next day, they felt no pain.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gqòtletéa

Small pine tree stem

They used any kind of plant medicine for our eyes. They put it in our eyes. Brew from small pine tree stem is also good for our eyes. To make the brew, they let it boil for a long time, until it looked like tea. They added a little bit of sugar and put it in both eyes. They did that. Even when our eyes were infected for over a week. It cleared our eyes in less than a week. That's what the brew from small tree stem can do.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

]hk'adzì -]nk'ajì

Whiskey jack berries (bearberries)

They also picked whiskey jack berries. My late granny Modzàni collected them in a little pail. Since whiskey jack berries are soft, they crush easily. Once they're crushed, it tastes like juice, for it is very strong and red. She collected and saved them. It was very good when a person had bad eyesight or sore eyes. She put a few drops in the person's eye. My late granny had a very sore reddish eye and she squeezed the whiskey jack berry juice onto the little spoon and dripped some drops in both eyes. That's how I've seen her do it.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

Gokè Eyah | Sore Feet

Sah wek'è

Bear paws

Sometimes when a person was in really serious pain, they used something from the bear's paw — the part from under its feet. It's just like hide. That's what they used. They collected that and kept it. They burned it first. Then they scraped the ashes off with their hands, collected them, and then made its brew. When a person had sore feet, they smeared that on them, and they felt no more pain. That's what they said. The old timers really tried everything.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Godzaà Eyah | Sore Legs

Sah wedzazì

Bear bone marrow

When we had sore legs, we used bear bone marrow. We took the marrow out of the bones and fried it. This is what we said as we cooked the marrow and then smeared it on our legs. "I have sore legs and it was said that you are the best animal. So, grant my wishes, for I have sore legs, and I'm going to use your marrow and smear it on my legs. And make my wishes come true." That is what my late father said when he told us stories.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

If we had a pain in the leg for a period of time, we didn't usually chop the bone, which we never did anyway. But if the person was really in pain, they broke the bone and applied the marrow on his leg. And he ate the marrow too.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Its [bear] marrow is good too. When a person had sore legs or when their legs ached during the night, and they couldn't sleep, they pleaded to that bear marrow. And they ate a little bit of it and smeared its grease on their legs. It was said this helped to relieve the pain in their legs for a long time.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Tsàlè - tsàlì / Tsàwola

Beaver castor / Beaver paws

Sometimes when we had sore fingers and sore arms, we boiled beaver paws and ate them, and that was good. And when we had sore legs, we talked to the beaver and pleaded to it. This is what we said. "My bones are really aching and you are the best animal. And we don't know how you lived on this earth. My legs are really aching and I am going to boil your feet. Please grant my wishes." This is what we said as we boiled the feet. This is what my late father used to say when he told me stories.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Whenever we came up with this miserable sickness, we cut this sac and inside was a liquid stuff, just like grease. It's very good for chest cold or flu. My late father used to keep a lot of this stuff to take. When they had a sore or bruise, they just applied this grease to their skin, for it is only grease. They also said it's very good for sore legs.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Ekwò wets'q edzaàwàh

Caribou leg skin

Caribou leg skin leg was very good when we had a sore leg. We burned the skin and collected the ashes. When we had enough ashes, we put them in a pail, added water, and boiled it. Once it's done it looked like tea. We rubbed this on our sore legs or feet, and drank it too. Doing this relieved the pain. This is what my stepmother used to say.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Gok'oh Eyah | Sore Neck

Sahlloo

Bear tail ashes

My late mother said that bear tail is really good for a sore neck. We burned the fur to ashes and smeared them on our neck. We had to plead to it and then we smeared it on our neck. I suppose they are right.

Sahloo**Bear tail ashes**

Do you know Joe from Rae Lakes (Gamètì)? Well, it was your late granny who has since passed away. At that time, Joe's neck was swollen so bad he couldn't even turn his head. Your granny said, "Oh my grandchild, your brother is getting worse, he can't even turn his head. He hasn't moved for two months now. Because of his neck, he can't eat."

She had a bear tail that was given to her. She burned it first and then smeared it all on his neck. And I made the ashes brew and gave it to him to drink. That's what I did and he was fine after that. It is the truth what she did.

Joe lost lots of weight because of his neck. But he started eating very well and in about two weeks he was back to normal health.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gok'à Eyah | Sore Throat
Sahwet'òò**Bear bladder**

When we have sore throat, can't swallow, and it gets infected; we drink that bear bladder brew and the infection goes away. But we have to plead to it first. We have to plead to it and then we drink its brew.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Sometimes even adults get an infection in our throat and we can't swallow anything. Then we get bear bladder. We mix it with a little bit of water and drink a little bit at a time. With that we feel better.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Tsàwek'à**Beaver fat**

What I've seen is this. When my father skinned a beaver, he never threw any part away. He cleaned out every part of the beaver meat and cooked the intestine with a stick over the fire. My father collected the fat from the muskrat, dried it, and kept it.

Tsàwek'à

Beaver fat

When you collect fat from the beaver, it's sticky just like gum; that's what they said. When my father cut out a piece of beaver fat and chewed it, my mother said to him, "Why are you chewing that?" My father replied, "This is good for a sore throat."

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Eehkwoo / Ts'arikwqò

Medicinal water plant / Frog legs

Eehkwoo is good for a sore throat. Ts'arikwqò is a different plant. That too they pulled out with its roots. And once they brought them home, they rinsed them with water to take the dirt out, tied them together, and hung them to dry. They kept them for a long time. This is what they did. And when someone said they have a sore throat, they gave some to each other. They just chewed it in their mouth and swallowed the sap. This took away the pain.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

If we had a very bad sore throat, we tried all different kinds of plants and trees, like spruce boughs or spruce cones or even blackberry root. If the pain didn't get any better, they tried eehkwoo. It's the best medicine. Elderly women kept these, even though it's small pieces. And when someone needed it, they shared it with others.

Elderly women said this to a person with a sore throat. "Since you have tried other plants and it didn't help, try this eehkwoo, which is good when you swallow its juice." So, they chewed the eehkwoo and swallowed its juice, and often the infections went away fast.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

In a situation where a person had a pain in their chest, and their throat felt kind of dry, they tried the thing called ts'arikwqò. This is what they said. "Chew this and swallow its sap, because your throat is dry and hurts, and this will relieve the throat." So, in the past, people always kept this.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Dzqdiì

Muskrat root

If a person had a sore throat, they said to one another, "If your throat is sore, then chew this rat root. And even though it's strong, if you swallow it, then your throat will get better." That's what they said, and they gave those things to one another.

Benny Pomie [02/10/91]

Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì / Ts'iwàòò / Tsqht'è

Spruce cones / Spruce boughs / Crowberry

The cones from the tree were collected and boiled this in a pail with water. Once it's well boiled and cooled off, we gargled with it in our mouth. This helped to relieve the pain in the throat. They continued to take this cone brew for a month. And slowly the pain was relieved.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Spruce tree boughs have small tiny cones. They are kind of soft and they are really good medicine for a sore throat. It's very good to drink its juice, and also to rub it on sores or an infection.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

If a child has a sore or infection in their mouth, spruce and crowberry juice will heal the sore quickly. That's why the mother searches for them when a child gets a sore throat. Once they make the spruce and crowberry juice, and treat their child with it, the infection goes away.

Marie Adele Simpson [29/10/91]

Same thing with spruce cones. They boiled them really well, and the brew looked like tea. That was used as a gargle when you had a sore throat.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Łiwet'òò

Trout bladder

They collected fish bladder. They said it is good for anything like mouth infections and sore throat.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Big trout bladder is very good indeed. When they had a sore throat, they soaked the trout bladder in warm water and gargled with it. Sometimes they applied this bladder liquid on their throat or else drank it.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

The trout bladder is good for a sore throat. They used it to make its broth. And they let the person drink its broth. And they also smeared it on their throat where they had pain. And also, around here on the chest too.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gobò Gohòᓄᓄ | Stomach Problems

Ekwòwewòò / Ekwò wets'q edzaàwàh

Caribou liver / Caribou leg skin

When our stomach was in pain, they boiled this liver. They cooked it well and cut it into pieces. This liver is very good when there is no food or meat. When their stomach was in pain, they ate this liver. This liver is very good.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

They also said that when we burned caribou leg skin and made its brew with the ashes, that's good for a sore stomach. And caribou liver is also good for a sore stomach. They just sliced it and fried it, and that was good for a sore stomach.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Sahwet'òò / Sahwewòò

Bear bladder / Bear liver

When we have stomach pain, bear bladder is good for it. We just drink its brew once in a while and continue to do that. And that helps to take away the pain.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Sahwet'òò / Sahwewòò

Bear bladder / Bear liver

Bear bladder is good medicine for a sore stomach, or if we have a bad heart, or when we're bleeding. We add a small piece of bear bladder to water and just drink it like that.

And that is really good for bleeding too. One time people were driving around in a truck. I don't know what happened to them, an accident, but one person was bleeding badly inside. They added a small piece of bear bladder to water, and they let him drink one cup of that. It was like his bleeding was cut off; it just suddenly stopped bleeding.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Besides the bear bladder, there's a part in the body called the liver. That too is really good when a person has a sore stomach. I suppose this was said by the old timers. When a person had a sore stomach, they collected bear liver and kept it because it's a good medicine. When a person had a sore stomach, they smoked it a little on the open fire; they cooked it just a little so they could smell smoke. And when it was smoked a little, they gave it to that person to eat it. And the pain in the person stomach went away. It is really good medicine.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Det'q wewòò

Duck liver

My auntie Elise (stepmother) tells me stories. She said ducks and other animals were brought on this earth for us. We didn't know if they were bad for us. Well, I suppose they were brought on this earth for us to eat them. "My daughter, you always complain about your stomach pain," she said. She had cooked lots of duck liver in a frying pan. And she brought some cooked liver to me in a bowl. She said that as she brought it in. I guess it is good; that's why she said that.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Dihwets'ii

Grouse intestines

If someone had diarrhea for a while, this grouse shit was used. Other than that, people tried other different kinds of bush medicine. When nothing works, they sent a young person to hunt for grouse. And if they had killed a couple of grouse,

Dihwets'ii

Grouse intestines

they brought them home. Quickly the women skinned the grouse and took out the intestines. They put the grouse intestines into a cup and made this person drink it all. When this was done, the person got completely well. That's why people always saved these grouse intestines.

People don't really hunt for grouse today because they hardly go anywhere. In the past people always hunted for grouse. We don't seem to save the grouse intestines anymore.

When children have stomach cramps, we give them modern medicine, but it doesn't help. Before, we treated them with grouse intestines. We just dried and saved them in a bag for a long time. But not anymore.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

The intestines of the grouse were used for rubbing on stomach pain. If we kept doing this, the pain often went away. And later you don't feel any pain.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

It was said that grouse intestines are good for a sore stomach. When we suddenly got stomach ache, we drank grouse intestines with water, and that was good. Yellowknife people collected that, but us, we don't bother with that.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Eghokkèè

Water plant root

They said these water plant roots are good too; its brew is good. That was discovered when we had a sore stomach and drank its brew. That takes away the pain in our stomach.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

This water plant is also good when someone has problems passing water. When we have an infection inside our waist or stomach pain, this water plant brew is good for it.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Dahghoòchjì / [tsì] / Gòh

Gooseberry stem / Rosehips / Fireweed

It was said that gooseberry stem is good for mouth infection. And when we have a sore stomach, we drink its brew. It was said that this is good medicine that has been discovered. It is also good for a person with shortness of breath. That is why people go for the gooseberry stem.

Because it is good medicine, they use it all the time. It's the same thing with rosehips; they are the same. As we make its brew, we talk to it and plead to it, and then we take it.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gooseberry brew, fireweed, and all these things are good for a sore stomach.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gooseberry herb juice is good for sore stomach and also when we have sore eyes.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Dechjta gonàèdì - detsjta gonàèdì

Bush medicine - earth medicine

When people are sick, people collect plants for them. Maybe young people still use bush medicine.

For myself (Elizabeth Mantla), I collected a lot of plants when I was at Fort Reliance last summer. Doctors treated my stomach problems with modern medicine, but I never got better. I made bush medicine from lichen, Labrador tea, willow, berries, and spruce bough; and I felt better.

Some people who are spiritual healers also make bush brew and give it to people who are sick.

Elizabeth Mantla, Marie Adele Moosenose, Annie Simpson, Dora Alexis, Marie Adele Beaverho [27/04/93]

ɫiwewòò

Jackfish liver

My mother said the jackfish liver is really good for stomach pain. If someone has stomach pain, all you do is cook the jackfish liver over the fire and eat it. And you feel relief after eating the liver.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Dzɔkaà wet'a edoò degoo holè /
Dzɔweghà

Muskrat spleen / Muskrat fur

Muskrat spleen is good for stomach cramps. In the past, when a child cried because it is horrified, they burned muskrat fur and applied the ashes all over the child's body. Right away the child stopped crying.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

The first time my father had the stomach cramp, the old priest who was in charge gave him one spoonful of medicine. I don't really know what kind, but my father got better from that medicine. But while we stayed at Rae, he got the same stomach cramp again. He tossed himself here and there, and grabbed his stomach tightly.

Before this happened to him, people had said the muskrat skin was very good for stomach pain. My stepmother had received a skin from someone, and I guess she kept it. When my father started getting stomach cramps again, she quickly put a pot of water on the stove and brought it to boil with the muskrat charred ashes. Once the broth cooled off, she gave him some in a cup. After he drank it, he laid still in a blanket. This happened when I was just a young girl. And he never got sick again, until he was very old and died of a different disease.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

When someone had a sore stomach, they used muskrat fur. They got muskrat fur and made its brew. Then that person drank its brew.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

It has been said that the muskrat created the earth. When a small child is sick with a sore stomach, we burned muskrat fur and smeared the charred ashes on the child's stomach. We also made its brew and drank it. Muskrat meat can be eaten too.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Gahwo / Diòò weghaloò

Rabbit fur / Squirrel fur

When we have a sore stomach we could use squirrel fur, rabbit fur, or the skin from caribou legs. We drink its brew and that takes our pain away. I guess they say that because people are not all the same; some people are allergic.

They don't mix them together. They use them separately, like caribou leg skin and rabbit fur each go alone. They also said the squirrel fur is the best. Lots of people talked about the squirrel fur.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Rabbit broth is really good to drink when you have stomach pain. Old women said that if you drink the broth of the rabbit, your stomach is relieved of pain.

Elizabeth Mantla [09/10/92]

Dzqdiì

Muskrat root

They also collect rat root because that is good for stomach infection. That helps us when we have pinworms.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

They say it's very dangerous to take rat root and modern medicine at the same time. It kind of attacks a person. Rat root is very strong. If we take modern medicine, we can't take this rat root shortly after.

If we have a sore stomach, we just chew it. And when a person has a headache, they light the dry rat root and smell its incense. When a person has a headache that's what they do. If they do that then the headache goes away.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Tatsq wechoò

Raven feathers

This was said a long time ago after a baby was born. If the baby never stopped crying, they killed a raven, burned its feathers, and smeared its ashes on the baby's stomach. It was said that made the baby stop crying.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Titsowotlo

Loon bladder

They collected loon bladder, because that is good too. Sometimes when my mother cleaned the loon, she took the liver and dried them on the drying rack. And she saved these. They are good for stomach pain. People chewed it and swallowed its juice, and that relieved the pain.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

K'àk'oo

Red willow bark

The willow that you see standing, they are very good too. They chopped them and made brew out of it. Sometimes they saved the willow bark, because it's hard to collect in the winter. They cut lots of willow and peeled them, and saved the bark just in case someone needed it. When a person had a stomach ache, they boiled the willow bark and drank its brew. They say the brew really helped the pain.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

K'ɔ̀jɔ̀ - k'è̀ɛ̀dzɔ̀ - k'è̀ɛ̀jɔ̀

Saskatoon berries

The stem of Saskatoon berries has a little black bud that is very good for a bad headache. It's good for a sore stomach too. They crush the buds, put them in a pail, and add water to let it boil. After it's well boiled and has cooled off, they drink its juice. This drink makes them vomit, and after that they feel better.

Or if a person had diarrhea, this was a very good medicine for stomach pain. As soon as it reaches the inside stomach, it collects all the bad mucus and drains it out. The person either vomits or has diarrhea. If it was mucus that made them sick, they felt much better once they passed it out.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Diwe - dowe / K'itì / Lidi

Tamarack / Birch sap / Tea

Tamarack has lots of good medicine. It's good when we have a stomach infection, and we drink its brew. It's just like gum. When we drink its brew, the pain goes away.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

When we had infection in our stomach, they used tamarack brew.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Many people today get a stomach infection. It's the food that causes the sickness. In the past, people who had stomach problems collected birch sap and tamarack. Tamarack is very good medicine.

Before chopping down a tamarack you have to look at it to make sure it's not too dry. The small, fresh tamarack are best. It must be chopped with its roots, and you have to give your offering to it before chopping it. You need to say these words, "I'm collecting you so that you will be a medicine toward curing me from my sickness." Then we offer some tobacco or another kind of offering. When we are very sick, this tamarack cures us. Its juice is very sticky; it's very good medicine for all types of disease.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/10/93]

Sometimes when we had a sore stomach or stomach cramps, we used strong tea or birch sap. But I heard that tea is best. When we had really bad stomach pain and used really strong tea, it's very good I heard. And I think it's true.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

Łiwet'òò

Trout bladder / Whitefish bladder

It is true that whitefish and trout bladder are good for our eyes; these two things are good. And when we have a sore stomach, trout bladder is good. We just add it to water and drink it like that. And we can also use this fish bladder if we have cold sores. We just smear it on our sores and that is good. I guess they are right because its brew is really strong.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Sometimes when we have a sore stomach, it is good when we drink trout bladder brew. And also, when we have sore eyes. We put a little bit of that

Liwet'òò

Trout bladder / Whitefish bladder

bladder in the water. We test it first to see if it's a little bit too strong. Then we put a little bit in our eyes. When we do that, the pain in our eyes goes away.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

K'i t'èhtè

Birch fungus

They used wood fungus for a sore stomach. They drank a little bit, maybe two drops of a teaspoon, and rubbed their stomach where the pain might be.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Birch fungus is also good for a person who has a big stomach; too much gas. A person like Alexis. There are some in this area that I have seen. If we have to save them, we do. We make juice out of it and drink it often. Then our stomach comes back to normal shape.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Ìghàà | Swelling

Dewatì – Dewaeyits'qtì

Salt water

If a tree falls on them and they don't break a bone, or if they have an accident with a gun and there is no open wound or cut, their body can still get swollen. If that happens, they use lots of salt and water, wash the swollen area, and the swelling goes away.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

T'oola

Balsam poplar branch tip

The end of balsam poplar tree branches is berry-like. This happened to my younger sister Dora, when we were picking berries. She fell over and twisted her knee out of joint. This was around freeze-up, but there was still no snow on the

T'oola

Balsam poplar branch tip

ground. We used the willows to pull her back here, all the way by the shore. My mother looked at her leg, which was big and swollen. She collected lots of balsam poplar and boiled them. She washed Dora's knee with the herb juice until it was a little bit better.

Then my mother said, "Help me." We helped her pull Dora's leg until her knee was back in joint. My mother used the herb juice made from the tip of that balsam poplar to wash her knee. With that it got better. It's good for when we catch a cold too. It's very strong.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Kw'iahnɔ̀t'oh

Beehive

If there are bees around, there is often a beehive hanging in a tree. When all the bees are gone, they get the beehive and burn it. They burn it all. When a person's body is swelling, they make hot water and add some salt. Then they wash the person. But if it stays the same, they smear the black, burned beehive over the swelling. They just do that. Then the swelling goes down.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Beehive is very good medicine. It's very good when part of the body is swollen. We light this beehive and rub its ashes on the swelling. In one day, the swelling is gone or disappears.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Eehkwoo

Medicinal water plant

They keep this brownish water root. Sometimes they chew it and apply it on the swelling. It's also good for sores. By the next day the swelling slows down. That is why people keep all the plants that are good for medicine. This brownish water root, you just put it in hot water and let it soak. After it's well soaked you apply it to the sores, cuts, or rash and they heal up quickly.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Daàtjɛ́'à edeghàts'èka

Bloodletting

When a person breaks their leg or arm, or sprains their ankle, they take the birch bark and wrap it around the limb to support the bone. This is left on for a year or until it heals. They changed it as needed, when it's worn out. If a person's bone is out of joint, they put it back into place. When there is a lot of swelling from a sprain, they break a piece of glass or a sharp rock, then poke the injured limb to make it bleed and take away the swelling.

If a person has a really bad headache, they first freeze the head with snow and then poke the head with glass or a sharp rock to bleed it and make the pain go away.

Marie Klugie, Marie Madeline Nitsiza, Celine Eyakfwo,
Rosa Romie [26/04/93]

Goghòò Eya | Toothache

K'ò

Willow

The small willow was chopped straight, then they stuck it in the fire. Once it got really hot, they removed it from the fire and let it settle for a while. Then they placed it on their toothache. Once it was placed on the person's toothache, they bit on it to relieve the pain. Once the warm willow was placed on their tooth or roots for a while, they must have felt better, I guess. They said the willow is good for this.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Detsj

Spruce gum

My late grandfather used to complain about a headache, caused by his toothache. So, he removed his tooth with a little knife. He used to say, "Because of my bad tooth I get this headache." So, he removed it. They also tried spruce gum for a toothache. They boiled the gum in a pot with water. Once it was boiled well, they cooled it and gargled, and it helped.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Gah weloo / Gah weliiwɔ

Rabbit urine / Rabbit bladder

Rabbit urine is good for toothache. When we have a toothache, we put a little bit of urine on a small piece of cloth on our toothache and it gets numb. Rabbit urine is the best thing for a toothache.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Rabbit bladder is good for toothache. People of the past always carried rabbit bladder with them wherever they went; there was no other medication. If they killed some rabbits, they skinned them well. They took the bladder out and hung it to dry. The old people of the past used to carry this dry bladder with them.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Rabbit urine was used for a sore tooth. And they saved that as well. When a person got a bad toothache, they put this rabbit urine on the cloth and placed that on their tooth, and it relieved the pain.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

As for a toothache, they placed this dry rabbit bladder into a small cloth and placed it on the tooth. They used this bladder very often on the pain. Once the tooth moved, then the pain was gone.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Goyihdloò Gohòɔɔ | Urinary Problems

T'ok'àhwhi

Cattail

The small cattail has a black stripe. Cattail brew is good for a person who can't pass their water. A person who drinks cattail brew will be able to pass their water normally. My stepmother once treated a person with the cattail brew and they were cured.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

A person who has not passed their urine, is uncomfortable moving around. This is what my stepmother did and I have seen her do it. She heated a towel and put lots of soapy water around the surface of the genitals. She treated men and

Tʼok'əhwhi

Cattail

women the same. What did they call this grass, the cattail that is long and narrow and has a black stripe, and holds one after another, as they said? I have seen them offering [it] their gift and making its brew for a sick person.

When a person can't breathe well, they fight for their breath, and people don't know what to do. They must collect some cattails, quickly put them in water, and bring them to a boil. In the meantime, they soak the towel in warm soapy water and rub it around the person's waist. People are in a hurry to do things for the sick person, whose stomach is just stiff with a full bladder.

Once the cattail brew was made, the sick person drank it in the cup and they kept rubbing warm water around the waist. Just shortly after, this person passed some urine, not very much, but he felt some relief. He was recovering by drinking this bush brew.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Daht'ji

Highbush cranberry

This plant looks like a highbush cranberry. On its branches are little tiny buds with some kind of red berries. We pull out all the roots and the whole stem. We saved this because it's very good for a person who has trouble passing their urine. We broke them in pieces, put them in a pot, added water, and boiled it very well. After it's well done you cooled it and drank its brew. If a person has problems having a bowel movement (constipated), this plant is very good for it.

But before you collect it, you have to offer your gift, like matches or tobacco. Then you have to say this as pleading, "Hope you will help me, for I am in this kind of sickness. I have trouble with my bowel movement and I hope you will grant me my wish and heal me." If you pleaded well, it surely worked for you.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Gots'agoò

Labrador tea

Gots'agoò is about this tall (hand gesture). The stump is long. This is very good medicine for a person who has trouble passing their water.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Gots'agoò

Labrador tea

My late step-mother-in-law never went without this water plant when she was alive. She said, "This water plant root is very good for a person that cannot pass their water (urinate) well." When she boiled these plants and told us to taste it, it was strong and bitter. Even just smelling it, we couldn't take too much. In the summer when we paddled somewhere by canoe, if we saw the water plant root above the water, we collected them and took them home.

Even if you cut them in thick pieces, they became thin once they dried. She tied two pieces together and hung them up to dry. She never went without it. Even after her death, there was still some hanging on the rack. But later on, they must have got rid of it, for it was gone. This was very good medicine for urine problems and constipation.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

After this girl died, her mother started to bleed a lot where she passed her water. They didn't know what to do about it; and there were no doctors then. At that time, it was a long day, my mother and aunt went out walking in an open space. They picked up the little jack pine, took it, and made juice out of it. They washed the woman's body with it and gave her some to drink. That is what they did for her. They tested two different kinds of plant juice on her, but they didn't work. So, they tried Labrador tea juice, and that stopped the bleeding.

Marie Adele Simpson [29/10/91]

Eghòhkèè

Water plant root

This water plant is also good when someone has problems passing water. It is as good as the other plants. When we have an infection inside our waistline or we have a stomach pain, this water plant brew is good for it.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

The plants that beaver and muskrat eat (eghòhkèè) are good medicine if you keep it. Long ago when there were no doctors, they made eghòhkèè brew for people who had problems urinating. They boiled it and kept it.

Joe Zoe Fish [24/05/91]

Tì whekò weyèwhet'ɔ̀

Hot water bottle

I heard when a person has trouble passing water, it's very dangerous. So, they tried everything, even hot water. They even treated people with a hot water bottle. They placed the hot water bottle on themselves. I guess they thought this helped them feel better when it's warm.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

Gah weliiwɔ̀

Rabbit bladder

When my father killed five rabbits, my mother cleaned them, removed the bladder, and dried them on the drying rack. She also dried the intestines. The rabbit bladder is not that big. She tied them with sinew and dried them. If a child had a urinary problem, she used the rabbit bladder. And that's why she saved them. She never used any type of modern medicine for a child. When a child was not feeling good, she soaked the bladder in water and applied it to the child's body. And that settled their pain.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

K'àk'oo

Red willow

If we have a problem passing water, red willow brew helps us to pass water quickly.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

You know the red willow; they peel this off, put the peel in a pail, and add water. Once it is well boiled, they let it settle for a while and make the person drink the brew. In a while this person passes their water well.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

That's the only kind they made its brew from. Red willow is good when a person has problems passing their water.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Those red willows; they peeled them and boiled them. They made him drink its brew while it's very strong, and smeared some of its brew all around the waist.

K'àk'oo

Red willow

And if they did that, he started to pass his water regularly. That's the kind of thing they said we could never be without.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Red willow is good for a person that can't pass water. And if they drink that herb juice, they get better and start going to the washroom. It's only red willow that's good for a person that can't pass water.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

K'jaj'echj

Saskatoon berry stem

Our late ancestors carried around Saskatoon berry stem when they travelled in the winter. If a person had a problem passing his urine, they said, "Maybe that old woman is keeping this Saskatoon berry stem, so go there quickly." They murmured to one another, "It's no good when a person doesn't pass the water; they cannot be like this too long." This is what they said. So, people rushed around the village looking for Saskatoon berry stem.

Once this stem was found, they chopped it into chunks, put them in a pail, added water, and brought it quickly to a boil. After it was well boiled, they cooled it quickly, poured some in a cup, and made the person drink the juice. After it was given to the person one more time, they started to pass their water (urinate).

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Saskatoon stem is also good for a person that has problems passing water. We made Saskatoon stem brew for this person and let them drink its brew. This helped the person to pass water normally. We chopped some Saskatoon stem. In the summer there was lots of dust, so we washed the stem first, then cut them into small pieces, put them in a pot, and brought it to a boil.

That's how we made Saskatoon stem brew. It helps a person pass their water normally and is also good for a person with an infection inside their waistline.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Gonii Eyah | Waist Pain

K'àk'oo / Titatsee

Red willow / Steaming

Red willow is good; so is the water plant eghqhkèè. They saved these. Whenever they needed this plant for their sickness, they had to plead with it before using it. And they always had these handy. Even if they had pain around the waist, once they drank this, they felt much better.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

When they got pain in the waist, they used the bush brew from what is now called eghqhkèè — water plant root. They boiled this plant until it was well done. A person was treated until they recovered.

When a person had pain in the waist, with a sharp pain in the chest, they brought water to a boil with spruce boughs and used this to sweat up the person in pain. The person got a lot of steam by leaning over the tub with a blanket covering their whole body. By doing this, the person got better in no time. In the past when a person had a pain in their chest or waist, they got a warm steam.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

K'ik'a

Birch inside layer

Birch layer brew is good when a woman has serious sickness. When we have pain in our waist, she gets better with this brew.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gokayi Eyits'o Gokaà | Wounds and Sores

Sahwet'òò

Bear bladder

They said when a person coughs out blood, bear bladder is very good for it. Bear bladder is also very good for cuts.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Tsàlè - tsàlɔ̀

Beaver castor

Whenever we came up with this miserable sickness, we cut this sac and inside was a liquid stuff, just like grease. It's very good for chest cold or flu. My late father used to keep a lot of this stuff to take. When they had a sore or bruise, they just applied this grease to their skin, for it is only grease. They also said it's very good for sore legs.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Dzɔ̀dɔ̀

Muskrat root

It's very dangerous to take rat root and modern medicine together. Rat root is about this long and it's green. You have to pull it out with its roots. Sometimes it's about this big and this long, and it has a yellowish colour (hand gesture). This is the best medicine.

Suppose we chopped our foot by accident, with the axe. We chewed this rat root well and placed this on our foot. It was back to normal in a week's time. There is rat root around in this area and many other good plants too. There are many kinds of bush medicine and we have to be careful about collecting them.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [02/10/91]

Gots'qà

Cloudberry

If someone cuts their foot or leg, depending on how big the cut or scab is, they chew cloudberry. They gather them, then put them aside juicy, and add to the juice until it gets a really dark black colour. If the person's scab is big, they put it on the scab. They chew two types of berries until they get soft, then later on place them on the person's scab or wound. If it is placed on the scab or wound for two solid days, the wound heals up really well and they have a fast recovery. They usually bandage it up with a cloth, or something like that, to hold it in place.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Ekwo'kwò / Diwek'a

Caribou meat / Tamarack inner layer

My parents were living with us on the land. One day my dad went hunting and my brother went along with him. They were gone almost the whole day. Just before night came, they came back. My brother couldn't walk well so I rushed toward him and asked what was wrong. He couldn't say much. I looked down at his feet and there was so much blood. I asked him what happened and he said he was chopping and cut his foot with an axe. Because we had meat I rushed into the tent and sliced up fresh meat, which I placed on his foot. Then he walked to the tent with me.

My father brought in the meat. My mother cut it up and put a thin piece of meat on the open cuts. Besides this, my mother used tamarack juice to wash out the blood and clean the cuts. Then she put a tamarack layer on the cuts so they healed up quickly. They kept doing this every day, smearing the cuts with tamarack juice and putting on a tamarack layer. It is good medicine. Scabs began to show around the cuts, but we continued to wash and clean the sores using the juice. In two weeks, he began to walk on his feet in a normal way.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Eehkwoo

Medicinal water plant

Eehkwoo is a very strong medicine. When a cut was big, they collected eehkwoo. What my granny said is, first they closed the wound like this with their hands. Then they placed eehkwoo on the wound. Then they tied it with a handkerchief really well. In those days there was no such thing as a bandage. So, they used a handkerchief to tie the wound together. This way the wound healed together quickly.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

They say eehkwoo (water plant) is very good to make the wound numb. When we used eehkwoo on a person's wound, it helped the person to not feel any pain. It made the wound numb. I remember that's what they used to do for each other.

I cut off my finger once, by accident. It was hanging like this (hand gesture). And they put it back together like this. They wrapped it with a bone, like a cast. It was wrapped like that for about three months. They cleaned the wound with eehkwoo broth at first; that's why I never felt any pain. I was losing lots of blood. I

Eehkwoo

Medicinal water plant

was the spiritual person who did the dressing. That's why my finger grew back together. In the past, before doctors, people depended on a spiritual person.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

They kept this brownish water root. Sometimes they chewed it and applied it to the swelling. It's also good for sores. By the next day the swelling slowed down. That's why people kept all the plants that are good for medicine. This brownish water root you just put it in hot water and let it soak. After it's well soaked you just applied it to the sores, cuts, or rash and it healed up quickly.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Bòet'ò

Caribou silver skin

If a person got a cut in the skin, they cut out a very thin piece of hide, placed spruce gum on the cut, and covered it with this thin hide. They left it on until it healed. And the person who had backache and was in pain, they cut a piece of hide the size of a band aid. On the hide they spread the soft spruce gum that was saved, and bandaged the whole surface of the pain. The same thing was done for kidney pain. This really helped to relieve the pain.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Łiwet'òò

Trout bladder / Whitefish bladder

It's true that the whitefish and trout bladder are good for our eyes; these two things are good. When we have a sore stomach trout bladder is good. We just add it to water and drink it like that. If we have cold sores, we can use this fish bladder for that. We just smear it on our sores and that is good. I guess they are right because its brew is really strong.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Diwe - dowe / ɪni t'à k'aàt'ɪi ɔtegehɔ /
Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzìi / Tsqht'è weghàà

Tamarack / Spiritual healing /
Spruce cones / Crowberry branch

When people cut their feet or their hands, they only used tamarack layer. They placed that tamarack layer on their cut. At that time, we had no idea what bandages were. We only used old rugs to bandage our sores.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Ever since I was young, I haven't seen or heard about someone performing surgery. None at all, absolutely none. But I want to say one thing.

One time, in a clear meadow, I saw my father get hit sharply by a stick. Slivers about one finger long went inside his thigh. My late aunt Mazini put water over the fire to get it hot. She told my father to stretch out his leg so that she can wash out the blood. The blood drained out so much, but my aunt kept washing his thigh with warm water.

My late uncle Homini collected tamarack. He brought back one tree of tamarack. He placed it over the fire to thaw it and to peel it off. Then he started to chew the tamarack layer.

My late aunt placed tamarack on the cloth. Every piece that was chewed was placed on the cloth. Since they were alone, they cut the animal skin so it looked like a tissue, and they covered the injuries with it. No matter how tough he was, my father cried and screamed when they placed this tamarack layer on his wound and wrapped it with a cloth.

The very next day, in tears, my mother went to see my father-in-law Firmie Pomie, and told him this. "My husband is badly in pain and his sores are all swollen; he hasn't slept at all." By late evening Firmie performed his spiritual power on my father. He told my father to use only this bush brew. After using only tamarack layer, all the slivers and pus with blood drained out. He recovered in less than a week.

Alexis Flunkie [29/04/93]

A person can have an accident with a gun. Sometimes people travel around and they are in a hurry, so they just rush around. They don't know if they left a bullet in their gun, and they grab it by the barrel. That's how they can shoot their hands.

When there's a spiritual person, they clean the wound. As they clean the wound, the others collect some tamarack. They boil the tamarack first. They collect only its fat inside layer. And with its broth they wash the wound. And after

Diwe - dowe / ɪni t' à k' ààt' ɪi ɔ̀tegehɔ̀ /
Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzìi / Tsqht' è weghàà

Tamarack / Spiritual healing /
Spruce cones / Crowberry branch

they wash the wound, they chew the fat until it gets really soft. And then they place it on the wound. And it heals like that. There is nothing left, nothing, not even a scar; none at all. That is how they healed each other a long time ago.

When a person causes too much pain for himself, like if he has a sliver in his body, the people all help him, to take out all the slivers. And after that they use tamarack as a medicine for the wound. They get tamarack and put it in a pail on top of the stove, and let it boil for a while. And once it's done, they take it down and pour it in a basin. And with the broth they wash the wound. That helps the wound to get numb.

And when that happens, they put some snow in a cloth and place it on the wound which helps to freeze it. And once they freeze the wound, the person doesn't feel any pain and they can take all the slivers out. That's what they used to do. But a long time ago our family never travelled with other people.

Rosalie Zoe [01/03/93]

At one time my mother's hand got infected and there was nothing we could do for her. Except we got tamarack, took off its bark, and boiled the layer. Once it was very soft, we chewed it to make it smooth, and placed it on my mother's hand. We spread it all over her hand and wrapped it with a clean cloth. For almost a whole year she had a sore on her hand. We mixed this together, tamarack and spruce cone. We used this brew to wash her hand very often and we kept changing the dressing. That's why her hand got better in two weeks. They said that tamarack is very good medicine. This stuff was very good to heal up the sores on the hand.

Another time there was a person with a very bad infection. I think he was sick because of the sores on his leg, for this is what they said. His leg was naked, that's how it looked. About this much (hand gesture) of his leg was naked and no dry skin showed because of the infection. What do we call that now; spruce cones and crowberry branches and tamarack. In a big pail of water, they mixed these three plants together, brought it to a boil, and boiled it until it's well done. Once it cooled off, they washed the person's infected leg and wrapped it with a clean soft cloth. And the infection disappeared very slowly. Every day he got the same treatment until his legs and foot were well. They wrapped up his whole leg and feet with a cloth like gauze so it stayed cool, and covered him with a thin blanket.

Diwe - dowe / ɪni t'à k'aàt'ɪi aʔegehɔ /
Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzìi / Tsqht'è weghàà

Tamarack / Spiritual healing /
Spruce cones / Crowberry branch

They cared for him for almost a month, washing his legs and feet with bush brew every day, until all the dry scabs came off. In a month's time his leg was well again.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

In the past when a person had a cut or a scab, they applied this tamarack layer and wrapped it well, even during the cold winter. When I was young, I was chopping wood and all of a sudden, I chopped my big leg by accident. At first, I was treated with chewing tobacco, followed by tamarack layer. As I had this tamarack layer on my leg, I walked around with it and then it started to heal.

Gum has all kinds of names. There is soft spruce gum that drains down from the tree and is a yellowish colour. There is another chewing gum that they called dzèwà, which was also collected. As for the soft spruce gum, my late Granny Modzàni said we usually put two cups of water in a tin can full of soft spruce gum and brought it to a boil. As it's boiling, it turns like creamy milk. We don't really have to add anything and using it this way you could get better. And maybe if they want to add salt, they do so and drink it like that.

Just as if you were drinking tea, that's how they drink this soft spruce gum brew that looks like creamy milk. It looks like milk once has boiled. And they heat the leftovers in a pan and save them in a little jar. "Use this as ointment. When you have a scab, you apply this on it," says my late granny. "And you do the same when you get infection on your body."

My late granny saved this sticky gum for sores. She saved it in a baking powder can that they used to get from the store. When we travelled to the bush, she carried carry this gum inside her bag. I've seen it. When Jean Beaulieu had a scab right over here (hand gesture), they applied this soft spruce gum on it, covered it with birch layer, and suddenly it healed. So, whenever we had sores, we used this as ointment.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

In those days there was no modern medicine. When someone cut their hands or feet with an axe, they used tamarack. I remember they used to chew tamarack inside layer and place it on the wound. I remember they used to say that only tamarack can heal the wound fast. So, they used to chew tamarack and place it on the wound.

Diwe - dowe / ɪnì t'à k'aàt'ɪ ɔ́tegehɔɔ /
Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì / Tsqht'è weghàà

Tamarack / Spiritual healing /
Spruce cones / Crowberry branch

Spruce tree inside layer is also good for sores. When a person cut their hands or feet, we chewed that layer and placed it on our cut.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

To prepare tamarack layer, he removed the peel and chewed the inside layer. They had to pay the plant before collecting it. He put lard or grease around the cut, covered the wound with tamarack layer, and wrapped it well with a cloth. If they left this dressing on for a week, it healed up well. They used only tamarack layer because there was no modern medicine. In a week's time, the skin was back to normal.

Every day the dressing was changed because the tamarack layer got kind of dry. It needed to be changed every day. Skin is warm and you can't keep this dressing on for the whole day, so it has to be changed twice a day. It really heals the wound quickly. That is the best medicine that I know of.

Just recently, a young boy who trapped with me was doing something, when all of a sudden, he chopped his foot with the axe. We didn't know what to do. There was no bandage or medicine, so I went to look for tamarack. As soon as I found it, I brought it back to him. I peeled off the top, chewed the inside layer until it got soft, placed that on the cut, and wrapped it with a cloth. We continued this treatment and by the third day it was well.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Spruce cone brew is good when we are bleeding, when a child has an infection in their mouth, and when a person has lots of sores. Its brew is very strong and we wash the sores with it. Brew they make from spruce boughs is good too for stomach and mouth infection. Both are good for mouth infections.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Long ago, the old timers only used bush medicine. They got medicine from trees, like the tamarack. They collected lots of tamarack layer. They chewed the inside layer and placed it on their wound. That helped to stop the bleeding and healed their wound quickly.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

Diwe - dowe / ʔni t'à k'aàt'ii aʔegehʔ /
Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì / Tsqht'è weghàà

Tamarack / Spiritual healing /
Spruce cones / Crowberry branch

If you suddenly chopped your foot with an axe, they used tamarack layer. They chewed it until it's really smooth and placed that on the cut. It sucked all the infection out, like pus and blood that is bad. They chewed some more to soften it, and changed the dressing twice a day so it healed quickly.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

They used to cut tamarack trees down and cut out about this much (hand gesture). They removed the outer bark and used the white inner bark. They boiled this in a pot, and used it when someone cut their foot. In the past there was no doctor and modern medicine to treat the wound. After the bark boiled, you chewed it for a while and then placed it on the wound. After an hour you didn't feel the pain from the wound. Even if you had a large wound about this size (hand gesture), it healed within a week if you used this medicine. This is good medicine for healing wounds and sores.

Alexis Flunkie [09/10/91]

This diwe used to be a great medicine. That's what it was; that's what they used to say. It was used when a man had a huge sore and it was infected. We gathered lots of tamarack, put it in a birch-bark, sewed it up for him, and kept it like that. Or maybe we had a wound on our foot or pus in our leg. For all these things, we put this tamarack on them. They told one another to keep a quantity of that medicine. They scraped away the outer bark and kept the inner bark. They threw the outer bark away. They kept a certain type of birch basket for that. They had it in something that was sewed up; that's how they kept it. They also told one another about the medicine value of certain types of trees.

Helen Rabesca [01/10/91]

Diwek'a / Ts'et'ii

Tamarack inner layer / Tobacco

A long time in the past, people were smart in using their spiritual power. Some of them used tobacco on a person's skin. If a person chopped their foot badly, and a person with spiritual power thought he could heal that person by applying tobacco, he did that.

Diwek'a / Ts'et'ii

Tamarack inner layer / Tobacco

Whenever the dressing needed to be changed, Jean Mackenzie removed all the scabs. It seemed like only chewing tobacco liquid remained inside the wound. After he removed the scab, he then placed the tamarack layer and wrapped it himself. Jean said to Johnny, "We'll leave this dressing on as long as you don't feel the pain. It will heal quickly this way." Johnny told Jean not to bother about the dressing. And he told the old couple that even though his foot got better, he won't be able to use snowshoes yet. He had said this to them just a few days before they moved out to their destination.

I cut my finger one time, and my late grandfather put tobacco liquid and tamarack layer on the cut, then wrapped it very well. A couple of days later it was healed back to normal.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

Sometimes if there's a person who has ɟk'qò, that person fixed the wound. They used something like tobacco to fix the wound. Then the wound got better fast. Or else they used tamarack.

That elder had sores all over his body. Grandmother said, "This happened when we were young girls. We all chewed on tamarack layer, after it was boiled. And we placed it on that person's sores. This took all the pus out. After it took the pus out, then we changed it again. We even washed him with that same herb juice. That tamarack is good medicine."

Tamarack is good medicine for anything. That was how they used to talk about it. As far as I can remember, that's the only thing they used. When a person had a sore, that's the only thing they used. Anywhere they lived in the bush. No matter how far it was to get tamarack, they went out and chopped one, and brought it back here to camp. They let it thaw out and then they scraped off the peel. The inside part is white. They boiled that and then chewed it. After that they placed it on that person's sores. It even gets the pus out as it heals the person's sores. Of all the trees, that's the best tree.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Diwe - dowe / Detsɔ̀tì / ɔ̀nì t' à k' aàt' ɔ̀
aʔegehɔ̀

Tamarack / Wood sap / Spiritual
healing

It's very true and they call it wood sap. Wood sap is good medicine and closes a cut quickly. People save this as they travel in the bush. When someone cuts their skin by accident, they apply this sap to the cut and tie it with something. In a couple of days, it is back to normal. It's also very good for sores.

The only treatment they had for pain relief was tamarack brew, I guess. There was no other thing besides this.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

The sap from the inside wood is good for cuts as well, you know. That is very good too. When you split the wood, you find the sap in it that is the very best, I'm telling you. That's why sometimes I collected them when one of my sons or grandchildren got a cut. I placed this wood sap on their cut and in two days it was healed. My sister said this wood sap is very good medicine.

When my late father was just a young man, he badly cut his leg, by accident. It was right here (hand gesture). He chopped his bone too. The spiritual person was the only one who could take all the pieces of bone from the deep cuts. After that, he placed the wood sap or tamarack on the cut.

These medicine men, of course they are very good at fixing bones. They poured water over the cuts so all the little pieces inside drain out. After it's all clean inside, they put tamarack layer on the cut and kept doing this often, on and on. To close the wound, they used wood sap because it's a very good medicine.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

When Jean, my brother in-law's father was out hunting with his dog team, his dogs got really excited when they saw caribou. He didn't notice a burned piece of wood sticking up from the ground. The dogs went full speed toward the caribou. I guess the stick went right through the toboggan bag and right through his thigh. The stick was about this big; eight inches. It broke inside his thigh. I guess this black stick went about this far in his thigh.

This man was in really bad shape, so they sent for my father. My father came and cut his skin open, and took the stick out. They washed out all the slivers and closed the wound. That's what my father did, and I witnessed it.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

Detsj t'èhtè

Wooden fungus

They used wooden fungus if somebody was working and cut himself with an axe, maybe his foot or his leg. When summer comes around, all the tree bark starts to melt and thaw out. That's when wooden fungus starts to come around. That's when they started to gather it up. It was really helpful for many things. They drank that wooden fungus whenever they had a scab or sore. They also chewed it and rubbed it on their scab or sore.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]



Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì | spruce cones. Courtesy Camilla Nitsiza



Plucking det'q | duck. Courtesy of Tessa Macintosh



Gòh | fireweed. Courtesy of Tessa Macintosh

Tich'aadii, Chja, eyits'q Łiwe Wet'à K'aat'ii Adets'ehjii

Animals, Birds, and Fish Used for Healing

In this database, elders share knowledge of animals and animal parts, and the conditions they that can help with healing and wellness. Each Tłchq dialect has their own way to spell some of the terms in this database. Sometimes only one Tłchq spelling appears. This does not imply that one dialect is more important than any other; each is essential.



Elder Marie Quite from Gameti taking det'q | duck from a bag at Njdzikaà, 1998.
Courtesy of Aalice Legat

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Dlòo | squirrel.
Courtesy of
Tessa
Macintosh

Ts'ihdiı - Ełqhdıı | Ants

Godaà eyah

Our sore eyes

In the old days, women saved anything that was needed. They knew what was good for what purpose, so they collected any kind of insects or plants. If another woman's son had sore eyes, they brought frozen ants in a cloth. They covered the boy or young man with a blanket and burned the ants so the smoke went under the blanket, and into his eyes. His eyes completely healed.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Sah | Bear

Gokwò ta eyah — Sahloo /
Sahwodzazıı

Aches and pains — Bear tail ashes /
Bear marrow

The ashes from the bear tail are also very good. When a person had a body pain, they applied the ashes on the skin. But before doing this, they had to plead for help. The ashes helped relieve the pain.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

When they had a very bad aching bone in their body, they didn't eat the bear meat, but smeared the marrow on their body, after pleading about their pain. They rubbed the marrow in well and they felt better.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Gonıkw'qò eyah — Sah wenoziı

Back pain — Bear spinal cord

Our ancestors talked much about bear parts, especially the spinal cord. When a person had back pain they pleaded for help, and ate the bear's spinal cord. They smeared the rest on their body and the person got well. This is what people did in the old days, and the practice has carried on to this day.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Gonıkw'qö eyah — Sah wenoziı

Back pain — Bear spinal cord

My late father said that when they got back pain, they ate the bear's white spinal cord, which looks like a soft white cheese. They smeared it on their body after pleading to it. This relieved the pain. They had to plead for the help they wanted to receive. My father said it made you feel well and brought you luck.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Many talked about back pain, including sharp, bad pain. When a person's back was very painful, they went for the spinal cord of a bear. It tasted like milk, and they applied that on the back where the pain was. This is very good medicine; the person felt well quickly.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

When a person got lightning pain in their back, they gave them some of the stuff taken from the bear's spinal cord, and the pain went away quickly. They ate it raw or after it's boiled. They saved what was left over to use another time. If the white stuff got dry, they put it in water so it could be used again. Things like this were kept just in case they were needed later.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

They break or separate the bone, and remove the spinal cord. Then they boil it and place it on a plate or pan. Before eating it, they say a few words about their needs. They say, "I have this or that pain, and I hope to get well by taking part of your flesh to eat. I know if I take this and you help me, that I will be fine; that you heard my intention and made me well." So, when we had a sore back, we needed to eat this stuff from the bear's spinal cord. You repeat this for two days and you are fine. It works very well.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

The spinal cord from the back of the bear is also good. When we get a back pain, we take the stuff from the spinal cord. We may eat some and smear some on our skin or burn the bear and smear the ashes where there is pain. Doing these things, the pain does not come back for some time. That's all I know of how the spinal cord from the bear can help us.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Godoo at'ıı / Godoo ts'eekeh —
Sahwet'òò

Bleeding / Coughing blood — Bear
bladder

People went for bear bladder because this is very good medicine. For example, when we cough out blood, the first thing to do is warm up water and add a small amount of bear bladder. Then stir until the bladder dissolves well. Even with a small piece, it is a strong drink, but we had to drink it anyway to stop the bleeding. We repeated the drink once in a while. When we coughed out blood this is what we needed to do.

That is why people always asked for bear bladder. I think bear bladder is also very good for tuberculosis. Bear bladder is good for the bleeding and helps a lot. I know it works, and it depends on how people think about it when they take it to drink.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

When a person has a bleeding nose, bear bladder is good to use. People never went without it in case someone needed it. They shared a piece with anyone who asked for it. They mixed the bear bladder in water, then drank it. The bear bladder looks just like black pepper and it is very strong. One time my mouth was bleeding and they quickly treated me with bear bladder. I kept drinking it even though it was strong.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

Bear bladder is very good for a sore stomach, heart problems, and for bleeding. We just took a small piece of bear bladder and drank its brew; it's very strong.

It's also very good for bleeding. One time people were driving around in a truck and had an accident. One person was hurt and bleeding inside their body. They quickly got bear bladder for him and put it in water for him to drink. He drank the bladder brew and it stopped the bleeding. It worked out very well.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

When a person is bleeding from their lungs, you can see the blood just pouring out of their mouth like this (hand gesture). People always had bear bladder in case they needed it. It's a very good medicine. Bear bladder is the only thing that could help stop the bleeding. They dissolve it in warm water and take a spoonful of the brew, which is very strong. Bear bladder is very good to stop the bleeding. Bear bladder has been discovered to be the best medicine. That's why people from down south are eager to get it.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Godoo at'ıı / Godoo ts'eekeh —
Sahwet'òò

Bleeding / Coughing blood — Bear
bladder

Sometime later we heard a man went out to hunt. When he saw a bear, he shot it and did what the old woman had told him to do. He brought me back the bear bladder in a plastic bag. I asked my granny what I should do with it. I was coughing blood at that time.

Granny said, "Just warm up water, put this stuff into it, and drink it. Every time your throat is itchy, keep on drinking this liquid. If your throat is fine then don't drink it," she said to me. "You need to drink this liquid every morning and at bedtime." The bottle was about this size (hand gesture). The old woman told me to take it until I finished the whole bottle. I kept adding more water to the bottle while the bladder was fresh. I took granny's advice and treated myself until Christmas came around, when I felt much better.

Elizabeth Mantla [09/10/92]

The bear bladder is good for when you are coughing up blood. When someone kills a bear they butcher it well, and save the bladder. When a person coughs out blood, they soak the bear bladder in warm water and make the person drink it. Later the person feels fine. They say bear bladder is very good medicine.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Bear bladder is very good for a bleeding nose as well. We soak the bladder in lukewarm water until it dissolves well and gets strong. Then we drink that and the bleeding stops.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Bear bladder is very good when a person spits blood. They save the bear bladder by drying it. When someone spits blood and needs it, they share by giving them a piece of the bladder, which they soak in warm water to make a liquid to drink.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

By taking a spoonful of bear bladder liquid and drinking it, this bleeding won't happen again.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Godoò at'ıı / Godoò ts'eekeh —
Sahwet'òò

Bleeding / Coughing blood — Bear
bladder

Trout bladder is also good, just like bear bladder. Whenever we didn't feel well, we took this bladder by drinking the liquid or by smearing it on the body. This helped to relieve the pain. These two kinds of bladder are very good.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

When someone killed a bear, they butchered it very well. They dried the meat and the bladder by hanging them up. Then we kept it to use for any kind of pain or someone who was bleeding. The bear parts were all used in a good way. Its feet and hands were collected too and boiled. When a person coughed blood, they quickly dissolved the bladder in warm water and made the person drink it. Then he or she felt better.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

When someone coughs up blood, the bear bladder is very good for it. Even when someone has a cut, it helps it to heal.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Whehts'òò — Sahloo

Boil — Bear tail ashes

The bear's tail is good for boils. We burn the tail, which is hairy. Before we smear the body with it, we plead to it by saying the words, "Hurry up and break open this boil." Then we smear the ashes on the skin.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

The bear tail is good. We burned the tail and used the ashes. When someone has a boil, or when the boil doesn't go away and moves in some way in the body, we use bear tail ashes on the infection. This way the boil doesn't move around to other places in the body. The boil then slowly goes away.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Beehive is very good for swelling and boils; this is what people used to say. If the beehive didn't work, then they used bear tail ashes. Most people burned this bear tail and saved the ashes for emergency use. When a person was swelling up, they applied the ashes on the skin. Once the pus showed on the skin, it opened up

Whehts'òo — Sahloo

Boil — Bear tail ashes

the infection. Or else they thinly sliced Sunlight soap and placed that on the infection. Overnight it opened it up.

The rest of the infection was cleaned out with a dry twig. A tamarack layer was used to cover the infection, making a clean dressing. It healed quickly, but you had to change the dressing every two days for four to five days. And you needed to place this layer on the infection morning and night. As you do it, all the pus was collected by the tamarack layer. It was healed in a week or so.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Godzeè t'à gohòıııı — Sahwedzeè

Heart problems — Bear heart

When we had a heart problem, we hunted and killed a bear, and butchered it well. We cooked the heart before eating it. We pleaded by saying, "You have good medicine and I'm asking for healing of my heart." This is what we need to say whenever we take the bear's food into our body.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

Dried bear heart is good for internal parts of our body, such as the liver and kidney. We chew on the dried heart and eat it, and plead for healing. We eat bear liver when our liver is infected, and it helps to cure us.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Got'ò ìghàà — Sahloo

Mastitis — Bear tail ashes

As for the tail, you burn it and save the ashes. At times a woman's breast may get infected, and then bear ashes are used. The infection opens up and the ashes suck out the pus. You have to repeat rubbing the bear tail ashes on the infection. Blood and pus come out of the boil, reducing the pain. Later on, you remove the pus and clean out the inside of the infection with a dry twig. You could also use tamarack, for it is very good. You chew it well until it gets very soft, and place it on the infection. Every day and night you change the dressing. This way the infection heals quickly, and the blood and pus go away. Until it's completely healed you have to often use birch layer. The sore heals, but a scar remains.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Ts'ejıı k'e gohqıqıq — Sahwet'òò

Respiratory problems — Bear bladder

The bear bladder is very good for those who have breathing problems. If you take just a sip of the liquid, you feel different and you get better along the way.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Godaa eyah — Sahwedaà / sah wenatı

Sore eyes — Bear eyes / Bear tears

They also collected bear tears and saved them. Whenever someone had a sore eye or can't see well, bear tears were used. They opened their eyes wide with their hand, and used a feather to put a drop of bear tears into their eyes. Doing that is very good; the person won't have this problem again and has good vision as they work out on the land or wherever.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gokè eyah — Sah wekè

Sore feet — Bear paws

When people had sore feet, they used the bottom of a bear paw. They cut off the thickness from the bear's foot, which looks like leather. They burned its foot and used the ashes for their own feet, pleading for help before using anything from a bear body. When they asked for help it worked; this is what people of the past have said. The old timers were smart. They always tested anything to see if it worked and this is how we know of these things. They burned bear feet and made brew out of it too.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Godzaà eyah — Sah wedzazı

Sore legs — Bear bone marrow

When you have leg pain for a long time, you cannot chop off a bear bone; never do that. But if a person has deep pain in their legs, break the bone and apply the marrow on the legs, and eat the marrow after pleading first for its help.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Godzaà eyah — Sah wedzazı

Sore legs — Bear bone marrow

When we got sore legs, we used marrow from the bone of the bear. I had very sore legs so I fried bear bone marrow. I said to the grease in my hand, "I have heard that you are the animal who can hear our wishes. I am going to smear this grease that I took from your bone. I am asking you to grant my wish, for my legs are sore." This is what people used to do when they got pains in their bones. My father told us these stories.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

When a person has sore legs during the night, bear marrow is very good. If you don't do anything about it, you won't be able to sleep. But first you have to plead to the bear marrow, then eat a bit of it and smear the grease on the legs as you plead. They said it helps relieve the pain in the legs and the person felt better for a long time.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Gok'oh eyah — Sahloo

Sore neck — Bear tail ashes

My late mother said bear tail is good for a sore neck. We burned the fur from the bear tail. Before we apply the ashes to our neck for the pain, we plead for help and keep speaking as we do it.

Do you know a guy named Joe from Rae Lakes (Gamètı)? He had a very sore neck that was swollen like this (hand gesture). Your late granny said, "Oh my grandchild, your brother is getting worse; he can't even turn his head. He hasn't moved his head for two months now. And he can't eat because of the pain in his neck. Now I will use this bear tail that was given to me."

She burned the fur from the tail and started pleading to it as she smeared it on his neck. She made a brew with the ashes and gave it to him to drink. He recovered from the pain; and it is true when you follow the instructions for using the bear's tail. Joe had not eaten well for a long time and lost a lot of weight. After that he ate well and in two weeks his health was back to normal.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gok'à eyah — Sahwet'òò

Sore throat — Bear bladder

When we have a sore throat, can't seem to swallow, and it gets infected, we plead to the bear bladder brew in our hand, drink it, and the pain goes away. Whenever you use parts of the bear or drink its brew, you always plead to it first. It works well and is good medicine.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

As adults, when we get infection in our throat and can't swallow anything, we get a bear bladder and mix it in warm water. Before drinking it, we plead for its help and slowly take a bit at a time. By doing this, we feel better.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gobò gohòq̄q̄ — Sahwewòò

Stomach problems — Bear liver

Inside the bear body is a part called the liver that is very good for a person with stomach pain. Old timers who were wise about uses of bear parts have said that the bear's liver is good medicine. When a person had stomach pain, they cooked bear liver a little over the fire until it made a little smoke, then gave it to the person. Before taking it, the person had to plead for its help. It is a very good medicine. The person's stomach pain felt better in no time.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Godzehdeè yì tàda — Sahwedzèhdeè /
Sahwets'òò / Sahwet'òò

TB in lungs — Bear lung / Bear
kidney / Bear bladder

They also said the bear kidney is good when someone has TB. They ate the bear kidney after pleading to it for healing.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

It is the same with the lung. When someone has TB in the lungs, they kill a bear and take the parts they need. They dry the meat and liver. They make the person with TB in the lungs eat it as they plead to it, and that works well.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Godzehdeè yìi tàda — Sahwedzèhdeè /
Sahwets'òo / Sahwet'òò

TB in lungs — Bear lung / Bear
kidney / Bear bladder

Bear parts are very good medicine. You need to be careful how you handle the parts and use them. They say that the bear knows what you think when you eat its meat or drink its brews. You need to be very serious and think in a positive way. For example, there are people who do not believe that bear bladder can stop your bleeding. Before taking it, you have to plead to it by saying, "I need healing by drinking your bladder brew." It is strong. When sipping it, if you spit it out, it won't help you heal. Your behaviour toward the part the bear has given is important.

Bear bladder is good medicine for spitting blood, sore throat, and nosebleeds. Bear heart, liver, kidney, and marrow is also good. You burn bear bone and its ashes make very good medicine too.

Bear tail, paws, and the hair from its skin; it's all good to burn and use its brew, even the ashes. You boil it in water, strain it, and drink its brew. But you need to talk before taking any bear parts into yourself — by eating, drinking, smearing it, or using them in tools, clothing, or other materials.

Bears are smart animals. If you treat them well, you succeed; if you ask for your wish to come to you, it happens. I remember my mom's mother telling me, "My grandchild, the animals were people like us. They have their own way of living their lives. We need to learn more about them and respect them. When we kill an animal, we need to take every part of the meat and fat, even the head, the hide, ribs, kidney, liver, backbone, sinew, blood, ankles, and leg parts for marrow. The bear is important, and we need to know the many rules for using its parts. This is common knowledge about respecting and using bear parts in a proper way."

Elder and date unknown

Tsà | Beaver

Dehko dıi / Dehko tàda / Gokayı eyits'o
gokaà / Godzaà eyah — Tsàlè - tsàlꞑꞑ

Bad cold / Flu / Wounds and
sores / Sore legs — Beaver castor

When we came down with this sickness, we cut off this sac. Inside there's a liquid that looks like grease. It's very good for chest pain when you have a cold or flu. My late father kept these for whenever he needed them to help other people. They applied the grease on their chest. If they had a bruise, they smeared it on the skin. It's only grease but it works very well. It's good for sore legs too. This has been said by others.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Godaà — Tsàwedaà

Eyesight — Beaver eyes

We were a large family. I had many sisters. When I was very young, my father hunted for beaver; my mother skinned them very well. When she got to the head and cut off the eyes, she said, "Where have all these children gone; I want them to eat the beaver's eye." She meant that if we ate the eye, our eyesight couldn't fail us, even in old age. This is what our mother taught us and we still eat beaver eyes. Now I am old, yet I never complain about my eyes. I still sew and I am so grateful. I obeyed her teaching and I guess this is what they meant.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

After skinning the beaver they take the eyes off. They say to eat the beaver's eyes while they are still raw. If we couldn't eat a raw eye, we got a cup of water and swallowed the eye with the water. They said, "This beaver's eye gives you good eyesight." This is what my father said to us.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gokwì eyah / Gokwò ek'jì làanì — Tsà wekwìwhò / Tsàwò	Headache / Skin rash — Beaver scalp / Beaver fur
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The beaver head is good for treating headaches. When we get a very bad headache, we take a beaver scalp and put it over the fire, then place it warm on our forehead. By doing this often the headache goes away. This has been said by our late ancestors.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

When someone gets a headache, they use some type of charred fur, maybe beaver fur. I don't remember very well. They burn the beaver's scalp hair and it smells like incense. Since they had no modern medicine, they used this for a headache. Matches were also used for headaches. The smell of it relieves headache pain.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

They warm up the beaver skin and place that on their head. They burn the skin with the hair on and inhale this through their nose. This relieves back pain too.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

When my father hunted and came back with beaver, he worked on the skins. He told us what we needed to know about the beaver. When people travelled, they sometimes came up with skin problems, rashes, or infections on the body. When things like this happened, they burned beaver fur or heated up the beaver's skin and placed it where the pain was. They placed the skin on their head for a headache. It works very well.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Gokwò ek'jì làanì / Gokwò ta eyah — Tsà wetsà	Skin rash / Aches and pains — Beaver tail
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When they killed a beaver, they took the tail, wet it, and placed it over the fire. They kept turning it until the skin could come off; you held the tail and with your other hand you peeled off the skin. This skin can be used on skin rashes. And when your body aches, you smear the peeled skin where the pain is and it is gone.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gokwq ek'jı llaani / Gokwq ta eyah —
Tsà wetsà

Skin rash / Aches and pains — Beaver
tail

When a person gets a rash all over their body, beaver tail skin is good for it. They burn the fur on the tail skin and smear that all over the person's body. The ashes heal the person's skin very well.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Godaà eyah / Nahwhı — Tsà wetsà

Sore eyes / Snow blindness — Beaver
tail

In the early spring when the ice looks like candles, people get snow blindness, especially men who always hunt and trap, spending a lot of time on the land. Their eyes get painful. In this case they get a beaver tail, place the peeled tail in a basin, then burn it. They let the smoke go into their eyes; then they can see well without pain. One time my brother got snow blindness and he was really crying because his eyes hurt. My father burned a beaver tail peel and the smoke made his eyes feel better. That's why it's good to save beaver tails.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

A person who gets snow blindness gets a beaver tail peel and burns it. It eats up the white film (nahwhı) in their eyes. The smoke from the tail peel heals the pain and it's very good for snow blindness. They see well too.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Beaver tail skin is good for sore eyes. If we get snow blindness it feels like tiny insects get in the eyes. To help with that, we put a blanket over you while the tail peel burns. The smoke rises into your eyes. Once this treatment is done the person feels very good, with no pain.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Godzaà eyah – Tsàwola

Sore legs — Beaver paws

My late father used to tell us stories. He said to us, “When we get sore fingers and sore arms, we can boil beaver hands and eat them, it is good.” We can plead to the beaver when we have sore legs. We say, “My bones are really aching so I’m going to boil your feet. Grant me my wish for you are my hope. I know you will help and your medicine can make me feel well again.” These words were given to us.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Gok'à eyah — Tsàwek'à

Sore throat — Beaver fat

I have seen what my father does with the beaver and he never threw anything away. He cleaned out every bit of the beaver meat and cooked the intestine with a stick over the fire. He also collected fat from muskrats. He dried it and kept it. When you collect the fat from beaver, it's sticky just like gum; that is what they said. My father cut out a piece of beaver fat and chewed it, and my mother said to him, “Why are you chewing that?” My father replied, “This is good for a sore throat.”

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Ekwo | Caribou

Gòo tàda — Ekwo wets'q edzaàwàh

Cancer — Caribou leg skin

When we kill a caribou, we collect the legs and burn the top well by scraping it, and burn it some more until it's well burnt to the skin. We do the same with the foot parts. Once we burn them, we mix it with the hair ashes from the legs. We mix them [in water], boil it, then drink the liquid. It was discovered to be a very good medicine.

Celine Eyakwo [13/10/92]

Gòo tàda — Ekwò wets'q edzaàwàh

Cancer — Caribou leg skin

Ashes of caribou leg fur is good; that's why we collect them. They burn the hairy parts connected to the leg bone until the hair is burned to a deep black colour. They say it becomes a very good medicine after it is mixed in a brew to drink. It is good for any type of disease, they say.

There are many people who are sick with all kinds of diseases. If they try these things for themselves, I'm pretty sure they will be cured. Many get very serious disease, like cancer and others, but if they try making these kinds of medicine, I know they can get well.

When you burn it in the fire, the ashes of charred caribou hair can be boiled to do the work. It tastes really sour. You can eat them too.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

Those who got cancer try taking any kind of plants or parts of animals. They tell one another to try burning caribou leg fur and even bones, using the ashes to make a liquid. That is why some have overcome cancer. Now, many people don't seem to think about animal parts; they use modern medicine that doesn't help them get well. As for myself, I'm still taking these brews from the animals and still doing fine. You need to let the ashes boil for a long time and it becomes very good medicine. If I do this for myself, you can too.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Godziìhkw'qò eya — Ekwòwedzeèbàa

Earache — Caribou ear

When a person has an earache, they take a caribou ear and burn the hairy parts. They take the ashes and smear them on and around the ear. They plead to it as they smear it. We even do that when we get pain in the ear. Once we do that, the pain goes away, but we need to plead for it.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Asii hazqò gha nezı — Ekwò wets'q
edzaàwàh

General remedy — Caribou leg skin

It has been said that charred caribou fur is good mixed in water and boiled to drink as a brew. I have been sick for many years but I only take one pill a day. Other than that, I drink broth of charred fur every day. When I run out of broth, I get another caribou leg and do the same thing; char it and boil the ashes and drink it every day. I save the broth in a large jar or in a pot and drink it once in a while.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

It is true that some people still use bush medicine. I do that; I use tamarack brew. I also use caribou leg skin. I burn the leg skin and put its charred fur in a pot of water to boil. Then I drink its brew. I do that and I am sure others are doing it too.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

Gowà gok'qò — Ekwò wets'o eda

Mouth infection — Caribou antlers

Caribou antlers are very good for a mouth infection. They burn the antler and boil its ashes. The broth works well for a person with a mouth infection.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Gokwò ek'jı làani — Ekwòwedzehdeè

Skin rash — Caribou lung

Caribou lung is really good to smear on the skin. The reason I'm saying this is because I have done this myself when I had a disease that I couldn't get rid of. One day my late father told me to try the caribou lung. I did, and kept doing it. Finally, the disease began to leave my body. I treated myself for quite a long time. I began to get better each day and after the disease left it never came back.

We cook the lung and it gets juicy. We use the juice to smear on our skin. We repeat it every day until it gets completely well. Caribou lung juice is also good for chapped skin. When I used the juice from the caribou lung, I smeared it on my skin twice a day. Since then, I haven't had this problem with my skin.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Godaà eyah — Ekwò wenatì

Sore eyes — Caribou tears

My fate father said caribou tears are good when we have sore eyes. When you put caribou tears in your eyes, it helps you to see far and pain won't bother you. His late grandmother must have shared all these stories, and she must have heard from her late relatives. These are stories that she told my father.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Godzaà eyah — Ekwò wets'q edzaàwàh

Sore legs — Caribou leg skin

Caribou skin leg is good for a sore leg. They burn the leg skin and collect the ashes. When they thought it was good enough to make juice from it, they put the ashes in a pail of water and boiled it for some time. When it was done it looked like tea. They rubbed that onto the skin of the sore leg or feet; they drank it too. Doing this healed the pain. This is what my stepmother said.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Gobò gohòq̄q̄ — Ekwò wets'q edzaàwàh / Ekwòwewòò

Stomach problems — Caribou leg skin / Caribou liver

They say when you burn caribou leg skin the ashes are very good. You boil them in water and drink it to stop stomach pain.

Caribou liver is also good for a sore stomach. They fry the liver or cook it a bit over the fire, slice eat, and eat it. This is good for stomach pain.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

When they had stomach pain, they boiled caribou liver, cut it into pieces, and ate it. The liver is good when we don't have much food. The liver from the inside of the stomach is very good for stomach pain; it works well.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Gokayı eyits'ų gokaà — Ekwòkwò

Wounds and sores — Caribou meat

My parents were living with us on the land. One day my dad went hunting and my brother went along with him. They were gone almost the whole day. Just before night came, they came back. My brother couldn't walk well so I rushed toward him and asked what was wrong. He couldn't say much. I looked down at his feet and there was so much blood. I asked him what happened and he said he was chopping and cut his foot with an axe. Because we had meat I rushed into the tent and sliced up fresh meat, which I placed on his foot. Then he walked to the tent with me.

My father brought in the meat. My mother cut it up and put a thin piece of meat on the open cuts. Besides this, my mother used tamarack juice to wash out the blood and clean the cuts. Then she put a tamarack layer on the cuts so they healed up quickly. They kept doing this every day, smearing the cuts with tamarack juice and putting on a tamarack layer. It is good medicine. Scabs began to show around the cuts, but we continued to wash and clean the sores using the juice. In two weeks, he began to walk on his feet in a normal way.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gokayı eyits'ų gokaà / Gonıkw'ųò eyah —
Ekwòkwò weye ha kw'è

Wounds and sores / Backache
— Smoked caribou hide

When a person gets a skin cut, they cut a piece of hide and cover it with soft spruce gum to put on the cut. They leave it on for a couple of days and the cut heals.

They do the same thing when a person gets back pain. They did it like a plaster, placing the hide covered with soft spruce gum on the person's back.

They do the same when a person has a sore kidney. It works very well.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Det'q | Duck

Gobò gohòq̄q̄ — Det'q wewòò

Stomach problems — Duck liver

When my stepmother-in-law was alive, she told me a story. She said ducks and other animals were brought on this earth for everyone. We didn't know if they were bad for us. We hunted them and killed them for food. She said, "My daughter, you always complain about a sore stomach." Later on, she cooked a duck liver, fried some, and brought it to me in a bowl. I ate it and it was very good.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Tıı | Dog

Gokwò ek'jı làani — Tııwetsò

Skin rash — Dog feces

White dog feces have been talked about for a long time. Many say it's very good to smear on skin infections after you boil it. Some say they drink its brew; that it doesn't smell or taste bad, and they found out it was very good to use. They used a feather to smear the white dog feces on the infections.

At one time all young people, even me, had a rash that covered our face, arms, and hands. Our mothers smeared this stuff on our skin. When they found white dog feces, they collected it for later use. They boiled it well before using it as a medicine. I overheard them say that they discovered something good. Once they found out it worked, they taught others how it worked for them. They don't use this stuff [now], but I hope they do, for this works well on skin rash.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

Dog feces is good for a person who has a rash. A long time ago the doctor told me that I had cancer, so I started to boil the ashes I saved from caribou skin and its bone. And I thought I could try white feces from the dog. I boiled them for some time, drained the broth through a cloth, and began taking it almost every day. I started to feel much better. I also used dog feces broth on my sores because other medicines didn't work. So, I turned to this instead and got better. I have no pain now.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Gokwò ek'jı làani — Tıhwetsò

Skin rash — Dog feces

It's been said that there was an incident when a girl's skin rash was cured by washing it with a brew made from boiled old, white dog feces.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Ƴehtoò | Grouse

Gonıkw'qò eyah — Ƴehtoò wewò

Back pain — Grouse bladder

My mother always collected grouse liver and bladder and saved them. When they had a sore back, they applied this grouse bladder to their back and it made them feel better.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Tı goɔqò at'ı / Gowò eya — Ƴehtoò wetsò / Dihwets'ı

Diarrhea / Stomach cramps — Grouse feces / Grouse intestines

If someone has diarrhea and it doesn't seem to stop, grouse feces can help. Other than that, people try different kinds of bush medicine. If they don't work, they ask a young man to hunt for grouse. The women quickly skin the grouse, take out the intestine, and boil it. When it was kind of warm, they make the person drink its brew. They feel much better.

We have none of these treats today because they don't seem to hunt for grouse like before and there is no more intestine. Nowadays when kids get a stomach cramp, we give them modern medicine, but it doesn't work too well. If we were on the land, we'd probably do what our late ancestors did. They even dried the grouse intestines and saved them in a bag.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

In the past, when a child had diarrhea, the mother boiled a grouse intestine. After it cooled off the mother made the child drink the broth. Later on, the diarrhea stopped. This I know very well.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Tı goɔɔq at'ı / Gowò eya — ʔehtòò
wetsò / Dihwets'ı

Diarrhea / Stomach cramps —
Grouse feces / Grouse intestines

People dry grouse intestines and save them in a tin or a bag. When a child gets diarrhea, they put an intestine into a pot and boil it, then make the child drink its brew. This is what my granny said to me. They also smear some around the rectal area. This stops the diarrhea quickly.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

As for elders or small children, when they have diarrhea for a long time, they say, "It's no good because it could cause infection inside their stomach." This is why they always kept grouse intestines in a safe place. I guess they meant grouse guts; they dried them and kept them. When we had them, we boiled them and drank the broth as often as we could. When an elder had diarrhea, we boiled the guts and they drank it. The diarrhea went away quickly.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

When a child has watery diarrhea, they add water and boil the intestine from a grouse. They make the child drink it. And this helps to stop the child's diarrhea, it was said.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Gokwò ek'ı làani — Dihwets'ı

Skin rash — Grouse intestines

There are types of skin disease that cause pain or itchiness. For this we use grouse intestine and it's good. We mix it and smear this on the skin. It works well.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gobò gohòɔq — Dihwets'ı

Stomach problems — Grouse intestines

It was said in the past, grouse intestines are good for a sore stomach. They said that when you get a stomach problem and it gets very sore, you soak the grouse intestine in water, put it into a cup, and drink it. It's very good to do that. People of Yellowknife collect these intestines because it's very good medicine, but people around here don't seem to do it.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Gobò gohòąq — Dıhwets'ıı

Stomach problems — Grouse intestines

Grouse intestine is good to rub on the stomach. By doing this, the pain goes away. You don't feel any pain after doing this.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Jhdaa | Jackfish

Gobò gohòąq — Łıwewòò

Stomach problems — Jackfish liver

My mother said that when you get a stomach pain, jackfish liver is good for it. You cook the jackfish liver over the fire and eat it. Later on, you feel relief of your stomach pain. It is a good medicine.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Tıtso | Loon

Gokwı eyah — Tıtso wekwıghòò /
Tıtso wekwıwhò

Headache — Loon brain / Loon scalp

They used the scalp if a person had a bad headache. They burned the feathers and rubbed the ashes really well on the person's forehead and hair.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Long ago they told stories about the loon and the brain. They said, "Remove the scalp and dry it, then burn the feathers and collect the ashes." They also warmed the brain and smeared it on their head. This made their headache go away. This is what was said.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Godzeè t'à gohòq̄q̄ — Tìtso wedzeè

Heart problems — Loon heart

When someone has a bad heart, the loon's heart is good for it. Sometimes they have a bad heart rate. When our heart is like that, they kill a loon and take out the heart. While the heart is still moving and raw, they swallow it like that. Then our heart is the same as the loon's heart. That's how it is.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

As for the loon heart, it's good for a person who has a heart problem. We eat the raw heart and it cures us. This is what was said.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

When a person had a bad heart rate, we killed a loon and took out the heart right away. And we ate it like that, raw. They said it is good when we do that.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Gonatsj̄ t'à gohoʔaa — Tìtso wekwìghòq̄

Sinus problems — Loon brain

They warm the loon's brain and smear it on their sinuses and around the eyes.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

Godaà eyah — Tìtso wenatì / Tìtso wekwìwhò

Sore eyes — Loon tears / Loon scalp

When we had sore eyes, they said that the loon's tears are good. I don't know how they used it but I guess they used it often.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

When a person had a bad eye, they got the loon's tears. We used a feather to get some of the loon's tears. We opened our eyes wide and put some drops in our eyes. This was said because the loon brought back the person's eyes.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

It was the loon that gave back a person's eyes a long time ago. This person was blind, and he was all alone. He was really thirsty for water. He heard the loon calling from the lake and crawled to the water. He didn't know where he was

Godaà eyah — Titso wenatì / Titso
wekwìwhò

Sore eyes — Loon tears / Loon scalp

going. It was only by feeling the ground with his hands. When he felt the water with his hands, he said, "Hey loon, I cannot see. You sound like you can see well. Come and swim toward me. I will be really grateful to you if you can bring back my eyes."

A long time ago, whatever people said or thought helped things happen their way. And so, the loon swam toward him. I guess in those days animals used to talk. That's what they said. The loon said to him, as he swam over, "Get on my back." And without knowing how, he got on the loon's back by feeling his way with his hands. The loon told him to hang on real tight and dove down in the water with him. The loon came out in the middle of the lake with him. And he asked the old man, "How do you feel?" The man said, "I can barely see." The loon said to him, "I am going to dive with you one more time, so hang on real tight." And then he dove in the water with him again.

It was close to shore when he came out of the water with him. Again, he asked the man, "How do you feel?" And he said, "I can see clearly now." So, I guess the loon took him back to the shore. When he reached the shore, he said to the loon, "Thank you, for you have brought back my eyes." And that is why they said the loon's eyes and tears are good for our eyes.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

The loon's tears are very good for sore eyes. That is why they saved them and had them handy.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

It was said, loon's eyes and tears are good when we have sore eyes. It's like this; we get some of its tears and put a drop in our eyes.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Sometimes when a person killed a loon, they saved the scalp. And when someone complained about their eyesight, they warmed this loon scalp and placed it on their forehead. And the ashes are good for a headache.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Gobò gohòq̄q̄ — Tıtso wet'ò

Stomach problems — Loon bladder

They even collected the loon's bladder because that is good too. Sometimes when my mother cleaned the loon, she took the liver and dried it on the drying rack. She saved them, for they are good for stomach pain. They chewed it and swallowed its juice to relieve the pain.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Dzq | Muskrat

Gokwò ta eyah — Dzq̄wò / Dzq̄ek'a

Aches and pains — Muskrat skin / Muskrat fat

Brew made of muskrat ashes is also good to take when you have pain. When people have pain in the body, they heat up the muskrat skin and place it on their body. It helps relieve the pain.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Fat from the muskrat's back could be used too. It was said that people were eager to get them. In the springtime lots of people go out trapping for muskrat. When they do that, they collect lots of fat and hang it on the willows to dry. And they keep them.

It's good for when they have pain anywhere in their body. They smear that fat on them. It is good. When we skin the muskrat, its smell is very strong. It is really good.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gokwì eyah — Dzq̄ wekwìghòq̄

Headache — Muskrat brain

When we had a really bad headache we used to plead to the muskrat's brain. Even though that animal is small, it has a strong mind. We had to plead to its brain and then eat the brain. If it can help a person's headache, then it can.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Godzeè t'à gohòąą — Dzq wedzeè

Heart problems — Muskrat heart

Muskrat is also good for a person with a bad heart. They swallow the muskrat's heart while it's still alive. They said that is good, my late father said when he told us his stories.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Chekoa etse nadaèt'è-le —
Dzqweghà

Child can't stop crying — Muskrat fur

In the past when a child cried because it was horrified, they burned muskrat hair and applied the ashes all over the child's body. Right away the child stopped crying.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Muskrat and beaver are both the same. My father said they are first cousins. It was said, that after a baby is born and is really crying, burn muskrat fur and smear its ashes on the baby's stomach.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Gobò gohòąą — Dzqkaà wet'a edoò
degoo holè / Dzqwò

Stomach problems — Muskrat
spleen / Muskrat skin

Part of the muskrat spleen is good for stomach cramps.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

When someone had a sore stomach, they got muskrat fur. They got muskrat fur, made its brew, and drank it.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

It has been said that the muskrat created the earth. When a small child is sick with a sore stomach, then we burn all of a muskrat's fur and smear the char on the child's stomach. We can also make its brew and drink it. We also eat this muskrat meat.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

The first time my father had a stomach cramp, the old priest who was in charge gave him one spoonful of medicine. I don't really know what kind it was, but he got better. While we were in Rae, he got the same stomach cramp again. My father just tossed himself here and there and grabbed his stomach tightly.

Before this happened to him people had said the muskrat skin is very good for stomach pain. And my stepmother had received one skin from someone and had kept it. So, when my father started getting stomach cramps again, she quickly put a pot of water on the stove and brought it to a boil with the muskrat skin. Once the broth cooled off, she gave him some in a cup. After drinking this he lay still in the blanket. It happened when I was just a young girl. He never got that sickness again. He got very old and later died of a different disease.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Nàbe | Otter

Chekoa nìhtè — Nàbe wetsjìt'è

Birthing — Otter chin

A long time ago, if a woman was pregnant and fell down and hurt herself, I have no idea if they performed surgery on them. But they used their spiritual power to deliver the baby. And when a woman had a hard time delivering her baby, the spiritual person helped her by giving her some otter chin broth. It was said that otter chin broth is very good. It helps the baby come quickly. That's why a spiritual person gave some of that otter chin broth to the woman.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

In the past, children often had a difficult time being born. Today the doctor handles the sick person. But it wasn't this way in the past. When a woman was pregnant, she talked and bragged about a child entering her womb. That is why, at the last minute, the child was stubborn to be born; we saw this a lot. When the woman had contractions but no sign of birth, people tried everything for her. Finally they came up with otter chin, and this is very good stuff. When the woman's child was not born yet, they put water in a little pail and heated up the otter chin. This broth works quickly for an unborn child. And the afterbirth comes out too.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Chekoa nıhtè — Nàbe wetsjıt'è

Birthing — Otter chin

When a woman had a hard time giving birth to a child, they made otter chin brew and the woman drank it. It was said that this helped the child to be born.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

When a woman had a hard time giving birth to her baby, they mentioned otter chin. They got a small piece and boiled it for her to drink with water. With that, they say, the baby is born quickly.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Some women have difficulty giving birth to their child. When this happened, they used the otter chin. They soaked the otter chin in a cup and the woman drank it. Then she gave birth to her child. Every time they take an animal part as a medicine they plead first. These people knew what to say for their health. As soon as this otter chin liquid hits the bottom of her stomach, she gave birth to her child. And that's how the otter chin works.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

For some women who had a hard time, while the men were elsewhere and the husband was not around, the elder women brought otter chin they had saved. They soaked this stuff in the woman's cup. Later, when it dissolved, they took the otter chin out and made her drink the liquid. As soon as it reached the womb, the baby was born right away.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Gah | Rabbit

Godzeè t'à gohòꞑꞑ — Gah weloo

Heart problems — Rabbit urine

When they felt pain in their heart and lungs, they drank rabbit urine. When they drank that, it is good. They got better. They tried all kinds of [animal medicine].

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Godaà eyah — Gah weloo

Sore eyes — Rabbit urine

Rabbit urine is very good for a sore eye. You put a wee, tiny drop into your eye and your eye will be fine.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Gobò gohòq̄q̄ — Gahwò

Stomach problems — Rabbit fur

When we had a sore stomach we could use squirrel fur, rabbit fur, and the skin from caribou legs. We drank its brew and that took our pain away. I guess they say that because people are not all the same; some people are allergic.

They don't mix them together. They use them separately, like the caribou leg skin and the rabbit fur go alone. They also said the squirrel fur is the best. Lots of people talked about squirrel fur.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Rabbit broth is really good to drink when you have stomach pain. Old women said this at one time. By drinking the broth of the rabbit your stomach is relieved of pain.

Elizabeth Mantla [09/10/92]

Goghòò eya — Gah weloo / Gaht'ò

Toothache — Rabbit urine / Rabbit bladder

Rabbit urine is good for a toothache. When we had a toothache, we put a little bit of urine on a small piece of cloth on our toothache and it went numb. Rabbit urine is the best thing for a toothache.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Rabbit bladder is good for toothaches. People of the past always carried rabbit bladder with them wherever they went. There was no other medicine. If they killed some rabbits, they skinned them well, took the bladder out, and hung it to dry. The old people of the past carried this dried bladder with them.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Goghòò eya — Gah weloo / Gaht'ò

Toothache — Rabbit urine / Rabbit bladder

Rabbit urine was used for a sore tooth. They saved it as well. When a person got a bad toothache, they put this rabbit urine on a cloth and placed that on their tooth to relieve the pain.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

For a toothache they put dry rabbit bladder on a small cloth and placed it on the tooth. They used this bladder very often. Once the tooth moved, the pain was gone.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Goyıhdloò gohòıqı — Gaht'ò

Urinary problems — Rabbit bladder

When my father killed five rabbits, my mother cleaned them, removed the bladder, and dried it on the drying rack. She dried the intestine as well. The rabbit bladder is not that big. She tied them with sinew and dried them. If a child had a urinary problem, she used the rabbit bladder. This is why she saved them. She never used any type of modern medicine for a child. When a child was not feeling well, she soaked this bladder in water and applied it on the child's body. And that settled the child's pain.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Tatsò | Raven

Chekoa etse nat'è-le / Gobò gohòıqı — Tatsò wechoò

Child can't stop crying / Stomach problems — Raven feathers

It was said, a long time ago, that after a baby was born, if it never stopped crying, they killed a raven, burned its feathers, and smeared its ashes on the baby's stomach. That made the baby stop crying, it was said.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Dlòo | Squirrel

Godzìhkw'qò eya — Dlòo wetsò /
Dlòo wets'ì

Earache — Squirrel feces / Squirrel
intestine

They kill a squirrel and use its feces for an earache. They remove the intestine and squeeze out the contents. They plead with the squirrel part before they apply the feces around the ear. They also dry the squirrel skin, heat it up, and place that on the ear. Treating the ear like this relieves the pain.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Whehts'òo — Dlòo wetsò

Boil — Squirrel feces

When a person gets a boil it's hard as a rock and it hurts. I remember my mother used squirrel feces. They smear squirrel feces on the boil; it feels warm when they do that. They smear it on the boil about three times and that breaks the boil. After it opens, they use plant brew.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

They apply squirrel feces on the skin and wrap it well with a cloth. The boil quickly opens the infection and sucks the mucus and pus out.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Edòò at'j — Dlòo weghalòò / Dlòo
wedzeè

Epilepsy — Squirrel fur / Squirrel
heart

Squirrel is good for a person who has a seizure, just like my grandchild Sue Ellen who has a seizure once in a while. If someone has a seizure like this, they kill a squirrel and take out its heart. The person or a child who ate this raw heart is not able to get this disease again. They also smear squirrel fur ashes on their body, and it helps too. Squirrel broth is good for drinking too.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Edoò at'į — Dlòò weghaloò / Dlòò wedzeè

Epilepsy — Squirrel fur / Squirrel heart

It was said long ago that when a person had a seizure, this is good for it. Long ago, my granny had a seizure once in a while. So, we charred squirrel fur for her and made its brew. When we burn the fur, it's just black. We smeared that on her with the brew. This helped her to stop moving during a seizure.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Godzeè t'à gohòąą —Dlòò wedzeè

Heart problems — Squirrel heart

They also said that squirrel heart is good for a person with a bad heart. They take out the heart and eat it raw.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Gobò gohòąą — Dlòò weghaloò

Stomach problems — Squirrel fur

When we had a sore stomach we could use squirrel fur, rabbit fur, and the skin from caribou legs. We drank its brew, and that took away our pain. I guess they say that because people are not all the same; some people are allergic. They didn't mix them together. They used them separately, like the caribou leg skin and the rabbit fur go alone. They also said squirrel fur is the best. Lots of people talk about squirrel fur.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

Łıwezqò | Trout

Gok'à eyah — Łıwet'òò

Sore throat — Trout bladder

They collected fish bladders. And they said it was good for anything like mouth infections and sore throat.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

The big trout bladder is very good indeed. When they had a sore throat, they soaked this trout bladder in warm water and gargled with it. Sometimes they applied this bladder liquid on their throat or drank it.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

The trout's bladder is good for a sore throat. They use it to make broth for the person to drink. They also smear it on their throat where they have pain, and around here, on the chest too.

Bruno Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gokwòq ta eyah — Łıwet'òò

Aches and pains — Trout bladder

There are a lot of suckers and it's really good to collect their bladder. It was applied to a sore leg; this is what they used before. People collected fish parts, for they have good medicine. Once it's collected, they tied them together and hung them to dry. It's the same with trout bladder. They saved these too. When a person complained about pain, they soaked this bladder in water and rubbed it on the body.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Godoò ts'eekeh — Łıwet'òò

Coughing blood — Trout bladder

Trout bladder is good for coughing out blood, and so is bear bladder. If we didn't feel good, we took these bladders by drinking them or smearing them on our body. It relieved the pain. These two are the same type of medicine and they are good.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Godzeè t'à gohòąą — Łıwezqò
wedzeè / Łıwewòò / Łıwet'òò

Heart problems — Trout heart /
Trout liver / Trout bladder

There are stories about big trout. There are three parts that are good. When you have a heart problem, trout heart is good for that, but you have to plead to it first. So is the big trout bladder. For the liver, you boil it and drink its broth. Never throw the broth away. You have to plead to it before you drink it. If you want to eat the liver raw, it's up to you, but you still have to plead to it.

Elizabeth Mantla [09/10/92]

These days sometimes people say they have a bad heart. It's just the same for an elder man or woman. When we have fishnets set in the water, we catch trout. And while the trout's heart is still alive, they tell us to swallow it like that. When they did, it helped their heart get better.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Long ago they said trout liver is good. And the heart is good when someone has an irregular heart rate. They take out the trout heart while it's still alive. When we cleaned the fish and a person had a bad heart rate, they swallowed the fish heart while it was still moving. They said it helps relieve the pain and they felt a lot better.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Godaà eyah / Gobò gohòąą —
Łıwet'òò

Sore eyes / Stomach problems —
Trout bladder

It is true that whitefish and trout bladder are good for our eyes, and these two things are good. When we had a sore stomach, trout bladder is good. We just added it to water and drank it like that. And if we had cold sores, we could use a fish bladder. We just smeared it on our sores and that was good. I guess they are right because the brew is really strong.

Marie Adele Moosenose [06/10/92]

So is the trout bladder very good for sore eyes. That's why they saved them and had them handy.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Godaà eyah / Gobò gohòq̄q̄ —
Łıwet'òò

Sore eyes / Stomach problems —
Trout bladder

If we have a sore eye, they say trout bladder is very good.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

There is a story about a big trout that concerns God's own will. There is a story about a very old blind man who received his eyesight by using a big trout bladder. And it happened like this. A young man was walking by the sea when a stranger approached him from nowhere. The stranger told this young man to kill a big trout and use the bladder liquid for his father's eyes so that he can see again. After the young man went home, he did exactly what the stranger told him to do and the father saw well again. This trout bladder is very good medicine, but we don't seem to bother with it much.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Sometimes when we had a sore stomach, we drank trout bladder brew. And when we had sore eyes, we put a little bit of that bladder in water. We tested it first to see if it's a little bit too strong. We put a little bit in our eyes. Then the pain in our eyes went away.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

And trout bladder is good for our eyes too.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Łıh | Whitefish

Nahwhı

Snow blindness

Long ago when people used to travel by dog team, what we call snow blindness used to happen. A small film develops in the eyes. At that time there was no such thing as glasses. When a person gets snow blindness, they can't even look at a fire because it burns their eyes. When another person took the film from their eyes, they said it looks and feels like lice. But if the eyes were still red, they tried whitefish bladder. If they used that in their eyes about two times, it went away, and they felt better.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]



Dè Gonàèdi Wet'à K'aàt'ii Adets'ehᑭᑭ

Healing from Earth's Plants

In this database, elders share knowledge of plants and plant combinations that help with healing and wellness. Each Tłıchq dialect has their own way to spell some of the terms in this database. Sometimes only one Tłıchq spelling appears. This does not imply that one dialect is more important than any other; each is essential.



Elder Robert Mackenzie, from Behchokò, with ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì | spruce cones.
Courtesy of Alices Legat

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Edith Wellin, from Behchokò, with a handful of dahghoò | gooseberries on Tìdeè, 2011.
Courtesy of Ałlice Legat



Stand of t'oo | poplar, 1999. Courtesy of Gabrielle Mackenzie-Scott

T'oooh | Balsam Poplar

ᑭghàà

Swelling

Every poplar tree has a berry-like growth at the end of the branch (cone or t'ooladzèh). When my sister Dora was young, we were picking berries and she fell, twisting her knee like it was out of joint. This happened just before there was snow on the ground, so we got willows to pull her home along the shore.

My mother looked at her leg; it was swollen up. My mother collected lots of poplar and quickly boiled them. Once the juice got cold, she washed my sister's leg and knee until she felt better. We helped my mother by holding up our sister's leg while she pulled and got the joint back in place. My sister got better in no time.

Poplar is good for washing an infected area and good for a cold. This medicine is strong and good for healing.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Ts'ejìi K'e gohᑭᑭᑭᑭ

Respiratory problems

This balsam poplar catkin is very good for breathing problems. But I don't know much about the tree itself.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

The cones (t'ooladzèh) attached to this tree are very good for shortness of breath. They chop them and dry them. When it's boiled, it looks like tea. They drink it, and it helps with sore throat too. Even people from Yellowknife talked about this tree; they said this bush juice works well for shortness of breath. Many have discovered this is the best medicine for shortness of breath. After we cut down this tree we collected cones, cut it up and boiled it until it's juice-like. Once it cooled, we drank it. It really works for people who have problems breathing. Smoke from the dried fungus keeps bears away too.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Godzeè t'à gohòɔɔ

Heart problems

When my late father had a sharp pain in his chest, they used that poplar on him. It's sticky like gum at the tip (sticky cones or t'ooladzèh). My mother collected lots of that and boiled it. After it was cool, she made him drink its brew. She also smeared the juice on his chest. She repeated this treatment until he got better. They said it's the strongest herb brew; stronger than any other bush brew.

When we place it in our mouth, it's just like a deep healer ointment; a spice. It's hot. It gives deep healing and it's good. When we have a sharp chest pain, we smear it where the pain is and it works.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Kw'iahnɔt'oh | Beehive

]ghàà

Swelling

When a person's body is swelling, they heat water and add salt to it. Then they wash the person with salt water. If there is no sign of healing, they go into the bush to look for a beehive among the trees. When the bees are gone, they take it and burn it, then smear the ashes on the person's body and the swelling goes down.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Beehive is very good medicine for a swollen body. We rub or smear the beehive ashes on the swollen part of the body. The next day, it is gone.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Gokwò ek'jì làani

Skin rash

Beehive is very good for rashes and chapped hands. We burn the beehive and rub the ashes on the sore skin. By the next day, all the sores are gone.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Whehts'òò**Boil**

The beehive is good for a boil on the body or swelling. The ashes of beehive are also good for skin infections. They smear the ashes on the infected area and it takes the pus away.

Ashes of the birch layer are also good for a boil. Sometimes they try burning a bear tail and put the ashes on the infection. The boil breaks open, the pus runs out, and the skin heals back to normal.

Another thing people do for a boil is thinly slice up Sunlight soap and leave it overnight on the boil. It opens up the boil. The remaining infection is healed by placing a tamarack layer over it, and also using a fungus. You smash up the dried fungus and turn it into a powder for the skin. The tamarack layer needs to be repeated for four or five days, morning and evening. The dressing should be changed as often as you can until the pus goes away. By the 10th day the skin is back to normal again.

Birch layer ashes are good for a boil on the skin. It was said that smearing beehive ashes on the infection is good too. They light the beehive and burn it to ash. Then they get a bit of water, put the ashes into it, and smear them on the swollen skin. It felt burning hot. The swelling went away in a while and didn't come back. This worked well on the boil and healed the infected area.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92], Marie Adele Moosenose
[05/10/92], Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Tf'ok'àhwhì | Cattail**Gokwò ek'jì làani****Skin rash**

When a person has sores and they increase, they go along the shore where there are cattails. They gather the tops and burn them, then smear the ashes on the sores. It's very good, they say. They like to get the cattails before freeze-up and save them. Sometimes they put some water on the ashes and rub them on the skin sores. We repeated that for a couple of days and the sores were gone. My late mother, Helen Beaulieu, said this to us long ago. The cattails are much like a cotton swab.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gokwò ek'jì làani

Skin rash

Cattail is very good for sores on the body. They burn it and use the ashes. Elderly women are never left without it; they say it is a good ointment that works well. That is why they carried these dry plants wherever they went.

When a child uses a moss pad and they travel a long distance, the pad gets very wet. The child could get a rash or infection. When this happened, they smeared cattail ashes on the child's skin. It became a dark colour. They put a new moss pad on the child and by the next day the rash was gone.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

These bush medicines are very good for mouth infections. When cattails don't work, they use spruce cones and crowberry. They collect them for whenever they are needed. They boil them together for an hour and then cool it. It looked like a tea. They wash a child's body with the juice, maybe a couple of times until the sores are gone.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

People say that cattail is good for a person or a child who has skin rash. They burn the cattail, smear the ashes on their rash, and it heals well.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Goyihdloò gohòɔɔ

Urinary problems

When a person can't pass their urine well, they brew cattail juice. They drink it once it's lukewarm, and they soon pass their urine well. My stepmother said cattail juice is the best treatment for a person who has a problem passing their urine.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

When cattail juice doesn't work well, the person finds moving around uncomfortable. That's when my stepmother had another way to help the person, and I witnessed it. She heated up a towel and put lots of soapy water around the surface of the genitals. She did the same with a woman.

The grass they call cattail is long, has a black stripe, and are attached to each other, as they said. I have seen them offering a gift before they take the plant. You have to offer something before collecting any plant. Then you boil them and use

Goyihdloò gohòɔɔ**Urinary problems**

the juice on the sick person. When a person is fighting for their breath, people don't know what to do. So, when they have these plants handy, they quickly put them in water and bring it to a boil. While the plant is boiling, they continue to use a warm, soapy towel around the person's waist.

People were in a hurry to help as best they could, because when there is no change, the person's stomach gets stiff because of their full bladder. As soon as the cattail juice is ready, they make the person drink it and keep rubbing their waist. Afterward, he or she pass their urine and feel a bit of relief, but may continue to drink cattail juice until they recover well.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Gots'qkà | Cloudberry**Godaà eyah****Sore eyes**

The small, five-petaled, pinkish flower that we call edaba grows from the cloudberry (gots'qkà) stump. My late granny always had them. When we got a sore eye, this five-petaled flower is good medicine. My granny said to me and others, "You don't seem to know what these plants are good for. When you see these five-petaled flowers growing, make sure you collect and save them. You may need them for a sore eye." This is what my late granny used to say.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Gokayı eyıts'o gokaà**Wounds and sores**

Depending how deep a cut is on a person's foot or leg, they crush cloudberry and place that on the cuts. Its juice is kind of a dark colour. If the cut is deep, they spread it on. Cloudberry is also good for the scabs. You keep it on the wound or scab for two days or so and it will heal up very well. They also bandage the skin infection to keep it clean.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gokayi eyits'o gokaà

Wounds and sores

One time I was chipping wood with a big knife. And I suddenly chopped my thumb. I was in shock and didn't say anything; I just went to get a cut-up log and asked my boy to split it for me. There was soft spruce gum just like a liquid. I put that into the deep cut on my thumb and wrapped it with a cloth. My mother-in-law asked me what happened. I just told her, "I hit my thumb but it will be okay." In two days, my thumb was normal; that's how fast this liquid gum works. Spruce gum is good for any rash, sore throat, scab, wound, or chapped skin. Spruce gum juice is good to drink for a cough.

Marie Adele Rabesca [06/27/2022]

It'ò | Cranberries

Goyhdloò gohòɔɔ / Tsòghooɔ

Urinary problems / Constipation

These cranberries have a high stem with a tiny bud on its branches. We pull its root off with the berries. We take them home and keep them in case we need them. They can help a person with a urination problem. We break them into pieces, put them into a pot with water, and boil it well. After it's boiled, you cool it off and drink the brew. This can also be used for a person with a bowel movement problem, and the medicine is very good.

Before collecting a plant, you have to offer a gift to the land, tobacco or whatever you can. And when you take the plant from the ground you need to say, "Help me get over this sickness," or whatever you need to say. A person may also say, "I have this problem and I need help with it." The words you say should come from your heart, and then what you ask for will happen.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Dehko / Łòts'eeko

Chest cold / Whooping cough

Cranberries are the best medicine for colds and coughing.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Dehko / Łòts'eeko

Chest cold / Whooping cough

Cranberries are also good for colds and coughs. It is good to eat them or boil them for jam or baking. During the fall women pick lots of them and save them all winter long. It's also a good vitamin for someone who can't eat food well. Its berries are red. It is very good for a person who has a cold or whooping cough. The cough will slow down.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Cranberries are good vitamins, and good for colds too.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Tsòht'è | Crowberry

Dehko dìi

Bad cold

Crowberries could be mixed with other bush plants to make brew to cure a person's body.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Chekoa nìhtè

Birthing

After the birth of a baby, they put a spruce bough and crowberry inside a towel and placed it around the woman's waist. When she was in labour, they gave her the plant juice to drink to help her relax a bit better.

If there was no change, they threw a stone into the fire until it got really hot. Then they placed the stone in spruce bough juice beneath the woman, and it steamed. They even did this in the tent in the cold of winter. After everything is fine, the woman has to continue drinking this brew.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Tàdaa t'alàa agohᑭ

General sickness

Sick people are sweated in tents as well as a house. They figure if we boil crowberry plants, they sweat the person with the steam from the crowberries. They place a big stone in the fire and cover the sick person with a blanket after removing their clothes. They place the hot stone in a tub with crowberry juice and put it underneath the sick person. Once he or she gets very sweaty, they give them a towel, wiping the body with towels one after the other. They continue adding hot stones and water to make more steam.

They said the steam helps the person to get well because the sickness is released from the body. Once the person gets cooled, they give them dry clothes to put on. In two days, the person is completely well and able to do chores again. This is how people lived on the land, providing for their needs themselves.

Marie Madeline/Marie Adele Champlain [02/03/93]

Gowà gok'qò

Mouth infection

My grandchild had an infection in his mouth, but it was getting worse using spruce cone brew. I guess the brew was too strong for the child. So, I said to his mom, "Try black crowberry brew." She made him take it and later on the infection in his mouth was gone.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

They also use eehkwoo. It is taken in deep water; it looks like rat root but this one is huge. If this plant didn't work well, they used crowberry roots or spruce cones for mouth infections. Once one of my grandchildren had an infection in his mouth. His mom smeared this in his mouth with a cloth and made him drink some spruce cone brew. The spruce cone is the best medicine.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

For mouth infection, spruce cones and black crowberry roots brew the best medicine. Black hairy lichen dahghaà from birch trees is good too. Also, whiskey jack berries; these red berries on the ground. They squash them and they're very good for a child's mouth infection.

A child cries when they have an infection, because it hurts and the pus shows as well. Then they quickly made spruce bough juice. When it got very strong, they spooned it into the child's mouth, used a feather, or put a cloth in the juice and

Gowà gok'qò**Mouth infection**

smeared it inside the child's mouth. It collects the pus. They kept doing it until it was well done and the child healed quickly. They said it is very good medicine.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Ligazoà | Traditional Earth Tobacco**Ts'ejì k'e gohɔɔqɔ****Respiratory problems**

Ligazoà grows in the bush and its leaves are high and sort of flat, with a blackish colour. Yellowish berries grow on it too. It's about this tall. They said they are good for the inside of the body, the respiratory system. When a man had this problem, he chewed ligazoà berries and swallowed them. They always gathered them and kept them for emergencies. They boiled the berries in a tin to make juice with a yellowish coloured tea. They saved it if there was any left over. If they heard about another person with a respiratory problem, they gave the juice to them to drink. They knew that this type of berries can cure a person with respiratory problems.

Helen Rabesca [01/10/91]

Gòh | Fireweed**Gobò gohòɔqɔ****Stomach problems**

Fireweed is good for stomach pain, and so is gooseberry. They boiled them and drank the juice. These plants are good for pains in the stomach and elsewhere in the body.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Eehkwoo | Medicinal Water Plant

Godòò at'ᑭᑭ**Bleeding**

A long time ago, some people had gun accidents. This is what granny said. “At times, the cause was carelessness. If a person got shot in their shoulder or finger, they bled a lot. Right away they got soft spruce gum from a tree and placed the gum on the wound. Or else they use tamarack layer; chew on it until it's soft, then place it on the wound. Or they get birch fungus (k'ì t'èhtè) and it stops the bleeding,” granny said to me.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Godziìhk'w'qò eya**Earache**

When a person got an earache and had a sore, they used eehkwoo for the pain. People of the past were never out of bush medicine that they kept for emergencies. For earache they used eehkwoo, or put a hot stone in a towel and placed it on the earache. It helped relieve the pain.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Gowà gok'qò**Mouth infection**

Eehkwoo is a brown plant taken from beneath the water for a brew. This is why they call it dishwater plants. They also use crowberry juice for a mouth infection. My grandchild had an infection in his mouth and his granny gave him some spruce cone juice. With that, the infection went away.

They used the cone juice to wash the infection, or soaked a cloth and smeared it on the sore in their mouth. This was repeated often until the infection went away. Tree cones make a very good medicine.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gok'à eyah

Sore throat

Eehkwoo is good for sore throat. So is ts'arikwòè, a tall yellowish plant near the rocks; sometimes you see it around split rocks too. They pull them out with the roots, rinse them well, and hang them up to dry. They keep them for a long time. When someone said they had a sore throat, they gave them some to chew, and they swallow the sap. It helps take the pain away.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

If we have a sore throat and bush medicines like spruce bough, spruce cones and blackberry root don't help, we try eehkwoo, for it's the best medicine. Elderly women keep it, even small pieces, in case someone needs it. Elderly women say, "Chew it and swallow the sap. When they do what they're told, eehkwoo works fast."

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Gokayi eyits'o gokaà

Wounds and sores

Eehkwoo is a very strong medicine that works well on sores and infections. When a person had a deep cut they walked into the bush, cut down a birch tree, and collect its fungus. The cut is big. Then they collected eehkwoo. First, they closed the wound with their hands, then placed eehkwoo on the wound. They tied up the wound with a scarf, for there were no bandages or gauze in those days. This way the wound healed fast.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

When a wound isn't getting better, they switch to eehkwoo, a plant from the water. They smear or place the plant on the wound. It numbs the pain and heals the wound. I remember people used to help others do this. One time I cut my finger by accident and it was hanging like this (hand gesture). They placed it back using a layer of caribou skin and wrapped it with a bone, like a cast. I kept that on for at least three months, but I worked with it, that's why it didn't heal up sooner. After they removed the skin layer from the caribou, they got eehkwoo, boiled its fungus, and used the juice on the sore. But I didn't feel pain because it was a spiritual person who did the dressing on my finger. It healed like my other fingers. This is how people used to help each other before doctors came.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

]ghàà

Swelling

This brownish water root (eehkwoo) is good to chew, and swallow the sap. You can also apply it to a swollen area and it's good for healing sores. You put the eehkwoo in hot water and let it soak. Then you apply it to the sores, cuts, or rash and it will heal quickly.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Dehkw'ı | Dry Twigs

Whehts'òo

Boil

When you get a boil, it looks white and red around the surface. Then you take a dry twig, place it on the white area and twist it a bit. It grabs the pus; you pull it out slowly. After the sore is open, you continue with the other kinds of bush medicine to stop the pain and get some relief.

When the dry twig grabs the pus it's painful. They collect all the pus on a cloth. Before burning it, they say to the germs, "I am burning you and don't return to me again, I want you to burn forever."

Then the healing starts and the disease does not come back. I watched people with this type of skin infection and it's very painful. I was afraid, just watching how they cleaned the wound.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

Eghòhkèè | Water Plant Root

Gonikw'òè eyah

Back pain

Eghòhkèè is very good for a sore back and any type of joint or muscle pain. They make juice from this plant and drink it. Later, the pain is not so bad.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Ts'ejì k'e gohᑭᑭᑭ / Godzeè t'à
gohᑭᑭᑭ

Respiratory problems / Heart
problems

Eghᑭᑭᑭᑭ looks like rat root but it's bigger. They used to collect it. It can be used to help someone with shortness of breath. This bush medicine is also good inside the body and for the heart, yet I don't know how they used it. Maybe they boiled it and drank its juice.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

Gobò gohᑭᑭᑭ

Stomach problems

This water plant is very good when a person has a stomach problem. They drink this and it works fast to stop the pain.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Goyhdloò gohᑭᑭᑭ

Urinary problems

This water plant is also good for a person who has problems passing water / urine. When we have inner body pain or stomach pain this water plant brew is good to drink.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

My stepmother-in-law never went without this water plant when she was alive. She said, "This water plant root is very good for a person who has a problem passing their water." She boiled them and told us to taste it, even though it was strong, with a bitter taste. Even just smelling it, we couldn't take too much.

In the summer when we paddled on the lake and saw this water plant root above the water, we collected them and took them home. You cut them in pieces because it's thick. Once you hang it up to dry it becomes very thin, and that is what she did. After her death, the water plants she was drying were still on the rack. Later on, they must have got rid of them. This was very good medicine for urine problems and constipation.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Goyihdloò gohòɔɔ

Urinary problems

Eghòhkè is a water plant that looks like rat root, but bigger. It is food for beaver and muskrats to eat. In the past when doctors were not around and a person had a problem urinating, they boiled this water plant for this person to take. They saved the juice and kept it for emergencies. It does work.

Joe Zoe Fish [24/05/91]

Gonii eyah

Waist pain

Eghòhkè — a water plant — is used for a person who has pain in their waist. They boiled the root from the plant. The person was treated until they recovered. And when a person had pain in the waist and chest pain, they boiled this water plant, added spruce bough, and steamed the person with it next to them. A person got a lot of steam by leaning over a tub with a blanket covering them. This person got better in no time.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

That red willow is good medicine and so is the water plant (eghòhkè). Before they collected them, they talk to the plant about their needs for a sick person. They always had these bush plants handy when a person had pain in their waist. They drink this plant's juice and they get well fast.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Dahghoò | Gooseberries

Godaà eyah / Gobò gohòɔɔ

Sore eyes / Stomach problems

Gooseberry is very good for stomach pain and when we have sore eyes. My daughter Georgina and some other young people were training to be forest firefighters. At that time Charlie N. was still alive. He must have sprayed mosquito repellent on the girls, and it got into my daughter's eyes. Both her eyes were just red. This happened on a Friday and the nurse said that she had to fly out on Sunday.

Godaà eyah / Gobò gohòɔɔɔ

Sore eyes / Stomach problems

Her eyes were really sore when she came in; she couldn't even go out to the washroom. On Saturday I went out to the airstrip where I picked gooseberry stems, which has thorns. I scraped off those sharp needles and took them home. I chopped them into pieces and boiled them until the water turned yellow. I drained it through a cloth and let it cool for a while. Then I poured a little into each of her eyes before she went to bed; they got a little cleared. I kept doing it often that night and the next day her eyes were better.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

When we have sore eyes, we should try gooseberry-stem brew. Even Jesus had thorns wrapped around His head. So, if we think about it deeply and use gooseberry stems, I'm pretty sure healing happens. Sometimes our eyes get weak, but if we use gooseberry stem brew in our eyes, we'll probably have vision like a little child. God created all sorts of plants for us and we should use them often instead of white man's medicine. When we ask God to help us to use His gifts from this earth, He will do so.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gobò gohòɔɔɔ / Gowà gok'qò / Ts'ejii
k'e gohòɔɔɔStomach problems / Mouth infection
/ Respiratory problems

Gooseberry stems and gooseberries are good for mouth infections and sore stomachs. We drink its juice or brew. People said this was a good medicine that has been discovered. This is also good for people who are short of breath. That is why people like to collect gooseberry stems.

They often use this medicine with rosehips, which also work on people with infections. We talk to the plant just like we talk to other people, then we collect them.

I used rosehips and gooseberry stems at times. I rinsed them well with water, cut them up, and brought them to a boil in water. Then I let it stand for a while and drink the juice. It helped with my coughing too. I haven't coughed since my sister passed away last year; I used it so much. It's the best medicine that I know of.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gobò gohòq̄q̄ / Gowà gok'q̄q̄ / Ts'ejii k'e gohòq̄q̄	Stomach problems / Mouth infection / Respiratory problems
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Gooseberry brew, fireweed; all these things are good for a sore stomach.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Wohgwjdzii - Wohgwjòò | Juniper Berries - Juniper Boughs

Dehko	Chest cold
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They collected juniper, tied it in a bundle and hung it in the warehouse. About wintertime,¹ when someone caught a cold, they made juice out of it.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Juniper is good for a cold. If we want to collect it, we really have to dig all around it and pull it from the ground. After we collect it, we place tobacco, sugar cubes, or other things in the place where we pulled it out. Because of this bush medicine I am still well and doing things.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Chekoa nihtè	Birthing
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If a pregnant woman had a cold and was bringing forth her baby, they cut the juniper into pieces and quickly bring it to a boil. They put hot rocks in and steam the woman by putting a blanket over her. They used hot rocks because there weren't any modern things like today, but the water became very hot and steaming.

The next thing they did was give her tamarack juice to drink, or any other bush medicine she needed. After she gave birth, they gave her boiled birch juice. She continued taking these bush juices until she got completely well, which might take two weeks or so. I'm not saying we just got up and walked around after the birth of a baby.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gonikw'qò eyah

Back pain

We took some juniper berries and collected them in a bag. We chew them for the juice and swallow it until there's no taste to it. It's good. It's very good to chew on and swallow its juice until there is no taste to it. We made brew out of it too. When we drank it, the back pain went away and we felt fine. I am still doing a lot of work and I don't feel pain because I drink this juniper berry juice. I feel great even with a lot of work.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

K'įąjìe - K'ę̀ędzìe - K'ę̀ęjìe | Saskatoon Berries and Stem

Goyhdloò gohòᑭᑭ

Urinary problems

K'įąjìe is good for a person (woman or man) who has a sore waist or sides, or has difficulties passing their urine. It was used when our sides were sore. We collected it during autumn and used it during the winter when it was hard to collect because the snow covered all the plants. So, we wrapped them well and saved them for whenever it was needed. K'įąjìe is good medicine to help pass urine and for pain around the waist.

Helen Rabesca [01/10/91]

When a person had problems passing his water/urine, we boiled Saskatoon stems for some time, let it cool, and make this person drink the brew. In no time the person passes his water normally, it works so well.

We usually collect lots of Saskatoon stem and keep them, mostly in the summer. When the wind blows dirt or dust in the air, we have to wash the stem before using it. We cut it into small pieces, put them in a pot, and boil them. It is also good medicine for a person with infection inside their waistline.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Our late ancestors gave us a lot of teachings on how to use Saskatoon berry stem. They used and carried them whenever they travelled in the winter. When there wasn't any and a person had problems urinating, they talked among themselves, saying, "Maybe that woman has some, we can ask her." When they asked, surely this woman helped by giving them what they needed.

Goyihdloò gohòᑭᑭ

Urinary problems

It's very dangerous for a person who has problems passing urine, so they don't just sit around doing nothing. They act quickly for the person by asking around the village for Saskatoon berry stem. Once they got some, they chopped them into chunks, put them into a pot with water, and brought it to a boil. Once it cooled, they poured the brew into a cup and made the person with urinary problems drink it. After that, the person surely passed their urine normally. It's very good medicine.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Gokwì eyah / Gowò eyah

Headache / Sore stomach

The stem of Saskatoon berries has a black bud that is good for a headache and sore stomach. They put them into a pail with enough water to boil them. When it was done, they drank it after it cooled off. When a person vomits after drinking it, they get well; this is a good sign. Otherwise, the person may get diarrhea and then feel better. They say that when this brew gets into the stomach it collects all the bad mucus and the person has diarrhea, which makes them feel better. This works well.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Łòts'eeko

Whooping cough

We were on the land walking and my mother had a pail in her hand. When we came to a place where there are Saskatoon berries and a place to rest for the night, she picked the berries. When she had enough, she put water into the pail and boiled them for some time. She strained it through a cloth and put some into a cup. My grandfather drank that juice a couple of times before he went to sleep. My mother saved what was left over. It really worked well and helps a whooping cough to die down.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Tl goᑭᑭᑭ at'ᑭ

Diarrhea

The Saskatoon stem bud is used for a child with diarrhea. Once it's well boiled, they let it sit for a while until it's cool. Then they make the child take it by mouth. This is very good medicine, so people collected and saved them.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Gots'agoᑭ | Labrador Tea

Goyhdloᑭ gohᑭᑭᑭ

Urinary problems

A baby girl died during delivery and her mother was bleeding where she was passing her water. They didn't know what to do for her and there was no doctor then. Daylight was long at that time, so my mother and my aunt went out to an open space where they picked a little jack pine. They made juice out of it, gave her the juice to drink, and smeared the rest on the woman's body. She drank a lot but it didn't work. So, they tried Labrador tea and the bleeding stopped.

Marie Adele Simpson [29/10/91]

Dehko dīi

Bad cold

Labrador tea is very good for a cold. It has a tiny larch on it which is good to use for a bad cold. It was said it's good to collect it and use it when needed.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Labrador tea has red berries which are also good for a cold.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Ts'ejīi k'e gohᑭᑭᑭ

Respiratory problems

When we were travelling on the land, my mother began to get a sharp pain in her chest. I asked her if we could get some herbs for medicine she could drink. She said to me, "My daughter, I can't breathe well so do what you can." My father was

Ts'ejì k'e gohɔɔɔɔ

Respiratory problems

wandering somewhere on the land. I too went into the bush to get medicine from trees. I saw Labrador tea sticking out of the snow about this far (hand gesture).

I kicked the snow off all around it with my snowshoes. After its stem was showing well, I took the axe and chopped the root off from the ground. The only thing I had was matches, since I made fire in the morning; no tobacco. I was alone by myself and my mother was in so much pain. As I was about to leave, I talked to the plant, saying, "I am the only one with my mother. She is in much pain in her chest, and I don't know what to do for her. That is why I am pleading with you that when she drinks your juice, which has been said to be very good for healing, your juice will heal my mother's pain. That is why I am offering this gift as my respect for you." I rushed back to my mother with this Labrador tea.

My mother said to me, "Hurry and prepare it, for my pain is worse, I can't breathe well." I broke the plant into pieces with its root and boiled them in a pail for some time. After I took it from the stove, she told me to pour it into a cup and give it to her. She drank it sip by sip for it was hot. She rubbed some around her waist and before night came, she began to feel less pain. She was pleading with the plant while drinking it and praying as she rubbed some on her chest. The pain was close to her heart.

I am telling the truth, my sister. My mother drank only two cups of this juice and she was healed. Labrador tea is very good for a cold and sharp pain in the chest. She stopped coughing too.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Kw'ah | Moss

Kwɔɔ ts'ɔɔɔ wekwɔ k'e nɪt'ɔɔ

Diaper rash

When we raised our children with moss diapers, they didn't get any rash. The moss pad is good and you can leave it on the child. But you have to make sure the moss is clean or something else can happen to the child's skin. When you do things well it's not a problem. Even in hard times people always made sure there was enough moss. They gathered a lot in the summer for the long winter. Young

Kwq̄ ts'q̄q̄ wekw̄ k'e nit'ᑭᑭ

Diaper rash

girls like us helped the women by pulling moss from the ground. We young girls got fed up with it.

They also made tipis with spruce trees and made a pole rack in there where they dried the moss. In the winter when the women were running out of moss, the men went back to where the moss was stored and brought it back for the children's use. The men and women worked as a team.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

In the past the women used to raise their children in moss pads. It was good, as there were no skin rashes. They said the moss pad was a bush medicine that kept the children from getting rashes all day.

It was the same when we travelled on the land by dog team. When they came to where they camped, they changed the child's diaper. If they didn't have dry moss, they cleaned and dried the moss. They continued like that until the next stop and the child didn't get a rash on their skin.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

Dègok'at'ᑭᑭ | Ground Roots

Dehko

Chest cold

This ground root is very good medicine for a cold.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Ts'ejᑭᑭ k'e gohq̄q̄q̄

Respiratory problems

When a person is short of breath and not feeling well, they use ground roots, for they say it's very good for shortness of breath and weakness.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Kwechj - kwetsj | Rock Tripe**Hoti ts'edaa****Good health**

This lichen can be seen on rocks; it looks black. I don't know if they used a knife to scrape it from the rock, but they made a soup with it and they liked it. They used plants of all kinds, and it gave them a good, healthy, long life. They loved the soup that came from this plant. This story was told to me by my mother. They liked to try plants of all kinds and loved doing this. My father shared the same stories as I heard from my mother. That is why we follow their teachings and we lived healthy lives too.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Ts'ejii k'e gohɔɔɔɔ**Respiratory problems**

To give you an example, lichen is very good for breathing problems. We take lots of pills for breathing problems, but these medicines don't work fast and sometimes no cure comes of it. But this lichen from the rocks (kwechj) works well. When we get sick, we need to collect the right kind of herbs. When the medicine begins to work well in your body, stick with the same plant. They say lichen is good medicine and it heals you.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Gqò | Pine**Gokwò ta eyah — Gqòweghàà****Aches and pains — Pine tree boughs**

Pine tree boughs are very good too. They drink the juice from them and it's very strong. They chew the pine tree boughs and the bark, which they smear on their body. They say it is good medicine. They rub it on their body where they have pain.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Dehko

Chest cold

When we want to get medicine for a cold, we look at the tree that is good for that. We chop down the tree and peel off the top and inner layer. We chop them and boil them, but we add the sticks to make it strong. This is how we make good medicine for a cold. It is also good for a chest cold and pain. A man named Paul Drybone was diagnosed with TB but got better just by drinking this bush medicine, and it's true.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Ts'ejii k'e gohᑭᑭᑭᑭ

Respiratory problems

When we have shortness of breath and the tree, which one was it? I think it was the pine tree. We peel this layer to about the size of our hands. We bring them to a boil and drink the juice.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

It was said that we chop pine trees and dry them on a pole rack. The pine tree fungus and trembling aspen fungus are both good medicines. It's good for shortness of breath. People always talk about these; people of Yellowknife have said the same things. This has been discovered for shortness of breath and it's very good. We know what to do when someone has a problem with their breathing and how to prepare it well. We need to boil the fungus and once it cools off, then we drink the juice. It helps us breathe normally again.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Godaà eyah

Sore eyes

There are many good plants we can use to heal our bodies. The plant we call goᑭᑭkàa is on the land. During the winter if you need these plants, you kick the snow away and collect them. We make weti (juice) from it with care, strain it through a cloth, then put the juice into the infected eye. We make sure there is no debris in the juice, then put it into our eyes.

Helen Rabesca [01/10/91]

Godaà eyah

Sore eyes

Small pine tree stem brew is also good for our eyes. When they want to make it, they let it boil for a long time. Then it looks like tea. They add a little bit of sugar, then put it in both eyes, even when our eyes have been infected for over a week. But it clears our eyes in less than a week.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

I have said that the water plant was good for pain around the waist. But the top of gɔɔhkhàachjɔ (stem of pine) is a very tiny cone that is good for sore eyes. One time we went walking to look for this water plant, found some, and took it home. As I was walking home, I thought about how I treated my eye with this plant. And for no reason I got my eyes punched by my man and I could hardly see. My aunt came to me and was very upset.

She said to me, "I will get the plant to treat your eyes." She boiled them and put the juice into my eyes. Two days later my eyes were back to normal. My memories all came back to me as I was chopping this water plant. I was treated badly but I never left my man.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Wohgwɔchjɔ | Puff ball

Goɔghòò godoò det'e

Nosebleed

This stuff which comes from the ground. When you touch these little things on the ground, it's just like a little smoke comes out of it. They said this puff ball is good when we have a nosebleed. When we are bleeding badly, what we do is let our blood drip on the powder ball, or we smeared it into our nose. This helped stop our nosebleed.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

These puff balls grow from the ground. They call it wohgwɔchjɔ and it looks like powder. When someone had a nosebleed, they smeared this powder in their nose. Sometimes they burned the powder and inhaled it in their nose, and this stopped the bleeding.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Gogghòò godoò det'e

Nosebleed

When we bleed from the nose, we put this powder in our nose, and that helped to stop the bleeding.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gokwò ek'jì làani

Skin rash

That puff ball is good for our sores. When we have a rash on our neck, we smear that powder on the rash and it goes away. Bruno once had a rash on his skin and was so uncomfortable he couldn't work. We used this powder until he got better, so it was good. Even when we don't get pimples, our skin gets chapped and very itchy. We smear this stuff on our skin and it works well.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Dzqdi | Muskrat root

Gokwì eyah

Headache

When a person gets a headache, they place a beaver scalp on the person's head. If this doesn't work, they use a bush medicine like rat root. They burn it, and the person covers himself or herself with a towel or blanket to inhale the smoke through their nose. The pain goes away. It works for some people but not for others.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

When a person had a headache and it was summer, they collected rat root. They saved them for a person with a headache. They break the rat root in half and light it so the person could inhale the smoke through their nose. They knew this was better than modern pills. In the early spring they ask one another to collect rat root because it has a lot of sap then, and it's good.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

Another thing they do for a headache is collect lots of spruce boughs, put them in a pail, and boil them. They place it near a sick person with a headache and

Gokwì eyah

Headache

cover them with a blanket until they got sweaty. If that didn't work, they get rat root, burn it, and have the person inhale it through their nose. Probably within an hour their headache disappeared. Because it is good medicine, I always keep it just in case I need it.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

For someone with a headache, rat root was good medicine. Now it's difficult to get rat root around this area. When they got some, they burned the top of it and smoked it under their nose. Their headache went away.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

People warned us not to take rat root when you take modern medicine. I don't know why, for there was no explanation. But what they have said is, rat root is good for headaches and head colds, and is very good medicine.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

This rat root that I mentioned is also good for a sore stomach and headaches. Just chew it and swallow its sap. When it's dry, it creates a lot of smoke when lit; its incense rises and helps a person with a headache.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Dehko

Chest cold

Rat root grows in the water. When the tip shows, they pull it out of the water. I think it grows under the surface in quicksand. Its habitat is water, and it grows with other plants, in ponds too.

Whenever they got a cold, they chewed on rat root and swallowed the sap. And when they had a headache, they lit it and inhaled the smoke through the nose. It works really well. The smell of it is like a very strong fragrance. I think this is a good medicine.

Joe Champlain [08/10/92]

Kwe'tjì nàèdì xè tètats'ehɔɔ

Mixing with modern medicine

About rat root: we cannot take modern medicine with it. It is forbidden to do so. The rat root has its medicine and it's very strong. So, we have to keep away from modern medicine when we take it, to prevent more harm. That's why I can't take rat root, because I take a modern medicine.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

They say it's dangerous to take rat root and modern medicine at the same time. They also say that if a person did that, it can cause dangerous harm because rat root is a strong medicine. Once you take rat root, don't take a modern medicine the same day, for this is forbidden.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Rat root brew is much better than taking modern medicine. Rat root helps fast, not like modern medicine, which takes forever. Don't take rat root medicine if you are taking modern medicine, for rat root is stronger.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gòokw'òà

Pinworms

When a person had pinworms, they crushed rat root and boiled it very well. After it cooled, they made the person drink it. Later this person passed all the pinworms and he or she healed.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Rat root is also good for pinworms. That's why they collect rat root and keep them. It does work well for a person with pinworms.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gok'à eyah

Sore throat

When a person had a sore throat, they tell them to chew rat root and swallow the brew. It helps cure their throat. They encouraged one another to take rat root whenever it was needed, and gave it to one another.

Benny Pomie [02/10/91]

Gobò gohòɔɔ

Stomach problems

They say it's very dangerous to take rat root with a modern medicine when you are sick, because rat root is strong. If a person has a sore stomach, chew on this rat root and swallow its sap, it helps quickly. A person with a headache lights up dry rat root and inhales the incense through their nose. It makes you feel well and cures the pain.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Gokayi eyìts'o gokaà

Wounds and sores

It's very dangerous to take rat root and modern medicine at the same time, together. Rat root is about this long and it's green. When you collect them, you need to pull it out by its roots. It's a yellowish colour, but it is the best medicine.

If we chopped wood and hit our foot by accident, right away we chew rat root and place it on the cut. It heals up in less than two weeks and the person can use their foot well again.

There is rat root around, and there are other kinds of bush plants nearby. We need to be aware of the plants we collect and use them the right way.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [02/10/91]

Ekwohdzjì - Ekwohjì | Rotten Wood

Gokwò ek'jì làani

Skin rash

For the rotten wood, you need to search for the right kind of dry willow and smash it into a powder. It can be used on a baby's umbilical cord after it is cleaned with water and dried. They smeared the powder on and later the cord came off well.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Gokwò ek'jì làani

Skin rash

Rotten wood is very good, especially when you mash it into a powder. It can be used on a baby's belly button, or if the baby gets a rash. They smear the powder on that area and the skin returns to normal.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

In those days there was no baby powder so they used rotten wood powder instead. When a child got a skin rash, we made this powder and smeared it on the skin. It works very well.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Ts'ì | Spruce

Gokwòq ta eyah — Detsj

Aches and pains — Spruce gum

If a person has pain in their body, they get soft spruce gum and put it on a smoked caribou skin, just enough to cover the pain area. They use the piece of hide as gauze and smear the soft spruce gum on it. Soft gum is very good for any pain in the body parts.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

When we hurt our arm or it gets a pain, we look for birch bark. When we find it, we peel it off and use the layer, holding it in front and heating it up well. We place that where the pain is and tie it in place with a cloth, leaving it on until the pain goes. Then we search for spruce gum, which is soft and coloured light orange. We use soft spruce gum when you crack your bone or when you get a cut, wound, or sore. It works fast and heals up the wound. It looks much like a bandage, but much better, for the pain goes away quickly.

Celine Eyakfwo [04/10/91]

Dehko — Ts'iwàᓂòò

Chest cold — Spruce boughs

For a woman who has a chest cold, they talk among themselves and see what can be done for her. They rush out and gather some spruce in a canvas, crush them together, and place that in a tub. They pour hot water in and add a very hot stone to make steam. They place the spruce boughs underneath her and cover her with a blanket.

People sometimes get chest colds during the winter. With spruce boughs you can get better, either by steaming or drinking its brew. So, when a person had a very bad cold, they steamed them by placing a very hot stone in the tub of water with spruce boughs. That is why when you enter the sick person's place you smell spruce.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

When we get a very bad cold, we get a spruce bough and boil it in water. Its steam helps us cough less and breathe well. They said that disease is afraid of spruce bough, for it kills the germs or sickness.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

When a person gets sick with a cold, they cut branches from a spruce tree and put them into a pot with water. When it boils, they put it next to the sick person to steam them under a blanket. Steaming them helps their recovery from the cold. Steam from the tree branches works very well and helps a person breathe normally again.

Joe Zoe Fish [24/05/91]

When a person gets a bad cold, they hurry to gather spruce boughs, place it in a pail, pour water into it, and boil it well. Then they poured that brew through a cloth into a different pail and either drank it or used it to steam the place. They saved the rest for whenever it was needed.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Dehko — Detsj

Chest cold — Spruce gum

What we do is get some spruce gum and boil it in a pail. When it's cool, we drink it and it's very good.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

People with a very bad cold look for soft spruce gum and collect it on a cloth since they didn't have other things to put it in. They take it home, boil it, and drink its brew. It's very good medicine.

Alexis Flunkie [09/10/91]

Godoò at'j — Detsj

Bleeding — Spruce gum

When a person had a gun accident, either on their shoulder blade or finger, and began losing a lot of blood, they got enough spruce gum to place on the wound. Or they got tamarack layer, chewed it to make it soft, and placed that on the wound. Or they used eehkwo to stop the bleeding by placing it on the wound, for it does help.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Dehko — Ts'ik'a

Chest cold — Spruce inside layer

When a person got a cold, they chopped off a spruce tree and peeled off the top layer. They peeled the inside layer too and chewed on it. It's good for a cold.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Godoò at'j — Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì

Bleeding — Spruce cones

When a child has a mouth infection or when we are bleeding, spruce cone juice is very good. It's also good for washing sores on a child's body. For a child with a mouth infection, they swab the mouth with the cone brew, using a cloth. They also drink its brew for stomach pain and infections. Even if it is strong, they drink it and it works well.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

Godoò at'w — Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì

Bleeding — Spruce cones

Black spruce trees have a lot of cones and they are much stronger than spruce cones. This is good for a person who is bleeding. One time my late granny was bleeding a lot and she couldn't continue like that, so we got black spruce cones for her and boiled them for some time. After it got cool, we made her drink it as a tea. The next day her bleeding just stopped.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Ekw'qò nàetòq — Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì

Broken bones — Spruce cones

If anyone broke a bone, their relative went see a spiritual person and pleaded with him until he did something to help. The gifted person rubbed tobacco over the broken bone, used birch bark to cover his leg, and wrapped it well with cloth. The person had to keep their leg straight and be careful. They used spruce cone brew and wood sap to wash his leg. When this treatment was repeated often, the person was able to use his leg to work, probably in less than a month.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Chekoa nìhtè — Ts'iwàwòò

Birthing — Spruce boughs

In the past when a person needed any type of bush medicine, people were always ready to help out, especially when a woman was pregnant and having labour pain or a hard time giving birth. She was treated by giving her a bush medicine or putting boiled bush (spruce bough) medicine in a cloth and wrapping it around her waist. This bush medicine was strong and dark in colour. I remember they did this to T'izi's wife and I witnessed it. They kept placing this bush brew around her waist and made her drink it too. By repeating this treatment, she gave birth. I said this, for I have seen it done.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

After the birth of the baby, we drink spruce bough brew, for it helps to heal the pain in our stomach. At times we rested in bed for two weeks and relatives talked about a bad omen or complained about it. We also had our own entrance and path to the tent. Now it's different and I don't know why they treated us this way.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Chekoa nìhtè — Ts'iwàᓂòᓂ

Birthing — Spruce boughs

When a woman is about to give birth and after the child is born, if the placenta has not come out because it's caught on the inside skin, they get a lot of spruce boughs and boil them in salt and water. After it was kind of cool, they soaked a cloth with the brew and put it around her waist often. And they made her drink the brew. This is what my granny told me. It helps loosen the afterbirth.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

After a woman gives birth, she is in pain. In this case they use spruce bough brew. The woman drinks its brew. This makes her feel less pain. It works.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

They say that cocoa is good for a woman's pain after giving birth. They encourage the woman's husband to have cocoa handy. If there is no cocoa, they use spruce bough brew for delivery of the afterbirth and placenta. Once the spruce bough is boiled and cooled off, they encourage the woman to drink it often, even if she feels a bit better. She takes it until the pain is gone.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Usually, they put spruce bough and crowberry inside a thin cloth and tie it. When a woman gives birth she has pain around her waist, and this is what they did. They place the wet cloth around the woman's waist to lessen the pain. In the past, a woman giving birth to her child could get into a poor situation, especially when they travelled or there was no midwife to help. They gave her spruce brew for the pain and to help her rest after the birth.

If the brew didn't work, they put water in a tub, put a very hot stone into it, and steamed the woman by placing a blanket over her. The steam helped her sit up. They did the same in the tent. When the woman sweated, they gave her a towel or cloth to wipe herself with and kept watch over her. As this continued, the woman felt better each day, but she continued to drink more bush juice.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

They say that when the afterbirth hasn't come out yet, they got spruce bough and boiled it. While it was hot, they soaked a cloth and made the woman sit on it to loosen the afterbirth or placenta. They gave her the brew to drink as well, then she passed the afterbirth. After this they made her keep taking the spruce bough potion until she got better.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Chekoa nìhtè — Ts'iwàᓂᓂ

Birthing — Spruce boughs

When a woman didn't feel well after the birth of a child and had back pain or pain around her waist, they brought in some spruce bough and put it in a pail of water. Then they let it boil. Once it was done, they gave her some in a cup to drink, and she kept drinking this juice until the pain went away. They collected more because they lived right among the spruce trees. They heated the boughs and placed them on the back pain, covered with a cloth. They changed the warm bough often. This really helped stop the back pain and the pain in the waist. She suddenly felt fine.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Women talk about spruce boughs among themselves. If you're travelling through deep snow after a child is born, when the woman experiences pain on her side, we take a fair-sized spruce bough. We cut three of them that size, prepare them well, then heat them up over the fire, turning them over and over. This was used only after a child was delivered. They tell the woman, "Hurry-up and squat on it fast. After your insides warm up, that pain will disappear." They used to talk about that a lot.

Helen Rabesca [01/10/91]

Ts'eekeh / Łòts'eeke — Detsj

Coughing / Whooping cough — Spruce gum

When they had whooping cough, they mixed spruce gum brew and drank that. It takes quite a while, about a week, to stop coughing.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Godzeè t'à gohòᓂᓂ — Ts'iwàᓂᓂ

Heart Problems — Spruce boughs

For sharp pain in the chest, they use spruce bough brew. They put them in a pail, add water, and let it boil for some time. The person drinks this often and it makes them feel better, since there was only bush medicine.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Gokwì eyah — Ts'ìwàᑭᑭ

Headache — Spruce boughs

One time we were canoeing at the mouth of Idaà Lake. But we were not capable of working; we were useless. That's when my father started to get a headache. The pain got worse, so they asked for a spiritual person to help him, but there was no cure. Then my grandfather said, "We hardly come around this area. That's why we are strangers in this area." So, we moved back to our destination, travelling all through the night. It was in the early morning light when we arrived at the place we were going. During that day my grandfather said, "What is wrong with my son? He is the only son who does all the work for me, and I depend on him, for he is the oldest one in the family. He has these headaches that don't seem to go away."

My mother boiled a strong tea and after it cooled off, she washed my father's head with it, but he didn't get any better. So, my mother collected spruce bough, put it in the pail with water, and brought it to a boil. Once the bush brew was cooled off, she drained it through a cloth many times. She washed his head twice and did the same thing with his legs. Then she placed a couple of stones in the fire to heal my father. She put the hot stones in the water to steam my father.

When my father was all steamed up, he started to vomit. It was yellow mucus and looked something like fish bladder. After that my mother removed the blanket from my father. He was sweating from the steam, so he wrapped himself with a towel. Then my father said to my mother, "My wife, you tried your best for me, and nothing was helping. But with this spruce bough brew, I finally begin to feel relief from the pain."

The phlegm that came from his mouth looked just like fish bladder. We never heard my father complain about headaches after that.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Ts'ejì k'e gohᑭᑭᑭ — Ts'ìwàᑭᑭ

Respiratory problems — Spruce boughs

In the past when a person was sick, with sharp pain going through the chest so they could hardly breathe, they chop spruce boughs, put them in the tub, add water, and boil it. After it is well boiled, they let it cool off. Or they throw some stones in the fire. When the stones are very hot, they put them in the tub with the spruce bough to make lots of steam.

Ts'ejì k'e gohɔɔqɔ — Ts'iwàɔò

Respiratory problems — Spruce boughs

They covered the tub with a thin cloth and placed it underneath the person. They steamed the person until they got really sweaty, often changing the towel to wipe them with. After sweating, they changed the person's clothes and covered them with a blanket. They heated up a stone and placed it at the end of the feet. With this treatment, the person felt much better the next day. They made this person stay inside for at least a week.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Godaà eyah — Ts'iwàɔò

Sore eyes — Spruce boughs

They used spruce bough for sore eyes, the new ones that are just starting to grow. They gathered that, made the juice, and kept it handy. That was a really strong one.

They used a duck feather, wet it, and opened their eyes wide to put drops of medicine in. The eye hurt; but after they woke up the next day, they didn't feel any pain.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gowà gok'qò — Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì

Mouth Infection — Spruce cones

Mouth infection is treated by spruce cone too. They boil these cones and let it cool off. After that they gargle it in their mouth. People have said that this was a very good medicine. This too had to receive its pay before taking it.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

For an infection in the mouth, spruce tree cone is good. Also, black crowberry roots. When the child's mouth infection is very bad, the child really cries, and there is pus too. And because of that they can't eat. Then they make spruce cone herb juice. They make it very strong and put some in the child's mouth with a spoon or feather. Or they dip a piece of cloth into the herb juice and wipe the inside of the mouth. This gets all the pus out. They put some of the herb juice in the child's mouth even though they are crying.

Gowà gok'qò — Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì

Mouth Infection — Spruce cones

If they did this, the child's mouth got better. That's spruce cone. Whiskey jack is also very good for infection in the mouth. Its big red berries are on the ground. They just mash them and put it in the child's mouth.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Gokwò ek'jì làani — Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì

Skin rash — Spruce cones

They use spruce cone brew for a skin infection. They boiled it until the brew was really strong. When a person had sores on their head, they used spruce cone brew to wash their head. When it got kind of dry, they applied lard on the sores. Since there was no ointment, lard was used for sores, with bush medicine. Otherwise, they used grease taken from animals.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Gok'à eyah — Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì

Sore throat — Spruce cones

Cones from spruce trees are collected and boiled in a pail with water. Once it was well boiled and cooled off, we gargled it in our mouth. This helps to relieve the pain in the throat. They continued to take this cone brew for a month. Slowly, the pain was relieved.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Spruce tree boughs have a tiny cone. They are kind of soft and it is good medicine for a sore throat. It's very good to drink its juice and use it to rub on sores or infections.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

They boil spruce cones really well and the brew looks like tea. That is used as a gargle when you have a sore throat.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Goghòò eya — Detsj

Toothache — Spruce gum

[My late] grandfather used to complain about a headache caused by his toothache, so he removed his tooth with a little knife. He used to say, "Because of my bad tooth, I get this headache." They also tried spruce gum for a toothache. They boiled the gum in a pot with water. Once it boiled well, they cool it and gargle, and it does help.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Gokayi eyits'o gokaà — Detsj

Wounds and sores — Spruce gum

Even gum has all kinds of names, a soft spruce gum that drains down from the tree, yellowish in colour. And there is another chewing gum that they called dzèwà; that too was collected. As for the soft spruce gum, my late Granny Modzàni said, "We usually put two cups of water in a tin can full of soft spruce gum and bring it to a boil. While it's boiling it turns out like a creamy milk. We didn't really have to add anything. Maybe if they want to add salt, they drink it like that."

Just as if you were drinking tea, that's how they drink this soft spruce gum brew that looks like creamy milk. They heat the leftover gum in a pan and save it in a little jar. "Use this as ointment. When you have a scab, you apply this on it," my late granny said. You do the same when you get an infection on your body.

My late granny saved this sticky gum for sores inside a baking powder can that they used to get in the store. When we travelled to the bush, she carried this gum inside her bag; I've witnessed it. Even when Jean Beaulieu had a scab right over here (hand gesture) they applied this soft spruce gum to it and covered it with a birch layer. Suddenly it healed. Whenever we had sores, we used this as ointment.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

Gokayi eyits'o gokaà — Ts'ik'a

Wounds and sores — Spruce inside layer

The spruce tree inside layer is also good for sores. When a person cuts their hand or feet, we chew that layer and place it on our cut.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Diwe – Dowe | Tamarack**Godoò at'ᑭᑭ****Bleeding**

When a person had a gun accident, either on their shoulder blade or finger, and began losing a lot of blood, they get enough spruce gum to place on the wound. Or they get tamarack layer, chew it to make it soft, and place that on the wound. Or they use eehkwoo to stop the bleeding by placing it on the wound, for it does help.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Gokwò whet'ee**Burns**

They collect the inside layer of tamarack for a burn. After washing the burn, they place the tamarack layer on it. They do the same thing for a burn from boiling or hot water. If the skin peels, that's when they use tamarack layer.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

Ekw'qò nàetòq**Broken bones**

At that time of no doctors, when they fixed a broken arm or leg, the first thing they did was wrap it with something before they took the person home. They peeled off a birch layer and wrapped it around the leg. Once they got home, they got bush medicine, like a tamarack layer. They chewed on that tamarack layer and placed it on their leg. Every day they changed the dressing. That helps to heal the wound quickly and also helps stop any bleeding.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

Whehts'òò**Boil**

Beehive is very good for swelling (a boil); this is what people used to say. If that failed, they tried bear tail. Most people burn a bear tail and save the ashes. When a person had swelling, they applied the ashes on the skin. When the pus reached the surface of the skin, the infection opened up.

Whehts'òò

Boil

Or they sliced Sunlight soap very thin and placed that on the sore. Overnight, it opens up the infection. The remaining pus and boil are cleaned out with a dry twig. They chewed tamarack layer to place on the infection and it heals up in no time. They used this tamarack layer for about four to five days, applying it on the sores twice a day (morning and night). The dressing was changed very often, and the pus was all collected by the tamarack. By the 10th day it was back to normal.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

That tamarack, long ago people always talked about it, when there were no doctors in our community. At that time my son Richard had a big boil on his skin. And the nurses said he was to fly out to Rae tomorrow. So, I went to get tamarack that was full of sap, and I peeled it. I boiled it first and then I chewed it. The boil was right on his neck, so I placed that tamarack there. During the night he woke up and said, "Mother, what is this dripping on me?" It was the pus, with blood draining from the infection. From then on, we used that tamarack on him, and he didn't take off the next day. Ever since that day, that boil he had never returned.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

If a person got a boil and it got infected, they used pilot biscuits. We chew some of the biscuit, add butter and salt, then place that on the infection and it sucks out the clot. We keep applying this on their skin. Their skin becomes very tender, and they poke it with an awl or needle so all the pus drains out. When the boil is big and leaves a hole, they thread sinew through the hole. Once the clot catches the sinew, they pull it out very slowly. And the person never has a boil again, this is what has been said.

After that they use tamarack layer. They boil it, and when it cools, they chew it and place it on the infection. Even if the infection is deep down in the skin, it heals with this tamarack layer in no time. This tamarack is the best medicine, and people also used it when they had a skin disease. Nowadays, people don't seem to care much about using tamarack layer, but it heals the infection even if the wound is big.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Hotì ts'edaa

Good health

Tamarack is very good for a chest cold, coughing, and sore throat. It is also good to boil it and use the juice to clean infections. You can chew it like spruce gum and swallow its juice. A layer of tamarack can also be placed on a boil.

Elder and date unknown

When the plants start to grow in the early summer, it's a very good time to collect tamarack for juice, if you want to. For tamarack that just has grown, you first need to dig out the dirt around the plant and then pull the root. Then you place your offering, like matches, tobacco, or shells of any kind. Then we take it home, prepare it well, and boil it to make a brew. If we took two, we have to use the first one we took first, because it received the offering first. Then we scrape the top off until it's really clean, chop it into chunks, and put them in a pail to boil. We keep the second one.

But the first one that we took, it's really good for healing. Lots of people have used this when they were coughing a lot and it really helps them stop. It's good for any kind of sickness, people with sore throat, mouth infections, and other areas where there are sores. This tamarack has almost cured all the diseases.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Got'ò }ghàà

Mastitis

Before Rayrock Mine opened and we moved there, my breast got infected. There were no doctors and no modern medicine, not even ointment for it. Because of my breast infection, this old woman, Monique, came to me. "My grandchild, you can't always change your children and carry them to the swing, for you have an infected breast." This is what she said. "There should be someone in this village who knows about a boil." And later Bernadette's mother and some other women came over to our place to check my breast. They told me that my breast was starting to get a boil, that the surface was still kind of hard. Once it got tender, they will place something on it, they told me. "In the meantime, use something to hold your breast up. And don't use your arm on that side too much. Use your other arm to change your child, and the father can place the child in the swing for you." My breast was getting worse and I couldn't take it anymore.

They continued checking my breast. When the old lady came to check on my breast it was big and very painful. So, she said she was going to get the other

Got'ò]ghàà

Mastitis

women and she also went to see Bernadette's mother. They came in to check my breast and it was getting tender.

"So now we will plead to the tamarack. Any plant that has sap, we need to plead to it before using it," she said. "We need something from a tree with sap. We don't chop it down with an axe. While the tree stands, and at every stem, we have to plead to it. That is how it is supposed to be. When we have difficulty, we need to plead. Only after pleading to it will we start collecting them." This old lady said, "We are going to collect tamarack for her." They left and returned by evening with tamarack. The old lady peeled the top part of the tamarack, cut out a piece of the layer, and placed that on the sore. They wrapped a cloth around my neck and under my arm to hold my breast up like this (shows how they wrapped her breast). The infection was right under the breast, that was why it was so painful.

Then she said, "My grandchild, when you get a swollen breast it's just like a pain in the heart. And when its ready to open, it will show, for you will feel itchiness. When this happens, let us know." Then they placed a tamarack layer on my sore. "On the second night and by the third day, you will feel like itchy," she said. "And that's the sign that the boil will break open soon." This is what the old lady said to me. "So just watch for that," she said. And about the third and the fourth day, the itchiness got worse.

This old lady, Monique, had her own tent but she always came around for a visit and to check on me. We had our own tent too. "Granny," I said to her, "I'm really in pain because of my breast. It feels like something is about to come out and it's real itchy too."

"Well, then I will tell the other old women," she said. She went out and came back in again with the other women. They checked my breast and said it was very tender and ready to break open. As they touched the infected area there was a little bit of pus. The old woman placed a moss pad on a mason jar top right under my breast. As she slowly removed the tamarack layer from my breast, the mucus, with blood and pus, started to pour out. Only when it was all gone did I feel relief. After I felt the emptiness in my breast, I felt much better. "Even though all the mucus with pus has poured out, it's not enough," said the old woman. "The boil is still there yet," she said.

"A dry twig from the tree easily catches the boil," the old woman said. There were two little dry twigs to use, in case they needed a second one. So, she placed

Got'ò }ghàà

Mastitis

the little dry twig right on my wound and kept twisting it inside until it got caught on the thread of the boil. That is how she removed the whole boil. It just looked like a muscle wound. She put it on the cloth with the mucus, blood and pus stain, and tied it up. She told the others to put lots of wood in the stove. As the fire started, she had the cloth ready to throw it in the fire. Before she threw this cloth in the fire, she said this, "She has suffered long enough with this and may it never return to her again. For this, I'm throwing it in the fire to be burned." To this day, nothing like that has ever returned.

Elizabeth Mantla [09/10/92]

Tamarack is very good for chest cold, coughing, and sore throat. It is also good to boil it and use the juice to clean infection. You can chew it like spruce gum and swallow its juice. A layer of tamarack can be placed on a boil and the next day it will break open. It often collects all the pus.

About two weeks after my son was born, my late husband said, "We will go hunting for caribou." I had an infection on my breast but I went along, with my two little ones. The pain was getting worse but I didn't want to complain. I worked with it and we stayed on the land for almost a month and a half. My husband went to Rae with the meat. I don't think I ate as much food as I liked to; the infection was getting very painful. Sunday came and we prayed at an elder's place. We ate together and I went back to our tent. Our oldest daughter was about three years old, and my son was only weeks old. Since I had no mirror, I took a tin can cover to see where my infection was.

First thing, I took a scarf and tied it around my chest, above and beneath the sore. Then I took a dry twig and placed it right where I saw something white, and twisted it. I guess the pus stuck to the dry twig. I pulled the pus out and couldn't do it a second time. But I felt a little less pain and had a small bit of meat and bannock with tea. I went to sleep after I fed my baby.

Early on Monday morning my husband came back and he asked, "What's wrong with you? You look so pale." I told him about the infection on my breast. He said, "I will get you tamarack," and he did after he slept. He said, "Peel the top off, take the layer and chew on it until it gets really soft, and place that on the sore." I did that and continued until all the pus was gone. After that I used a birch fungus to heal the wound. It sure worked well and I am fine to this day.

Marie A. Rabesca [05/26/2022]

Got'ò ᑭghàà

Mastitis

When a woman had a breast infection, this is what they did. It was way out in the bush and there was no modern medicine, even for our sores. Tamarack has all kinds of bush medicine, so they make that. With that potion, they washed her breast infection. When there was pus, they chewed tamarack bark and placed it on the infection. This takes all the pus out.

But for some women, it was very painful when they got a boil on their breast. That is what I saw. When a woman had a boil on her breast it was hard as a rock. When it was like that, they placed tamarack bark on it. If it didn't break open the boil, then someone got a needle or an awl. They sharpened the awl with a file and then they burned it. With this they broke the boil open. Then all the pus and blood came out. It's that tamarack bark that healed the wound. That's how I know it; I raised my children with breast milk, and this used to happen to my breast. When I had an infection, I used that tamarack layer, and the infection healed. That's how it was. A tamarack layer was used for all kinds of sickness.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Hok'ets'òà eyah

Pain relief

The only kind of treatment they had for pain relief was tamarack brew, I guess. There was no other thing besides this.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Gobò gohòᑭᑭ

Stomach problems

Many people today get stomach infections. It's the food that causes the sickness. People who have stomach problems collect birch sap and tamarack. Tamarack is very good medicine. Before chopping down the tamarack you have to make sure it's not too dry. A small fresh tamarack is the best. It has to be chopped with its roots, but you have to give your offering before chopping it and say these words, "I'm collecting you so that you will be a medicine for my sickness and cure me of it." Then we offer some tobacco or any other kind of offering right in the place of the tamarack. When we are very sick this tamarack cures us. It has juice that is really sticky and it is very good medicine for all types of disease.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/10/93]

Gobò gohòɔɔ

Stomach problems

Only tamarack has lots of good medicine. Tamarack is good when we have a stomach infection and we drink only its brew. When we only drink that as water, the pain goes away. And tamarack is just like gum too.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

When we have infection in our stomach, we use tamarack brew.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gokayi eyits'o gokaà

Wounds and sores

Ever since I was young, I haven't seen or heard about someone performing surgery. None at all, absolutely none. But I'd like to say one thing.

One time I saw my father get hit sharply by a stick in a clear meadow. Slivers about one finger long went inside his thigh. My late aunt Mazini put water over the fire to get it hot. She told my father to stretch out his leg so she could wash out the blood. The blood drained out so much, but my aunt kept on washing his thigh with warm water.

Somehow my late uncle Homini must have collected tamarack, because he brought back one tamarack tree. He placed it over the fire to thaw it and to peel it. And then he started to chew the tamarack layer.

It was my late aunt who placed tamarack on the cloth. Every piece that was chewed was placed on the cloth. Since they were alone, they cut an animal skin off, which looked like a tissue. They covered the injuries with it. No matter how tough he was, he cried and screamed. They placed this tamarack layer on his wound and wrapped it with a cloth.

The very next day my mother went in tears to see my father-in-law Firmie Pomie and told him this: "My husband is badly in pain and his sores are all swollen; he hasn't slept at all." By late evening Firmie performed his spiritual power on my father. He told my father to use only this bush brew. After using only tamarack layer, all the slivers, pus, and blood drained out. He recovered in less than a week.

Alexis Flunkie [29/04/93]

Gokayi eyits'o gokaà

Wounds and sores

When people cut their feet or hands, they only used tamarack layer. They placed the tamarack layer on their cut. At that time, we had no idea what bandages were. We only used old rugs to bandage our sores.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

At one time my mother's hand got infected and there was nothing we could do for her. For almost a whole year she had a sore on her hand. But we got a tamarack, took off its bark and boiled the layer. Once it became very soft, we chewed it to make it smooth, and placed it on my mother's hand. We spread it all over her hand and wrapped it with a clean cloth. We had mixed tamarack and spruce cone together. We used this brew to wash her hand very often and kept changing the dressing. That's why her hand got better in two weeks' time. They have said that tamarack is very good medicine; and this stuff was very good to heal up the sores on the hand.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Here, people sometimes travel around and are in a hurry, just rushing around. Sometimes they don't know if they left a bullet in their gun and they grab it by the barrel. That's how they accidentally shoot their hands.

When there's a spiritual person available, he cleans the wound. As he cleans the wound, others collect some tamarack. They boil the tamarack first. They collect only its fat (inside layer). With its broth they wash the wound. After washing it, they chew the tamarack fat until it gets really soft, then place it on his wound. And the wound heals like that. There is nothing left, nothing, not even a scar; none at all. That is how they healed each other a long time ago.

When a person is in too much pain to help himself, like if he has a sliver in his body, the people all helped him take it all out. After that they use only tamarack as medicine for the wound. They get tamarack, put it in a pail on top of the stove, and let it boil for a while. Once it is done, they take it down and pour it into a basin. With the broth they wash the wound. That helps numb the wound too. They even used snow for that. They put some snow in a cloth and place it on the wound. Once they freeze the wound, the person doesn't feel any pain and they take all the slivers out. That's what they used to do. But a long time ago our family never travelled with other people.

Rosalie Zoe [01/03/93]

Gokayi eyits'o gokaà

Wounds and sores

In the past when a person had a cut or a scab they applied this tamarack layer, wrapping it well even during the cold winter. Once when I was young, I was chopping wood. All of a sudden, I chopped my big leg by accident. At first, I was treated with chewing tobacco, then with a tamarack layer. I walked around with this tamarack layer on my leg and then it started to heal.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

In those days, when some people cut their feet with an axe, there was no modern medicine. So, they used tamarack. I remember they used to chew the inside layer of a tamarack and place it on the wound. They did that when someone cut their hands too. In those days people used an axe a lot and sometimes cut their hands too. I remember they used to say that only tamarack can heal the wound fast. They used to chew tamarack and place it on the wound.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

That tamarack layer, he removed the peel and chewed this layer. They had to pay the plant before collecting them. He put lard or grease around the cut, covered the wound with a tamarack layer, and wrapped it well with a cloth. If they left this dressing on for a week, it healed up well. They used only this tamarack layer because there was no modern medicine. In a week's time the skin was back to normal again.

Every day the dressing was changed because the tamarack layer gets kind of dry. The skin is warm and you can't keep this dressing on for the whole day. It has to be changed twice a day. It really heals the wound quickly and that is the best medicine that I know of.

Just recently, a young boy trapped with me. He was doing something when all of a sudden, he chopped his foot with the axe. We didn't know what to do. Since there was no bandage or medicine, I went out to look for tamarack. As soon as I found it, I brought it back to him. I peeled off the top. I chewed the tamarack layer until it got soft, placed that on the cut and wrapped it with a cloth. We continued with this treatment and by the third day it got well.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

My parents were living with us on the land. One day my dad went hunting and my brother went along with him. They were gone almost the whole day. Just before night came, they came back. My brother couldn't walk well so I rushed toward him and asked what was wrong. He couldn't say much. I looked down at

Gokayi eyits'o gokaà

Wounds and sores

his feet and there was so much blood. I asked him what happened and he said he was chopping and cut his foot with an axe. Because we had meat I rushed into the tent and sliced up fresh meat, which I placed on his foot. Then he walked to the tent with me.

My father brought in the meat. My mother cut it up and put a thin piece of meat on the open cuts. Besides this, my mother used tamarack juice to wash out the blood and clean the cuts. Then she put a tamarack layer on the cuts so they healed up quickly. They kept doing this every day, smearing the cuts with tamarack juice and putting on a tamarack layer. It is good medicine. Scabs began to show around the cuts, but we continued to wash and clean the sores using the juice. In two weeks, he began to walk on his feet in a normal way.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Long ago the old timers used to use bush medicine only. They used to get medicine from trees, like the tamarack tree. They collected lots of tamarack layer. They chewed the inside layer and placed it on their wound. That helps stop the bleeding and heal their wound fast.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

That elder had sores all over his body. Grandmother said, "This happened when we were young girls. We all chewed on tamarack layer after it was boiled, and placed it on that person's sores. This took all the pus out. After that, we changed it again. We even washed him with that same herb juice. That tamarack is good medicine."

Tamarack is good medicine for anything. That was how they used to talk about it. As far as I can remember, that's the only thing they used. When a person had a sore that's the only thing they used. Anywhere we lived in the bush, no matter how far it was to get tamarack, we went out and chopped one and brought it back here, to camp. Then they let it thaw out and scraped off the peel. The inside part is white; they boiled and then chewed it. Then they placed it on that person's sores. It even draws the pus out and heals the person's sores. Of all the trees, that's the best tree.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Gokayi eyits'o gokaà

Wounds and sores

If you chopped your feet with an axe by accident, they used this tamarack layer. They chewed it until it was soft and really smooth, and placed that on the cut. It sucks all the infection out, the pus and blood that is bad. They chewed some more to change the dressing. They changed the dressing twice a day so it healed quickly.

Sap from the inside wood is good for cuts as well. When you split the wood, you find sap in it. That's the very best, I'm telling you. That's why I collect them when one of my sons or grandchildren get a cut. I place this wood sap on their cut and in two days it heals. My sister said this wood sap is very good medicine.

When my late father was just a young man, he cut his leg very badly, by accident. It was right here (hand gesture). He chopped his bone too. The spiritual person was the only one who could take all the pieces of bone from the deep cuts. After that he put wood sap or tamarack on the cut.

These medicine men, of course they're very good for fixing up the bone. They pour water over the cuts so all the little pieces that were inside can drain out. Then after it's all clean inside, they put a tamarack layer on the cut and keep doing this often, on and on. To close the wound, they use wood sap because this is very good medicine.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

This diwe used to be great medicine. That's what it was and that's what they used to say. It was used when a man had a huge sore, and when it was infected. Then we gather lots of tamarack, put it in a birch-bark basket, sew it up, and keep it like that. Or maybe we had a wound on our foot or pus in our leg. All these things, all of them, we put this tamarack on them. They told one another to keep a quantity of that medicine. They scraped away the outer bark and kept the inner bark. They threw the outer bark away. They kept a certain type of birch basket for that and kept it sewed up. They also told one another how certain types of trees have medicine value.

Helen Rabesca [01/10/91]

They used to cut down tamarack trees about this size (hand gesture). They removed the outer bark and used the white inner bark. This they boiled in a pot. For instance, when someone cut their foot in the past, there was no doctor or modern medicine available to treat the wound. After the bark boils, you chew it for a while and then place it on the wound. After an hour you don't feel pain from

Gokayi eyits'o gokaà

Wounds and sores

the wound. Even if you had cut your foot, or had a large wound about this size, the wound heals within a week using this medicine. This was good medicine for healing wounds and sores. People also drank the tamarack bark juice for fever, colds, and flu.

Alexis Flunkie [09/10/91]

Tehgqò - tèeht'aà | Lily Pad

Gowà gok'qò

Mouth infection

Tehgqò is really good for mouth infections and for a sore throat. When you take two cups of the juice the sore slows down.

Birch bark has a white upper part with these catkins. Its juice is very good too. Once it's boiled it tastes like milk; the juice is like thick, creamy milk. They use this to wash the infection or the sore.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Godaà eyah

Sore eyes

This water plant tehgqò is very good for a sore eye. This is what has been said before.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Gokwò ek'jì làani

Skin rash

Only bush brew was used. It could be made from pine tree or tehgqò. They use this bush brew for washing the skin. After that they use other bush brews to wash chapped or itchy skin.

Annie Simpson [13/10/92]

Gokwò ek'jì làani

Skin rash

Sometimes when a person got scabies on the body and it was really bad, they treated this person with tehgòò. This is very good for all kinds of diseases, and for skin infections.

It's like when the doctor gives you medication, it's almost the same. Some people get skin infections and don't wash their sores well until they bleed. Then the infection won't heal fast. But if they do wash their sores well, the infection heals fast. After removing the scab and using the bush brew, it just gets kind of dry.

How long it lasts depends on how well the person gets treatment for the infection. Even today, some people don't like to clean the sores of others. If they don't wash and clean their sores, then they don't heal fast. But for those who wash the sores and let it bleed, that heals their infection fast. That's how it is.

If people have tried the bush brew and it didn't work on them, they ask a person with a spiritual power for help. That's what they do.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

The water plant with a short leaf has a tiny cone that is called tehgòò. That too is very good. My daughter Mary Jane's head was covered with sores. Her father was still alive when this happened. He said, "My daughter's hair is long and I don't want to cut her hair." So, I continued to wash her hair twice a day with spruce cone and crowberry brew. But the infection didn't go away. It was snowing outside but I told him, "We should try tehgòò. There are some of these in the little pond not too far away. If you come to a trail, turn to your left. And when you come among the birch trees, go down to the clear area. That's the good place to find them."

So, he went out, filled the packsack, and came back with it. I chopped the cones into little pieces, put them in a pail, and added water. Then I let it boil all day to make its brew, then took it down from the stove to let it cool off. I was pregnant at that time and my husband told me that I should watch myself, not to get kicked by my daughter when we washed her head; and he was helping me. She was crying her heart out as we washed her head. Her head was covered with pus and blood when we were washing her hair in the big dish. When she was crying, I just couldn't take it anymore and I cried for her. I pitied my daughter; we didn't give her a licking but she was really crying her heart out. I told my husband that I just couldn't stand the sound of her crying. And he said to me, "Let her cry, it's okay."

Gokwò ek'jì làani

Skin rash

So, I continued to wash her hair with tehgoò brew twice a day. Less than a week later, my daughter's head was all healed. This tehgoò is very good indeed.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Ts'et'ii | Tobacco

Godziìhk'w'qò eya

Earache

Residue from smoking pipe tobacco is also good for a sore ear. At that time, they used to smoke. They put some pipe residue on our ears, and we got better with that.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gokayì eyìts'ò gokaà

Wounds and sores

A long time in the past, people were smart in using their spiritual power. Some who took tobacco applied it on the person's skin. When a person chopped their foot badly, a person with spiritual power applied tobacco if he thought it will heal the person.

Whenever the dressing needed changing, he (Jean Mackenzie) removed all the scabs, and it seemed like only chewing tobacco liquid remained in the wound. Then he placed the tamarack layer and wrapped it himself. Jean said to Johnny, "We'll leave this dressing on as long as you don't feel the pain and it will heal quickly this way." Johnny told Jean not to bother about the dressing. And he told the old couple, even though his foot got better, he can't use snowshoes yet. He said this to them just a few days before they moved out to their destination.

Even when I cut my finger one time. My late grandfather put tobacco liquid and a tamarack layer on the cut and then wrapped it very well. A couple days later it healed back to normal.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

Gokayi eyits'o gokaà

Wounds and sores

If there was a person with ᑭ'qò, that person fixed the wound. They used something like tobacco to fix the wound. Then the wound got better fast. Or else they used tamarack.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Godzeè t'à gohòᑭᑭ

Heart problems

When we had sharp chest pain, they boil pipe tobacco too. When they boiled it, they smeared it on themselves.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

ᑭ'adziì - ᑭ'ajì | Whiskey Jack Berry - Bearberry

Gowà gok'qò

Mouth infection

When a child gets a mouth infection, they use whiskey jack berries too, and they always save them. They say the whiskey jack berries are good. In the fall, when we go berry picking, our parents tell us to pick whiskey jack berries too. This berry juice is also good for a little baby with sore gums or sore throat. They give the baby some berry juice with a teaspoon for the sore. They said this juice cures it in no time.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Whiskey jack berry is very good for mouth infections. One time my grandchild had a mouth infection. We treated her with all types of bush medicine, like spruce bough and crowberry, but nothing seemed to cure it. So, I told them to search around for whiskey jack berry. They usually are found by birch trees. They collected about half a bag of whiskey jack berries and brought them in. I told her mother, "Don't pay attention to her crying, just go ahead and apply all this stuff in her mouth." The mother applied the juice of the berry in her daughter's mouth. And the very next day she was okay. We always used to have these berries on hand before. But when there is lots of snow it's hard to find them.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [07/10/92]

Gowà gok'qò

Mouth infection

That kind (whiskey jack berry) is good too. We don't have to make its brew; we just squish them and apply it all inside the child's mouth.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Whiskey jack is very good for infection in the mouth. Its big red berries are on the ground. They just mash them and put them in the child's mouth.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Ts'ejì k'e gohɔɔqɔ

Respiratory problems

Whiskey jack berries are also good for shortness of breath. But I don't think people eat them anymore. They are soft like gum.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Godaà eyah

Sore eyes

They even picked whiskey jack berries as well. Since the whiskey jack berry is soft, my late granny Modzàni collected them in a little pail and they crush easily. Once they're crushed, it tastes like juice for it is very strong and red. She collected and saved them. It is very good when a person has bad eyesight. Even for sore eyes, she put a few drops in the person's eye. My late granny had a very sore reddish eye. She squeezed the whiskey jack berry juice into a little spoon and dipped it in both eyes. That's how I saw her doing it.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

Ts'arikhwòò | Frog legs

Gok'à eyah

Sore throat

If a person had a chest pain and their throat felt kind of dry, they tried ts'arikhwòò. They said to us, "Chew this and swallow its sap, because your throat is dry and hurts. This will relieve the throat." In the past people always kept this.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

Well, that eehkwoo is good for our sore throat. And ts'arikhwòò is a different plant. That too they pull it out with its roots. And once they bring them back home, they rinse it with water and take the dirt out. And then tie them all together and hang them to dry. This is what they do, and they keep them for a long time. And when someone says they have a sore throat, they give some to each other. They just chew it in their mouth and swallow its sap. This takes away the pain.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

K'ì | Birch

Gonikw'òò eyah — K'ì wet'ì

Back pain — Birch bark

When we have back pain, we drink that brew. It's really good because it's very strong. It kind of burns our mouth and it hurts. But we take one cup of brew, add a little bit of sugar, and drink it down real fast. It makes our back feel hot and numb. That's what it does, so I think that is the best.

My son Freddy had a real bad back pain. I used that brew on him and now he is healthy. I told him that he had to take it for two months. I filled the jar with that brew and he said to me, "Mother, the brew is too strong for me." But I told him that it was okay, just add a little sugar, drink it, and you'll feel better. So, he drank the brew and finished one jar in two months. Then he had no problems, and he did his chores. Once in a while he came around and said, "Mother, I feel my back pain again. And if there is some of that brew, I'll drink some." But I haven't collected any for a while now. That is the best, that bush brew is the best. That was a bush medicine that the old timers depended on.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gokwòq ta eyah — K'ì wet'ì

Aches and pains — Birch bark

When our arm got a sudden pain, we got a birch bark peel, then heated it up. When you crack your leg or arm you wrap the birch bark on the pain area, then tie it on. That's how we worked on it. Then later, when the sore started to heal, we'd go and look for spruce gum — spruce gum that looks like yellow and liquid, that is the kind we used to put on all our sores. It's just like a bandage that holds the skin together, and just like a medicine as well.

Celine Eyakfwo [04/10/91]

Godoò at'ɔ — K'ì t'èhtè

Bleeding — Birch fungus

Long ago people didn't know much about the animal parts, but if a person was bleeding, they used k'ì t'èhtè (birch fungus) or t'èhtè dek'ò (red fungus). They are very good when a person bleeds.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

This brown fungus, it's from a birch tree. We just chop it and it's yellowish. That is good for when a person is bleeding from the nose or mouth. They make the person drink the herb juice.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Whehts'òo — K'ik'a

Boil — Birch inside layer

When someone has a boil, it was said birch layer ashes are good too. Beehive is also good, they said. If we smear beehive on the boil, this breaks it open. Then all the pus comes out. They smear it on themselves. They burn the beehive first, then they smear the ashes on themselves. It's the same with the birch layer. They burn it and then they smear the ashes on themselves.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Dehko — K'ik'a

Chest cold — Birch inside layer

Juniper berries are also good for a chest cold. And the birch layer is good too. When we collect this birch layer, first we scrape off the peel; then we get the inside layer. That too is good for a chest cold.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Kw'ahnᑭ xàgohdee — K'ì xàdaasee

Bee sting — Birch sapling

When we get a bee sting and it gets swollen, we use a newly growing birch tree when it is greenish, this green trembling tree. They used the peel, chewed it, and smeared it on the swelling. It was said that when they smeared it on the swelling, the swelling went away.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Ekw'qò nàetòᑭ — K'ì wet'ìi

Broken bones — Birch bark

If anyone broke a bone, their relative went to see a person with ᑭ'qò and pleaded with him until he did something to help. The gifted person rubbed tobacco over the broken bone, used birch bark to cover his leg, and wrapped it well with cloth. The person had to keep their leg straight and be careful. They used spruce cone brew and wood sap to wash his leg if it wasn't too seriously broken. By the 10th or 20th day this person walked normally again.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

At the time of no doctors, when they fixed a broken arm or leg, the first thing they did was wrap it with something before taking the person home. They peeled off a birch layer and wrapped it around their leg. Once they got home, they got bush medicine, like tamarack layer. They chewed on that tamarack layer and placed it on the leg. Every day they changed the dressing. That helps to heal the wound fast, and helps stop the bleeding.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

This happened to my granny Modzàni once. She was mushing her dogs and suddenly fell off the sled. The dogs dragged her with the rope wrapped around her wrist. That was how she ruptured her wrist. We didn't know what to do for

Ekw'qò nàetòq — K'ì wet'ì

Broken bones — Birch bark

her. So, we peeled off these birch trees, placed it around her wrist, and tied it real tight. It was said that helps to heal the broken bone real fast. This story was told by my late granny K'etètą.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

When a person had a broken bone, they numb his legs with a spiritual person's help so he doesn't feel the pain. The spiritual person makes the broken bone grow back together with his power. That is what they used to do. Then they used birch bark to wrap the bone and left it wrapped like that until the broken bone healed. The birch bark helped to heal the wound fast.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

They used birch bark peel as a bandage for a broken bone. The bark is also a medicine, it helps to relieve the pain. The bone heals back to normal. Since there was no doctor, they used this bark peel as a bandage. They didn't take it off until the bone was cured.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Gokwò whet'ee — K'ì wet'ì

Body burns — Birch bark

When a child gets burned with hot water, my mother said this once, they got birch inside layer. The inside layer feels like salt when they rub it. She said, "We peel it and we collect the inside layer. We boil it for a long time. Its brew gets really strong and it looks stronger than tea. If we smear it on the child's body about twice, then the burn goes away. That is the best bush brew."

This was what my mother said when she told us stories. "That heals a person's wound fast," she said. "We wash the person's wound with this brew only. That helps the scab to come off easily, and you can see the new skin growing. That is the best medicine." That's what my late mother said.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Ts'eekeh — K'ik'a

Coughing — Birch inside layer

Victor told me one time when I was really whooping, coughing day and night, that I was coughing too much. And I told him, "I've tried bush brew but it's still the same." He said that he'd get some birch for me. So, he went out and came back with a big pack full. He peeled it first and collected the inside part for me. Then he told me to break it into small pieces, put them into a big pail of water and when it's boiled, drink its brew. I made the brew really strong; it was just red and I could feel it burn my mouth when I drank it. But they told me to keep drinking that brew, so I kept drinking it. After two weeks I stopped coughing. Ever since I stopped coughing, I never coughed again and two years have passed now.

I drink that brew because I think that it is the best of all the bush brews. When I go into the bush, I collect spruce tree layer and birch inner layer. They said they were the best, and that's what my uncle Victor said. I had tried all kinds of bush brew, but when I tried birch layer that's when I stopped coughing.

It was said that we should never chop a birch tree on a Sunday. That's what was said and lots of people know about it. It was said that its medicine was created by God. I've mentioned that there's lots of good bush brew, but I think that this birch brew is the best.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Chekoa nìhtè — K'ì xàgeehxa

Birthing — Birch brew

When a woman was pregnant, and just had her baby and got a bad cold, they chopped juniper into small pieces and put them into an old bowl with water. Then they put hot rocks in it to boil. They put it under the woman and put a blanket over her; that's how they steamed a person until the afterbirth was born. After that, they let her take tamarack brew or another kind of bush brew.

They made birch brew for this woman, because she had stomach pain after her baby was born. They made her keep taking that until she got better. But this woman stayed in bed for about two weeks. I don't mean to say we just get up and start walking right after the baby is born.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Godzeè t'à gohòɔqɔ — K'ɪ t'èhtè

Heart problems — Birch fungus

If a person had a heart problem, since there was no modern medicine, they used a brownish fungus from a birch. They boiled this in a pail and drank the brew once it cooled off. This is very good for heart and breathing problems. Once this fungus brew comes to a boil, the person with a heart problem is treated and gets well again.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Ts'ejì k'e gohòɔqɔ — K'itì

Respiratory problems — Birch sap

For that problem (trouble breathing), birch sap is good for it.

Joe Champlain [07/10/92]

Gowà gok'qò — K'ɪ wet'ì

Mouth infection — Birch bark

Tehgqò is really good for mouth infections and for a sore throat. When you take two cups of the juice the sore slows down.

Birch bark has a white upper part with these catkins. Its juice is very good too; once it's been boiled it tastes like milk. The juice is like thick, creamy milk. They used this to wash the infection or the sore.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Gobò gohòɔqɔ — K'ɪ t'èhtè

Stomach problems — Birch fungus

Birch fungus is also good for a person who has a big stomach (too much gas), like Alexis. There is some birch in this area that I have seen. If we need to save them, we do. We also make juice out of it. We just drink this very often, then our stomach goes back to its normal shape.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Gonii eyah — K'ik'a

Waist pain — Birch inside layer

Birch layer brew is good for when a woman has a serious sickness. When we have pain in our waist, this brew helps her get better.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Dahba | Wild Roses

Gokwòq ta eyah

Aches and pains

Thorn branches are good for just about anything, for anything if our body that is sore and in pain. Just like when doctors give us medicine, they often ask us, where is the pain? It's just like that. It's good for any pain within our body. That's how it is.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Dets'eèhdi

Hunger

They used to boil rose hips too, and they ate them. They say it helped when they had no meat. When they ate boiled rose hips, they didn't feel hunger.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Gowà gok'qò / Ts'ejì k'e gohɔɔqɔq /
Gobò gohòqɔqMouth infection / Respiratory
problems / Stomach problems

Gooseberry stem and gooseberries are good for mouth infections and sore stomachs. We drink its juice (brew). People said this was a good medicine that has been discovered. This is also good for people who are short of breath. That's why people like to collect gooseberry stem.

They often use this medicine with rosehips, which also work on people with infections. We talk to the plant, just like we talk to other people, then we collect them.

Gowà gok'qò / Ts'ejì k'e gohɔɔqɔ /
Gobò gohɔɔqɔ

Mouth infection / Respiratory
problems / Stomach problems

I use rosehips and gooseberry stem at times. I rinse them well with water, cut them up, and bring them to a boil in water. Then I let it stand for a while and drink the juice. It helps with my coughing too. I haven't coughed since my sister passed away last year; I used it so much. It's the best medicine that I know of.

Celine Eyakfwo [13/10/92]

Godaà eyah

Sore eyes

These red things look like red flowers, they grow on rosehips. When we make wild rose brew, we put a little drop in our eyes and this helps our eyes.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

My mother said that these wild roses are good when a person's eyes are getting white. We made this wild rose herb juice and put it in their eyes. Then that person's eyes got better.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Detsɔti | Wood Sap

Ekw'qò nàetòq

Broken bones

If anyone broke a bone, their relative went to see a person with ɔk'qò and pleaded with him until he did something to help. The gifted person rubs tobacco over the broken bone, uses birch bark to cover his leg, and wraps it well with cloth. The person had to keep their leg straight and be careful. They use spruce cone brew and wood sap to wash his leg if it wasn't too seriously broken. By the 10th or 20th day this person walks normally again.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Gokayi eyìts'ò gokaà

Wounds and sores

It's very true, wood sap is good medicine and closes a cut quickly. People save this as they travel in the bush. When someone cuts their skin by accident, they apply this sap to the cut and tie it with something. In a couple of days, it is back to normal again. It's very good for sores too.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

Sap from the inside wood is good for cuts as well. When you split the wood, you find sap in it. That is the very best, I'm telling you. That is why I collect them when one of my sons or grandchildren gets a cut. I place this wood sap on their cut and in two days it heals. My sister said this wood sap is very good medicine.

When my late father was just a young man, he cut his leg very badly, by accident. It was right here (hand gesture). He chopped his bone too. The spiritual person was the only one who could take all the pieces of bone from the deep cuts. After that he put wood sap or tamarack on the cut.

These medicine men, of course they are very good for fixing bones. They pour water over the cuts so all the little pieces that are inside can drain out. Then after it's all clean inside, they put a tamarack layer on the cut and keep doing this often, on and on. To close the wound, they use wood sap because this is very good medicine.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Detsɔ Tɛ'ehɛ | Wooden Fungus

Godoò at'ɔɔ

Bleeding

If a person had a bleeding problem, they gave them some wooden fungus in the mouth to swallow. Before they went to sleep, they gave you some more. Long ago, that's what they used to do when a person had a bleeding problem.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gokayi eyits'o gokaà

Wounds and sores

If somebody was working and cut himself with an axe, maybe his feet or his leg, they used wooden fungus. When summer came around, all the tree bark started to melt and thaw out. That's when wooden fungus started to come around and they started to gather it up. It was really helpful for many things. They drank that wooden fungus whenever they had a scab sore, and they rub it with wooden fungus. They chewed it and rubbed it on their scab.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gobò gohòq̄q̄

Stomach problems

They use wooden fungus for a sore stomach, which they drink a little bit, maybe two drops of a teaspoon, and rub their stomach where there was pain.

Bruno Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

It'ò Eleta Ats'ehw | Plant Combinations

Gokwòq̄ ta eyah / Dehko —
Ts'wàq̄q̄ + Wohgw̄q̄q̄Aches and pains / Chest cold —
Spruce boughs + Juniper boughs

When an elder says they have a sore arm or legs, they mix spruce boughs with juniper, boiling them together for some time. After it cools, they smear that juice wherever they have pain.

They also used salt water. They boiled salt with water and smeared it on their arms and legs; it helped take away the pain.

My granny said that spruce boughs and juniper could be mixed. They could also drink the brew, and it loosened the mucus in their chest. They used this a long time ago when there were no doctors.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Dehko — Ts'qht'è + Diwe

Chest cold — Crowberry + Tamarack

Long ago, people were very well aware of what kind of bush medicines could be used. People always moved around in those days, travelling here and there, sometimes in mid-spring when the snow was melting after Easter and there was hardly any snow on the trails. My uncle Willin's late father's wife was sick and had a chest cold. She couldn't speak very well because her throat was sore too. And we were very young and not able to do anything like them, so useless. That was when my father said, "When you collect any plant, make sure you do an offering." My father brought in crowberry and tamarack in a packsack. My late uncle and his wife lived with us in a tent. My father boiled the crowberry and tamarack together until it was well done. The sick woman drank the bush medicine juice until she felt well.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

Gowà gok'qò — Ts'iwà gots'qòhdzì + Tsqht'è

Mouth infection — Spruce cones + Crowberry

When a child got a mouth infection, they used spruce cones and crowberry, and boiled them together. While the medicine was in the making, they washed the child's mouth using a cloth soaked in the juice. Then they made the child drink some. It works very well.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Gokwò ek'jì làani — Ts'iwà gots'qòhdzì + Tsqht'è

Skin rash — Spruce cones + Crowberry

Spruce cones and crowberry are very good medicine, especially when a child gets an infection in the mouth. It can be used for older people too. They also use cattails for skin infection, but if it didn't work very well, they mixed it with crowberry and spruce cones. When they boil them, it takes a while for them to become like tea, but strong. After cooling it they smeared it into the infection on the child's body. It didn't take too long before healing took place.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Gokwò ek'jì làani — Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzìì + Tsqht'è

Skin rash — Spruce cones + Crowberry

My brother-in-law Pierre, his brother Bruneau, and his wife Margaret were all living with us. This girl, Elizabeth, had sores on her body; she was pitiful. And Monique (Paul Rabesca's younger sister) and Paul Rabesca's mother said to Elizabeth's mother, "Hurry up and make this bush medicine for your daughter. She is so pitiful with all these sores on her body. The weather is cold and if she catches cold it won't be good." She also told her to collect spruce cones from a young tree with strong juice, and crowberries to mix together. The juice turned a dark black colour and they rubbed it into the girl's infections. This woman told the girl not to use any soap, only this bush juice until her skin healed. So, she kept doing that.

At the same time, I got an infection on my breast and it was painful. We both used the same bush juice and were cured by it. It's good to stick to one kind of bush medicine when you're getting better from it.

They collected a lot of bush medicines from young trees, crowberry, spruce cones, and put them into a birch bark basket. I saw Elizabeth's body cured with these, without any kind of modern medicine.

Elizabeth Mantla [09/10/92]

Crowberry branches and spruce cone is good when you mix them together. I believe this bush medicine works, because it happened with my grandchildren during the summer. We collected spruce cones and crowberry and boiled them together. When it cooled, we used the juice to wash the child's rash and it worked well.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Gok'à eyah — Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzìì + Tsqht'è

Sore throat — Spruce cones + Crowberry

When a child has a sore or infection in the mouth, spruce and crowberry juice heal the sore quickly. When her child got a sore throat, the mother gets spruce and crowberry and boils them. They cool the brew and treat the child with it, and the infection goes away.

Marie Adele Simpson [29/10/91]

Gokayì eyìts'o gokaà — Dìwe + Ts'iwà
gots'òqhdzìì + Tsqht'è

Wounds and sores — Tamarack +
Spruce cones + Crowberry

One time my mother's hand got infected, and we didn't know what to do for her. The only way was to remove the bark from a tamarack and boil the layer. Once it got soft, we placed it on my mother's hand. We spread the soft layer all over her hand and wrapped it with a clean cloth. She had had this infection for almost a year. So, we mixed spruce cone and tamarack and used the juice to wash the infection as often as we could. Doing that, the infection healed in less than three weeks. They said that tamarack is very good medicine, and so is the spruce cone when there are sores or infection on the skin.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

There was a man who had a bad infection on his leg. He had no clear skin, the infection covered his leg. That's how far the infection had spread (hand gesture). Now what do we call this plant? Spruce bough cones, crowberry branches, and tamarack. We put them into a big pail and boiled them in water until it was the right colour. Once it cooled off, they washed the man's leg with the juice and continued doing it until the sores slowly began to disappear. They also covered the sores with a clean cloth. They cared for him very well by keeping him wrapped in a clean blanket. Their care was well done, for the man healed in less than a month.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Hotì ts'edaa — Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzìì +
Ts'iwàᑭòò + Tsqht'è

Good health — Spruce cones +
Spruce bough + Crowberry

At times, people mixed three kinds of plants together: spruce cones, spruce bough, and crowberry. They put them in a large pail and boiled them for some time. People of the past never ran out of this bush medicine; they carried it wherever they went. That's how it was during their lives on earth, and for that reason they lived a healthy life together.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

Hotì ts'edaa — Ts'iwà gots'òqhdzì +
Ts'iwàòò + Tsqht'è

Good health — Spruce cones +
Spruce bough + Crowberry

When spruce cones are fresh, they are sticky. They mix them with crowberry and boil them until it is very strong, like tea. Even though it was strong they drank it, for it gave them good health. These two are special bush medicines and people were never out of them.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

Chekoa nìhtè — Gots'agoò + Gòh

Birthing — Labrador tea + Fireweed

She said that even though it was dark outside she went out and chopped some fireweed and Labrador tea. She chopped them all the way down to the stem and brought them back. She quickly broke them into pieces and put them into a pail with water in it. We put it on the stove and brought it to a boil for some time, then put the juice into a cup that we placed in the snow to cool off quickly. The mother took cups of the bush juice, drank it, and felt a bit less pain. Later on, the baby in her womb began to move into position and was born fine, yet she smeared the juice around her waist and on her stomach.

Your mother drank about two cups of that brew and then she started to feel uncomfortable from the pain. And then a while later the stillborn child was born. She smeared a little bit on her back and around her stomach. And I gave her about two cups of its brew. And a while after that she said she started to feel sharp pain in her stomach. She said she was in and out of consciousness when her stillborn baby was born.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Chekoa nìhtè — Ts'iwàòò + Tsqht'è
weghàà + Eghqhkèè

Birthing — Spruce boughs + Crowberry
branches + Water plant root

They say that eghqhkèè is very good when a woman is having a problem giving birth to a child, and after the birth when the mother is in pain. They give her crowberry juice mixed with spruce bough juice and have her drink it often until she gets well. This bush medicine works very well.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]



Elizabeth Chocolate from Gamètì, cutting dzqdi | rat root, 2000.
Courtesy of Madelaine Chocolate Pasquayak



Detsᑭ | spruce gum, 2016. Courtesy of Camilla Nitsiza

Ts'èko Gízaa Gòh'èe K'è Hotiì Geeda

Women's Reproductive Health

In this database, elders share knowledge about health and wellbeing related to conception, pregnancy, birthing, and breast-feeding / breast milk. Each Tḥchḡ dialect has their own way to spell some of the terms in this database. Sometimes only one Tḥchḡ spelling appears. This does not imply that one dialect is more important than any other; each is essential.



Daht'ḡḡ | high bush cranberry. Courtesy of Alices Legat

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Elder Dora Migwi, from Behchokò collecting Ɂadzì | lichen at ʔedèezhì, 2012. Courtesy of Aalice Legat

T'òeht'ò / T'òò | Breastfeeding / Breast Milk

Cheaka wets'ò aja

Conception

As for today, young mothers who are raising their children feed their little ones with cow's milk only. That's why they get pregnant less than two years apart.

It wasn't like that before. When the woman was pregnant and when that child was born, about three or four years later another child was born to them. That's how they used to have children in the past. Because the mother raised their child with breast milk only.

Nowadays the mothers raise their child only with animal milk. That's why they have children every year. The mother is pregnant again before her last child starts to walk.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

Got'ò òghàà

Mastitis

When someone had a breast infection, this is what they did if they were far out in the bush. There was no modern medicine, even for our sores.

They make tamarack bush medicine. With that potion they washed her breast infection. When there was pus, they chewed the tamarack bark and placed it on the infection. This took all the pus out.

For some women, a boil on their breast is very painful. That was how I saw it. The boil could be hard as a rock. When it was like that, they placed tamarack bark on it. If it didn't break the boil open, someone got a needle or an awl.

They sharpened the awl with a file and burned it. With this they broke the boil open, and all the pus and blood came out. It was the tamarack bark that healed the wound. I have raised my children with breast milk and this used to happen to my breast. When I had infection, I used that; I used tamarack layer and the infection healed. That was how it was. Tamarack layer was used for all kinds of sickness.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Before the Rae Rock Mine opened, my breast got infected. There were no doctors and no modern medicine, not even ointment to apply. Because of my breast infection, this old woman Monique came to help me. "My grandchild, you

Got'ò lghàà

Mastitis

can't always change your children and carry them to the swing; you have an infected breast.” This is what she said. “There should be someone in this village who knows about boils.”

Later, Bernadette's mother and some other women came to our place to check my breast. They told me that it had started to turn into a boil; that the surface was still kind of hard. Once it got tender, they'd place something on it. They told me, in the meantime, “Use something to hold your breast up. Don't use your arm on that side too much. Use your other arm to change your child. The father can place the child on the swing for you.” My breast was getting worse and I couldn't take it anymore.

They kept checking on my breast and told me when it gets tender, they will put something on it. When the old lady came to check, it was big and very painful. She went to get the other women and to see Bernadette's mother. They came to check my breast and told me, “Now we will plead to the tamarack. We need something from a tree with sap. While the tree stands, we have to plead to it at every stem. We start collecting only after pleading to it. Any plant with sap is collected first. We don't chop it down with the axe.”

The old lady said, “We are going to collect tamarack for her.” They left and returned by evening with tamarack. The old lady peeled the top part, cut out a piece of the layer, and placed that on the sore. They wrapped a cloth around my neck and under my arm to hold my breast up like this. (Shows how they wrapped her breast). The infection was right under the breast.

Then she said, “My grandchild, when you get a swollen breast it's just like a pain in the heart. And when it's ready to open, it will show, for you will feel itchiness. And when this is happening let us know.” And they placed tamarack layer on my sore. “On the second night and by the third day, you will feel itchy,” she said. “That's the sign that the boil will break open soon. So just watch for that.” About the third and fourth day, the itchiness got worse.

This old lady Monique had her own tent, but she always came around just for a visit and to check on me. We had our own tent too. “Granny,” I said to her, “I'm really in pain because of my breast. It feels like something is about to come out and it's very itchy.”

“I will tell the other women,” she said. She went out and came back with the other women. They checked my breast and saw it was very tender and ready to break open. When they touched the infected part, there was a bit of pus. The old

Got'ò lghàà

Mastitis

woman placed a moss pad under my breast. As she slowly removed the tamarack layer, the mucus with blood and pus started to pour out. After it was all gone, I felt relief. I felt the emptiness in my breast; I felt much better. "Even though all the mucus with pus has poured out, it's not enough," said the old woman. "The boil is still there."

"The dry twig from the tree easily catches the boil," the old woman said. There were two dry twigs to use if the boil didn't drain completely. She placed the dry twig right on my wound and twisted it inside until it caught on the thread of the boil. That's how she removed the whole boil. It looked like muscle. She put it on the cloth with the mucus blood and pus stain, and tied it up. She told the others to put lots of wood in the stove. As the fire started, she had the cloth ready to throw in the fire. Before she threw it, she said, "She (Elizabeth) has suffered long enough with this and may it never return to her again. For this, I'm throwing it in the fire to be burned." To this day, nothing like that has ever returned.

Elizabeth Mantla [09/10/92]

If a woman's breast got infected, they used bear tail ashes. The bear ashes open up the infection and suck out the mucus. Very often they rub a burned bear's tail on a boil. Once it got red, they put on more ashes. It opens the infection and gets all the pus and blood out.

After this, they get a dry twig and clean out all the pus left inside the infection. Once the pus is cleaned out, they chew tamarack layer until it gets really smooth, and place it over the sores, without boiling the layer. Every day they changed the dressing, and at night too. I guess this tamarack layer sucks out all the pus with blood. Until the sore healed, they used this birch layer often. It healed the infection and left its scar.

Marie Klugie [08/10/92]

About two weeks after my son was born, my late husband said, "We will go hunting for caribou." I had an infection on my breast but I went along, with my two little ones. The pain was getting worse but I didn't want to complain. I worked with it and we stayed on the land for almost a month and a half. My husband went to Rae with the meat. I don't think I ate as much food as I liked to; the infection was getting very painful. Sunday came and we prayed at an elder's place. We ate together and I went back to our tent. Our oldest daughter was about three years old, and my son was only weeks old. Since I had no mirror, I took a tin can cover to see where my infection was.

Got'ò lghàà

Mastitis

First thing, I took a scarf and tied it around my chest, above and beneath the sore. Then I took a dry twig and placed it right where I saw something white, and twisted it. I guess the pus stuck to the dry twig. I pulled the pus out and couldn't do it a second time. But I felt a little less pain and had a small bit of meat and bannock with tea. I went to sleep after I fed my baby.

Early on Monday morning my husband came back and he asked, "What's wrong with you? You look so pale." I told him about the infection on my breast. He said, "I will get you tamarack," and he did after he slept. He said, "Peel the top off, take the layer and chew on it until it gets really soft, and place that on the sore." I did that and continued until all the pus was gone. After that I used a birch fungus to heal the wound. It sure worked well and I am fine to this day.

Marie A. Rabesca [05/26/2022]

Gokwò ek'jì làani

Skin rash

Nowadays children are bottle fed. In the past, women raised their children with breast-feeding. And when a person had a rash and they didn't know what to do for that person, the mother got some of her breast milk and smeared it on the child's rash.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Bò detlòò

Raw meat

When the child isn't getting any milk from his mother, they cut out a small piece of raw meat, put the stick through it, and let the child suck it. And sometimes the baby really sucks their mother's nipple until the milk comes.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Tiwoo

Soup

At that time they also ate any kind of soup. They say soup helps to develop more milk. So they ate any kind of soup: fish soup, meat soup. They said they do that because this helped their baby to suck their breast milk easily.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Lidì

Tea

And sometimes when our breast milk is hard and there's no milk, and our baby isn't sucking any milk out, and our breast is just as hard as a rock, then they tell us to wash it with hot water. So we used hot tea to wash it. We did that, and then our breasts got normal; then the baby could suck our milk out.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Cheaka Wets'ò Aja | Becoming Pregnant

Gomq wet'ò / Ejjet'ò

Breast milk / Cow's milk

Well in that case, when children are born several years apart, it's true what you said about children. As for today, young mothers who are raising their children feed their little ones with cow's milk only. That's why they get pregnant less than two years apart.

It wasn't like that before. When the woman was pregnant and that child was born, it was about three or four years later before another child was born to them. That's how they used to have children in the past. Because the mother raised their child with breast milk only.

Nowadays the mothers raise their child only with animal milk. That's why they have children every year. The mother is pregnant again before her last child starts to walk.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

Gomq wet'ò / Ejjet'ò

Breast milk / Cow's milk

It was like that for most married people, they didn't have many children in the past. Some of them had just two and others had three, but it wasn't more than that. Recently, some married couples started to get more children, some had about 15 children. Maybe some women are meant to have lots and others none.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/07/93]

There was no such thing like that in the past (birth control pills or sterilization); none at all. Nobody knew anything like that. It is just recently doctors came and they brought in some modern medicine. That's when some women who didn't want to have any more children started taking pills. And whoever didn't want to have any more children they went to see the doctor. And if they have to get surgery, they do that.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

In the past people didn't really have many children and that's how it was. Some may have a couple, others one or two or none. And some women had miscarriages because they didn't watch themselves when they did heavy work. And other people who knew about the woman being pregnant wondered how come this child isn't being born yet. Maybe there were many miscarriages, that is why people didn't have many children in the past. And a reincarnated person won't have any children. That is what has been said.

Question: People of the past worked very hard, but they had children that are not too close together. And today, there are couples with many children and some of them are very close together. But in the past, it wasn't like that. How come? Can you tell me about it?

Because many people (women and men) don't work as hard as before and they don't travel around in the bush like before. That's why this happens; just recently people started to have children every year. In the past people worked hard and women breast-fed their children. That's why they didn't have many children. This is what the women used to talk about.

And men always travelled far away in the bush and they didn't really stay at home often. That's why they say that person had few children and others none. Nowadays people live in nice houses and don't go anywhere at all. Women just don't travel in the bush these days and don't work hard like before. They say these people seem to have many children.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/01/93]

Nòhtsɿ wenàowoò k'èè / Hanì ha yɿwɔ

God's will / Meant to be

It's through God that we are born into this world. Some people are not meant to have children, and some are meant to have children. When a woman is reincarnated from a man, she is not meant to have children. It's not our parents' fault that we don't have children. It is the will of our creator that we don't have any children.

As for myself, I don't have any children. Other women are like that too. So I guess that's how it is. It's not our parent's fault; it's the will of our boss (God). We do really want to have children, but we are not meant to have them, I guess.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

For people who never conceived children, we just thought that was how they were meant to be. That was how God made some women to be. For that reason, people never went to a spiritual person for help.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

Dɔ nadlɿ / Nàdaetì / Inì nàowoò

Reincarnation / Pleading / Spiritual power

Women do get help to conceive a child from someone, but I don't know who. There are things in this land that we don't really know about. What they call the afterbirth, they say there is a mountain like that somewhere. And when we plead to it, it will give us a child. There is also a mountain called Weyiits'atlaa (we walk in) that is like that too. So when they plead to the mountain and ask for a child their pleading will be answered. And if they are to receive one child they will. This is what had been said.

The reason why some women can't have children is because some men can't have children. And some couples do have children. It could be because of the man or the woman. If a couple has no children and feels really miserable, they plead with a spiritual person. But I have never heard of a spiritual person who helped other people to have children.

(Question: Some people had said that some women can't have children because they were born as a male spirit themselves. Like some dead people enter

Dq nadlɔ / Nàdaetì / Inì nàowoò

Reincarnation / Pleading / Spiritual power

into the woman's womb to be born again. And most of the women are like that, that is why they can't have any children. What do they mean by that?)

They said even if a woman did conceive a dead person's spirit, and she'll get pregnant just the same. But sometimes other women don't get pregnant at all. Even my wife, she had a child who was reincarnated and a couple of years later she had a little girl. You should know about my wife, for she had a child who was reincarnated. After the last child was born, we didn't have any after that. Even though they are reincarnated, they could still have children of their own.

(Question: Some people say that person is reincarnated. It's the same problem in Rae too and elsewhere. They say of course this woman won't have any children because she is reincarnated herself. What do they mean by that?)

I don't really know what they mean. Some young women who are reincarnated don't have children. But for us, we did have a child who is reincarnated. I had a dream about this person and remember it very well, either in my sleep or in my vision. He opened the door and walked in, and I thought he was talking to me. The next thing I knew, he was climbing into bed with us. That's when I woke up; but there was no one there. I guess he did that to be reincarnated as our son. And it's very true that a dead person can be reincarnated.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/01/93]

Inì nàowoò / Hanì ha ghàni ha hqòò

Spiritual power / What is meant to be

Question: Some people, they have too many children. Like they have a baby every year. When it's like that, how was it dealt with, not to have too many children?

Well, some people are like that. Some women have children every year. Like nowadays, when some women give birth with a doctor. Even with the doctor around, some women have a hard time giving birth. Some women have a hard time having their baby. Even nowadays some women are still like that.

Some women had too many children. They pleaded to the spiritual person for help, to not have any more children. And that spiritual person gave them some

Inì nàowoò / Hanì ha ghàni ha hqòò

Spiritual power / What is meant to be

water, if they can, right after the child was born. And when that woman had some water from the spiritual person, they don't have any more children. Spiritual people were like doctors.

Rosalie Zoe [01/03/93]

In some cases people are not meant to have children. When a woman doesn't have children, it may be because she took some kind of brew. Celine said that if a woman or a man has the spiritual power of a particular animal, they may not have children.

Marie Madeline said that trouble with conception could lie either with the man or the woman. Other people may not have children for a long time. The spiritual person gave the couple a cup of water. The spiritual person drank half and gave the rest to the couple and soon after they conceived a child. Marie Klugie (who never had children) said that this was done to her, but she still never had children.

When she had her first menstruation, Marie Klugie's father gave her and her sisters (except for one, Annie), some water that prevented them all from having children. Annie was given water by someone else and was able to have children.

Marie Klugie, Marie Madeline Nitsiza, Celine Eyakfwo,
Rosa Romie [26/04/93]

When a person doesn't have children, sometimes if the father has spiritual power and doesn't want his daughter to suffer by having children; and they think their daughter should not have children, and they have her in their mind; that's why when we have our first menstruation, any of our relatives with spiritual power give us some water. And as they give us some, they think of us, so we won't have children of our own.

That's why we (other women) have no children. That's the reason why long ago lots of people didn't have children, lots of people had no children.

Even like Marie, all of them are like that. My mother-in-law said to me, this was Joe's mother who said this. She said, when her daughter Annie had her first menstruation, she said, "My daughter, not her again, she can't be like the others and have no children. For all of them don't have children. And I don't want her to be like that again," she said.

She had her first menstruation and mother said, "I want someone else to give her water." That's why another person gave her water; that's why only Annie has

Inì nàowoò / Hanì ha ghàni ha hqòò

Spiritual power / What is meant to be

children of her own. And none of them have children; none of my late uncle Andrew Zoe's own daughters have children, none of them. After they were full grown, the women passed away, but none of them had children of their own. Even Madeline never had children, even though she was married twice. These kinds of people who don't have children are like that because of their parents.

When a woman doesn't have children of their own, some women really want to have a child. When they feel like that, they plead to a spiritual person. When they plead to a spiritual person, then that spiritual person gives them a child. With their spiritual power they give them a child. That woman gets pregnant. But they are given just one child, sometimes two. That's how it was said.

Rosalie Zoe [01/03/93]

People have said that few spiritual people had the experience of a child. Spiritual people were like a specialist doctor for children. Late William, he was a specialist person for children, but his wife didn't have any. For him, maybe this was his choice not to have children.

One couple had about 10 children, and one by one these children suddenly became sick and died. Then this man William said, "If I let the women step over six different kinds of birds, they won't have any children at all." And when the couple overheard this, they asked him if he could save the rest of their children, because they didn't want to lose them all; and so he did.

Some people feel guilty because they don't have any children. At one time, one woman wanted to have a child, so they asked this person who knows about children. But this man said, "I can't help you, for you are meant to live without children." Some couples have no children, but after three or four years of marriage they start to have children.

My late grandfather Eyeèkoo was a smart medicine person. Whenever a person spoke to him about these kinds of problems, he helped them out.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/07/93]

Ts'èko ɔqɔhdaà ts'ih'fèe t'axqò dɔzhì goxè sɔnàwoo

Timing of menstruation and sexual activity

Long ago, women didn't have lots of children. If a woman married soon after her first menstruation, she had lots of children. If she waited, she had fewer.

In the past, when a woman married, sometimes it was five years before she had children. Today, girls are still babies when they have children. Women rarely had children every year. Usually, there was about four years between the children. They rarely had a lot of small children. In their younger days, the boys and girls played separately.

Marie Klugie, Marie Madeline Nitsiza, Celine Eyakfwo,
Rosa Romie [26/04/93]

Chekoa Nìhtè | Birthing

Chekoa nàwo dɔɛɔ

Breech birth

You mention about when a child was in the wrong position. One of my brothers was born upside down. There was no doctor, and we were living out in the bush. My mother went through hard difficulties because she couldn't give birth. She was very weak and couldn't use her strength. For that reason, they tied a blanket around her chest area and to the pole rack, in a sitting position. She was in labour pain for four days and she was very, very weak. Because the child was in the breech position, they had difficult times trying to place the child in the right way. In those days, there wasn't much they could do in these cases.

The only thing they could do was get their hands very soapy and try to place the child in the right position, with tender care. And this was how the child was born. The child was born standing up because the mother had an accident with the axe handle.

They couldn't send a message to the doctor because there were no men in the village. Sterile women weren't allowed to see the women in labour. But in those days, women were like a specialist doctor for delivering babies. When the baby was born, his head was misshapen. So they used their hands to put the head back in shape. The baby was barely breathing, so they asked Bruno to baptise the baby.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/07/93]

Chekoa nàwo dqelɔ

Breech birth

Some women have a hard time to deliver their baby, like Charlie Jim's mother Adele. They only burned wood for heat. I don't know where her husband was. Even though she was pregnant, she was chopping wood with an axe. She hurt herself with the axe handle, and she got sick and went into labour. She was sick for over a week. There weren't many people living here; not many women. The women were tired of looking after her. They sent for Jimmy's mother, who was living on the long point Nizah. The women that were looking after her (Adele) were tired.

There's a foundation that holds a tent up. They had a rope tied to it, and it was tied to her like this, around the chest. And that's how they looked after her, but they were all tired. The late grandfather of a man that I had lived was named 'no leg'. He walked with two crutches. His wife went to get him at their home and she came back with him. He went around Adele once and said to take care of her, as he got back to where he left off. A while later the child was born.

For many nights the child couldn't be born. When they just couldn't take it anymore, they put lots of soap on their hands and used a cloth to wipe her where a person passes out water, where a child is born. They used their soapy hands to help the baby be born. They did that. That was how the child was born.

Because the mother had hurt herself with an axe handle, the child was born with this side of his head looking like it was crushed in. And because of that, his tongue was sticking out. But the women managed to put the child's head back into shape with their hands. It turned out fine and the child grew up. That was him, Charlie Jim.

When some women have a hard time to deliver a child, then they got Jimmy's mother. She's the one who delivered all the children that were born long ago. That's why she's still living on this earth, even though she's more than 100 years old. People used to live at the end of this lake and here in Whatì too.

They have said that this woman was sick and in labour for many nights. This was Francis's mother, who passed away. They said that she was really sick in labour. And Jimmy's mother used a lot of soap on her hands. I guess the child was standing inside the mother; the child was born standing. That was how she got the child out. That's the one they called Mike.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Bebia wemqò welè t'axo bebia hagit'la

Caesarean - C-section

At first the group agreed that a baby is not removed through caesarian if a woman dies during pregnancy. But then the following story was recounted.

It was the late Jimmy's wife Monique, who is still alive, who performed caesarean surgery on a woman — Marie Madeline's daughter's grandmother. She was sick or injured during the pregnancy and died. They didn't know what to do with her; they couldn't leave the body like that. The relatives asked Monique to help.

Monique felt miserable having to make a decision about what to do. She told the other women not to mourn, because she'd take care of things. They prepared the body for surgery. While she was sharpening the knife, she thought about whether or not she had a strong enough mind to go through with it. She thought of the Creator. It was not right to have the child buried inside the mother. She knew the Creator gave her the courage to perform the surgery; to do his will.

She cut the stomach open. She wasn't afraid or feel terrible. The body was partially frozen. She wasn't sure how far to cut down from the ribs. She cut across the abdomen and took the baby out. The women had prepared everything, so when she took the baby out, she placed it on a canvas cloth. Then she sewed the mother back up.

Monique told this story to Marie Madeline Nitsiza. Not just anyone could do this type of surgery. It takes someone with a strong mind with spiritual powers; someone like herself. She was smart to use her spiritual power. She was a powerful spiritual person. They placed the child under the mother's arm for burial.

Marie Klugie, Marie Madeline Nitsiza, Celine Eyakfwo,
Rosa Ramie [26/04/93]

Councillor Joseph's wife was pregnant. She went into labour because she got hit by the axe handle when she was chopping wood. After the mother died, the baby was still alive in her stomach. They said a woman who has a strong heart and a strong mind can do the caesarean. Another woman did the caesarean, and took a baby boy out.

It was said, after the mother died, the baby was still alive, so they cut the mother open and they took the baby out. This happened in the bush when there were no doctors around. That time the husband wasn't around. He went out trapping. That's when it happened.

Marie Adele Moosenose [27/04/93]

Bebia wemqò welè t'àxo bebia hagitlà

Caesarean - C-section

When a pregnant woman died, sometimes they had to cut the woman open and take the baby out. If they could take the baby out normally, they did that. If the child was meant to live in this world, they lived. That's how people helped each other to survive in the past. There were no doctors.

Any woman that could do that; it was only women who performed surgery. Men never did that.

Rosalie Zoe [01/03/93]

They checked the woman's stomach to see if the child is still alive. And if the child is still breathing, they cut the woman's stomach open and delivered the child. Women who were very sick got a lot of treatment in this way, and some overcame their illness. This is what we heard from our elder women as they talked among themselves.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/01/93]

When a pregnant woman died and the baby was still alive, they cut the mother open and took the baby out. Sometimes the baby was barely breathing when they got it out. That's how it was when the mother died and the baby survived.

Louis Wedawin [07/07/93]

Dq k'enegede / Inì nàowoò

Curse / Spiritual power

Long ago people used to live at Marion Lake. This old Manton's wife was pregnant. And we were living at T'ok'aàtq. When they travelled back from Deline area, there were no people around. My late uncle Tobie used to live at Dètaitq. He was the only person with spiritual power. There were no other people with spiritual power. We were living in a camp with three other families. And old man Manton and his wife, with his father-in-law, camped in the same area where we were living.

This pregnant woman was completely healthy; she had no problems with her pregnancy. When we went out for spruce boughs, she came with us and carried them back. We climbed up the mountain to get branches. After we were done, we sat up on that mountain and rested before we came back down. She had no problem when she packed the branches on her back to the camp. She changed

Dq k'enegede / Inì nàowoò

Curse / Spiritual power

the branches in her tent. Her husband went to Rae, even when the ice was really bad, so she was alone.

When she went into labour, she was in labour for about three days. The other woman tried to help her and then finally the baby was born. But the afterbirth wasn't born yet, then she became unconscious. They didn't know what to do because the ice was really bad to travel on. But they tried and they went to get Tobie (spiritual person) who was living at Dètahtq̄. They used a canoe all the way between the ice, and when they brought him back, he went to see her. But it was no use, her body was already cold.

And when he saw her, he said that there was some wolf hair all around her waist; that was the reason she had a hard time giving birth. When they travelled in the Deline area, I guess she used to joke and laugh with people out there. And they had put a curse on her.

When we travel to different places, some people are like that; they put curses on others. When they put a curse on her, they used wolf hair and put it all around her waist. It was meant for either one of them to die. The old man said, "If only you had told me earlier, it could have been good."

But I guess he wanted to try anyway, so he told the people to get a rat root that is just growing out. They ran to look for some. When they came back with rat root, he took them and wove them all over her. But he said it's too late; his spiritual power told him that it was too late for him to help her.

The woman's body was getting cold, and the fluid that was coming out of her was just like water pouring out. Inside the womb, next to the stomach, there is a spleen, and that was the fluid coming out of her. That's what happened because it was caused by a curse. The baby survived but the mother died.

It was amazing this happened when there was no one around; no spiritual person. If only she had told someone when she went into labour earlier. She had no problem and she was healthy. She used to get spruce branches and fix all the meat when they brought the meat back. It just happened so suddenly. In those days, there were no doctors, but people lived in the bush all the time. At that time we didn't know about these things.

There was a pregnant woman in labour. My mother came in and out saying, "Your auntie is in labour. I don't think my sister will live," she said. There were no men around and another woman helped. They told us to get some plants; I don't

Dq k'enegede / Inì nàowoò

Curse / Spiritual power

know what kind. While they were looking around for that, they were both crying, saying, "We wish nothing to happen to our sister. If anything happens to her, who will there for us."

I guess we went to sleep. We were small. The next morning when we got up, my mother was saying, "Thank you. My older sister gave birth to a baby, but the baby is very tiny and all blue. It has small hands and small legs, just blue. The baby was born slowly, bit by bit, and she was drained out. The afterbirth was born after that."

We saw she was right when we went to see my auntie and her baby. I don't know what kind of bush medicine they gave her. They did all these things without the doctors' help. They knew something was good for that. That was the way they all helped each other, even without the doctors' help.

Elizabeth Mantla, Marie Adele Moosenose, Annie Simpson, Dora Alexis, Marie Adele Beaverho [27/04/93]

Wemò bebà k'e elaiwò

Women died giving birth

The old priest told Joseph not to take his wife into the bush because she was pregnant; but they went anyway. It's partly the husband's fault that she died. After the funeral, the husband was still on the trap line. They left the tent as it was. When the husband came back, he looked into the tent and then kept going. The baby was adopted by another woman.

He really missed his wife, but married again the following summer. His first wife died during the winter. Pierre was in camp when the woman died so he sent the message that she had died. This happened when they used to live in the barrenlands. She is buried near Gots'òkàtì (Mesa Lake). A couple of years ago, there was a gathering there. Her late husband built a fence around the grave. There was also a grave of another woman there.

When people passed by in the canoe, they saw a rainbow over the grave. People have heard the woman singing in the area around her grave. She was a good-hearted, kind person.

Celine Eyakfwo [26/04/93]

Wemò bebà k'e elaiwò

Women died giving birth

In the case of my late aunt, she died during pregnancy. She was buried with the child inside her. Usually, the child was taken out, so that the spirit could escape.

Celine Eyakfwo [26/04/93]

Wohgwɔ̀ò / K'í

Juniper boughs / Birch

When a woman was pregnant and she just had her baby, and had a bad cold, they chopped the juniper into small pieces and put them into an old bowl. Then they put hot rocks in it to boil and put it under the person, with a blanket over her. That's how they steamed a person until the afterbirth was born. After that, they gave her tamarack brew or any kind of bush brew. They made birch brew for this woman, because she had stomach pain after her baby was born. They made her keep taking that until she got better. This woman stayed in bed for about two weeks. I don't mean to say we just get up and start walking right after the baby is born.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Gots'agoò / Gòh

Labrador tea / Fireweed

Even though it was dark outside, she went out and chopped some fireweed and Labrador tea. She chopped it from the bottom of the stem and then she brought them back and broke them into small pieces, mixed them, and put them in a pot of water. Because we were in a rush, she put it on top of the fire boil. And because we couldn't waste time and wait long for it to cool off, I put it outside in the snow.

Your mother drank about two cups of that brew and then she started to feel uncomfortable from the pain. A while later the still born child was born. She smeared a little bit on her back and around her stomach. And I gave her about two cups of its brew. And awhile after that she started to feel sharp pain in her stomach. She was in and out of consciousness when her stillborn baby was born.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Kw'ah

Moss

When a woman is pregnant, she collects lots of moss and fills a big bag. She prepares everything for her child's needs, like a flannel shirt papoose. And if she goes into labour pain, the woman gets things ready for her child's birth, like making a moss cushion for the mother and a moss pad for the child as a pamper. That's how women give birth to their child. And they place the child well in the papoose.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/92]

Nàbe wetsjìt'è

Otter chin

For a woman who had a hard time, when the men were elsewhere and the husband was not around, what the elder women did for her was to go home and bring the otter chin they saved, to the woman who is having difficult times. They soaked this stuff in the woman's cup and later, when it dissolved, they take the otter chin out and make her drink the liquid. As soon as it reached the womb, the baby was born right away.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

In the past, children usually had a difficult time to come. Today, the doctor handles the sick person. But in the past, it wasn't like that. When a woman was pregnant, she talked and bragged about a child entering into her womb. That's why, at the last minute, the child was stubborn to be born. We have seen this a lot.

So when the woman es having contractions and no sign of birth, people boasted about her. They tried everything for her, and finally came up with otter chin. This is very good stuff when a woman's child is not been born yet. They put water in a little pail and heat up the otter chin. The broth works quickly for an unborn child, and the afterbirth comes out too.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

When the woman is having a hard time giving birth to a child to, they made otter chin brew and let the woman drink its brew. It was said that this helps the child to be born.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Nàbe wetsjìt'è

Otter chin

Some women have difficulty giving birth to their child. And when this happens, they use otter chin. They soak the otter chin in a cup and the woman drinks it; and she gives birth to her child. Every time they take an animal part as a medicine, they plead first. And these people knew what to say for their health. As soon as this otter chin liquid hits the bottom of her stomach, she gives birth to her child. And that's how the otter chin works.

Philip Zoe [09/10/92]

When a woman is having a hard time giving birth to her baby, they mention the otter chin. They get a small piece and boil it, and they let her drink it with water. And with that, they say the baby is born fast.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

Chekò yeyì whìda - chekò wewò

Placenta retained

A woman died in childbirth and the placenta remained attached. The woman who was helping her during the birth pulled at the placenta, and the woman died from hemorrhaging (heavy bleeding). The child survived. The woman who died worked very hard during her pregnancy, getting wood and preparing her bed, as though she knew she'd die. My mother was there when the child was born. It was Councillor Joseph's wife. The woman's husband was off on the trap line. The woman who died was working very hard right up until the time she delivered. She ignored her pains and it wasn't until the evening when she finally told the other woman that it was time. The woman went to her tent. She gave birth to a boy.

Celine Eyakfwo [26/04/93]

When a child is born, but the placenta remains attached, they heat up a rock, wrap it, and place it where the placenta is. Then the placenta is released. Then they use bush medicine to heal the wound. When a woman has a child and she is still bleeding, she has to stay indoors and stay in bed.

Marie Klugie, Marie Madeline Nitsiza, Celine Eyakfwo,
Rosa Ramie [26/04/93]

Wha

Pole

When a woman is having baby and they can't hang on to her any more, they get a long pole and put it across like this (hand gesture), and tie it to another stick. This way, the woman can lean over it. That's how a baby is born.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

In the past it was different. The pregnant woman travelled and worked hard in the bush. She used snowshoes in winter and followed the others so the child in her womb always moved. Sometimes when she got very tired, they let her sit in the toboggan. Until they came to their destination, that's what they did. And that is where she gave birth to her child.

In the past they cut a pole about this long and placed it across the other pole. And they covered the woman with a blanket as she knelt. And this was how they gave birth to their child. The women are really happy when the child is born well and healthy. They say thanks many times.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

Jnì t'à k'aàt'u alegehɔ

Spiritual healing

If a woman was going through a hard time during her labour, and not giving birth yet, and the women that were keeping her got too tired, they went directly to the person who knew about the child. Today, it's very good that we have doctors. When we enter the hospital, we sit down on the bed and someone watches us. Before, it wasn't like that. Maybe five or six women took turns to take care of the woman until she gave birth to her child.

This woman knelt down for a long time, probably until she gave birth. They placed the rack for her so that she can rest on it, and the women sat behind her and watched.

The woman in labour got a lot of support from other women. That was how people used to treat one another. And when this woman couldn't take any more and ran out of strength, she told the others, "Could one of you go and tell this spiritual person about my labour and the contractions I'm getting, but still nothing is happening."

In the past, people lived mostly on spiritual power; they were like a doctor. So this woman who was in labour told the other women this. "Could you go and tell

Ḵnì t'à k'ààt'Ḵ ategheḴ	Spiritual healing
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this spiritual person to cut me a stick, for I can't take any more. So if she said this, they did it for her. They changed the pole rack. The one that was chopped down by the spiritual person was placed across from the other stand, and this woman laid on it.

The spiritual person told the others that once the child is born, make sure you get rid of this stick where no one can get at it. Shortly after changing the pole rack, this woman gave birth easily. This is what they said. It was done by the spiritual person; the people of the past lived by the spiritual power.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Sometimes if a woman is in labour and having difficult times giving birth, that's when the spiritual person gets involved and helps. They pull a little tree out from the ground and peel off the top until it gets white. Then they tell the other women to place this tree stick under the woman who is giving birth. That's not just an ordinary act, that's for sure, for as soon as they place this tree stick, the child comes right out. That's what they used to do.

The first time a son is born to the new couple, the father distributes one sled of wood to all the elders of the camp for his gift. This was the way people lived on this land before.

As we mentioned about that stage in time, people were pitiful, very pitiful. The people who didn't have a tent, had what they call nobawa, but it wasn't like a tent shape. They called this a tipi house and covered the whole tipi with trees only. And they also covered it with snow, so there weren't any drifts coming in. In the centre, they had a fire going that kept the whole place warm.

Some women gave birth to their child in a place like this. After the birth of the child, they headed out again the next day. The woman that gave birth dressed herself very well from the cold. She had her own dog team and followed her husband's dog team, which was ahead of her. She didn't have doubt about the birth or that she might catch a cold right after that. Long ago, that was how people lived on this land.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

A long time ago when a woman was pregnant and fell down and hurt herself, I have no idea if they performed surgery on them. But at that stage, they used a spiritual person; they used their spiritual power to deliver the baby. And also if a woman was having a hard time delivering her baby, the spiritual person helped

Inì t'à k'ààt'ù aṭegəḥɔ

Spiritual healing

her by giving her some otter chin broth. It was said that otter chin broth is very good. It helps the baby come quickly. That's why a spiritual person gave some of that otter chin broth to a woman.

Sometimes when the pregnant mother hurts herself by accident, the baby's head is broken while it's still in the mother's stomach. And still the baby is born normal. How could it survive like that?

I have no idea if they ever performed caesarean surgery on the mother. But with the spiritual person, the baby is born. It's just the same as performing surgery.

After the baby is born, the afterbirth comes next. And if the woman had suffered too much, they crushed the afterbirth when it was born. When they do that, the woman can't have any more children.

They never cut the woman open, but the spiritual person was like a surgeon. As far as I know, that's how they used to deliver a baby.

Jimmy B. Rabesca [01/03/93]

Inì t'à k'ààt'ù aṭegəḥɔ / Ts'wàḥòò

Spiritual healing / Spruce boughs

Sometimes it takes a woman about five days to have her baby; that's how long they are in labour. And that person who wants her baby to be born, they ask this spiritual person for help.

And that spiritual person gave some water to the woman. When he gave her some water, her baby was born normal. That's why spiritual people were like doctors in the past. When a woman was pregnant, these spiritual people brought them back to their health. That was how they lived on this earth in the past, before the doctors.

After a baby was born but the afterbirth was not, that was so pitiful too. When the afterbirth wasn't born, sometimes it could happen that some women can take the afterbirth out. They warm something, even like a plate. They warm up a plate and place it on the stomach. And then they make spruce bough brew, and let her drink the brew. For a long time the woman doesn't pass water; they don't pass water until their afterbirth is born.

Inì t'à k'aàt'u alegeh / Ts'wàzoò

Spiritual healing / Spruce boughs

Oh what a difficult time they went through in the past. When we say difficult, it was very difficult. That's what they went through until the afterbirth was born. Wherever the afterbirth is, the other women know it by feeling the woman's stomach with their hands. They use their hands to feel where the afterbirth is, even if it's in the back, they know. Even a person that doesn't have spiritual power, they know about this, how to take the afterbirth out, and how strongly the afterbirth is caught onto the woman's skin. They know it; they can feel it when they feel her stomach. So, they place something warm on her. They keep placing something warm on her stomach until the afterbirth gets lost and comes out. That's what they did.

These days, we have our babies born with the doctor, and that's fine with us. But it wasn't like that in the past. Sometimes it took us about two weeks, just lying down. But nowadays, after we have a baby, we can get up and walk around. It wasn't like that in the past. After we had our baby, we rested in bed for so many days. Then finally, if we felt fine, we got up and did a little task. That was how it was.

Rosalie Zoe [01/03/93]

Ts'wàzoò

Spruce boughs

When a woman is not feeling well after the birth of a child, and has a pain around her waist or her back, they bring in some spruce boughs, put them in a pail, and add water. Then they let it boil. Once it's done, they give her some in a cup to drink and she keeps drinking this juice until the pain goes away. And they collect more because they live right among the spruce trees.

When they take these, they heat the bough and when it's very warm they place it on the back pain and cover it with a cloth. They keep changing the warm bough very often. By doing this, it stops the back pain and relieves the pain in the waist; she suddenly feels just fine.

Marie Madeline Nitsiza [05/10/92]

Ts'wàṛòò

Spruce boughs

Concerning spruce boughs, the women talked about that among themselves. If you're travelling through deep snow after a child was born, and the woman has pain in her side and it gets worse for her; if that happens, we take a fair size spruce bough; we cut three of them and prepare them well, then heat them up.

We turned them over and over on the fire and heated them up that way. This was used only after a child was delivered. And they told the woman, "Hurry up and squat on it fast. If you do that and after your insides have warmed up, then that sickness will disappear." That's what they used to say and they used to talk about that a lot.

Helen Rabesca [01/10/91]

Long ago, people used these kinds of bush medicine when a woman is pregnant. And when the woman was in labour and having a hard time bringing forth her child, they treated her with bush medicine. While the spruce bough was boiling strongly, they put a hand towel in it and when they take it out it is very dark brown. And they placed this around the woman's waist once it cooled off a little. They did this with T'izì nì's wife and I witnessed it. They put this warm towel around her waist and made her drink the other bush brew. And by doing this often, she brought forth her newborn child. I've witnessed this myself.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/10/92]

In the past when women had pains after the birth, they also used cocoa. They told the pregnant woman's husband to have the cocoa handy. And if there was no cocoa, then they went for spruce boughs and used them after the birth of the child and after the placenta was delivered.

Once the spruce boughs boiled for a period of time and were left to cool off, they poured some in a cup for her and she drank this very often. And they told her to keep drinking this spruce bough brew, so that her stomach pain will stop and she'll feel much better.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

It was a long time ago when my granny told me these stories. When a woman was pregnant and she gave birth to a child, and when the afterbirth is caught onto the inside skin, they collected lots of spruce boughs. They made its brew, added some salt to it, and placed it on her back. They soaked the cloth and placed it on her back. And they let her drink the brew. This helped to loosen the afterbirth.

Marie Adele Moosenose [05/10/92]

Ts'ìwàòòò

Spruce boughs

After the child is born and the woman has after pain, they prepare some spruce boughs for her and let her drink its brew. In the past they used plant brew only. And when they felt a little pain, that's what they used.

Rosa Romie [07/10/92]

After the baby is born, they cut some spruce bough and bring it to a boil. Then we drink its brew just like that. That helps to heal the inside of our stomach. They do that so we could get better. That's what we had for medicine. Most likely we rested in bed for two weeks. For that long, the relatives complained about a bad omen. We had our own entrance in the tent and our own path. That's how it was. I don't know why they did that for us.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

When they said the afterbirth had grown into the inside of the womb, they got spruce boughs and made hot water. They heated the spruce boughs in the water, then took them out and put them in something like a canvas bag or cloth. And while it's still hot they made her sit on it. And while the herb juice is still warm, she drank it. Then the afterbirth loosened and came out. After that, she kept taking the spruce bough potion. Then she got better.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]

Ts'ìwàòòò / Tsqht'è / Titatseè / Eghòhkèè

Spruce boughs / Crowberry / Steaming / Water plant root

After the birth of a child, they placed spruce bough and crowberry inside a thin cloth and tied it; and placed that around the woman's stomach. In the past, women who gave birth were in a poor situation. When the woman was in pain, they made her drink some of the spruce brew and rest.

If this didn't help, they heated up a stone very hot and placed the hot stone in the tub of bush brew, and steamed her with it. She sat up, covered with a blanket so that she could get well steamed. They treated her in the tent, even though it's cold. And she continued to wet her body often with a towel. After she got kind of cool, they removed the blanket. After doing this, she may feel better but has to keep taking the bush medicine.

Marie Adele Simpson [13/10/92]

Ts'wàòò / Tsqht'è / Titatseè /
EghqhkèèSpruce boughs / Crowberry /
Steaming / Water plant root

They say that eghqhkèè is very good, also spruce bough and blackberry branches when they are mixed very well. They boiled these together and the woman who just gave birth often put this bush brew on her stomach and all around her waist. And if she drank this brew often, she got well in no time.

Marie Klugie [06/10/92]

Lisimì Jkw'à

Wet towel

People never mentioned about women having difficulties during their pregnancy and never talked about caesarean. For there were midwives with great experience in delivering a child. But when a woman had difficulties, they got a wet towel, smeared some kind of medicine on it, and placed it under the woman. When the baby's head was showing and the woman had a contraction, they placed a wet towel around the baby's head. When they could see that a child was very fat, they continued to place the towel on her. This helped the woman to deliver the baby easily.

Elizabeth Mantla [06/07/93]

Sataàt'èè Ts'èko Ts'wàòò | Menstruation

Jnèe

In the past

The first time we got our menstruation, we don't even look up, for we were ashamed. We covered our face with a headscarf and don't even look at our brother when he heads out hunting. And our parents never want us to step close to our brother's bed mat. If we walked up to the front, they hit us with a willow or stick. People in the past were very serious about omens.

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

Jdìi eyits'q dìi

Past versus present

In the past, people lived by spiritual power. Girls got their first menstruation much later than they do today. In the past, girls had little contact with boys.

Today, because boys and girls 'play around' with each other at an early age, menstruation happens earlier. In the past, when a girl got her first menstruation, the other girls weren't allowed to go and see her.

When people were out in camp and a woman was menstruating, she stayed in one corner of the tent. She didn't use the main entrance but went out the side of the tent, under the flap. She had her own special washroom — a spruce tipi — just outside the tent. The young girls were advised to stay away from other menstruating women, otherwise they'd get their period early and have sore legs.

When a girl first got her menstruation, her mother made her run far. They dressed her up warm and the women shouted that she had become a woman. When she was dressed, they told her to run with all her might. She ran as far as she could. When she stopped, the other women set up a spruce tipi for her. She was out there for about a year.

When a girl appeared mature, but still didn't have her first menstruation, the parents went to the priest in Rae to ask him why she was delayed.

Marie Klugie, Marie Madeline Nitsiza, Celine Eyakfwo,
Rosa Romie [26/04/93]

Chekoo Xè Nezì Hotiì Ts'èdaa | Healthy Pregnancy

Hòt'ò eghàlats'edaa / Edets'et'ì

Hard work / Exercise

Nowadays, young girls don't do too much work when they're pregnant. In the past, the mother advised her daughter(s) to keep active getting wood and doing other chores. In this way, the baby stayed healthy. The only thing a pregnant woman had to be careful about was handling an axe. By chopping lots of wood, the woman and the baby inside her moved a lot. This made birthing easier.

Marie Klugie, Marie Madeline Nitsiza, Celine Eyakfwo,
Rosa Ramie [26/04/93]

Hòtì'ò eghàlats'edaa / Edets'et'ì

Hard work / Exercise

As for pregnant women, the mothers told her daughter(s), "Don't think about taking a rest just because you're pregnant." The daughters believed their mother's words; they didn't hardly rest from doing their chores. This helped the child to stay healthy in the daughter's womb. The mothers also told their daughters to watch for the axe handle and to not stumble hard on the ground. These were the words of our late ancestors.

And as for today, when a young mother / girl is pregnant they say this to them, "Watch out for yourself and don't lift anything heavy."

Marie Madeline Champlain [02/03/93]

Yes, long ago, people always travelled in the forest. And some women gave birth while they travelled. People always used to work hard no matter what situation they were in. Like us, we always worked hard out in the bush and we have seen many in this situation. One of the women from here gave birth to her child right on this lake when we were travelling back to this community. And it happened to one of my sisters-in-law who was expecting her child.

But we moved out to Kwet'ootì (Lac Grandin) we set the tent up for them, for we had arrived there first. We got spruce boughs, and it was very cold. We spent the night there with them, that was when she gave birth to her daughter Adeline. That's how people lived on the land before. It wasn't only them that went through this situation, many other women did too.

Men even took their pregnant women out to the barren lands by canoe and they worked together, no matter how tough the work was. They gave birth to their child normally. We witnessed this as we worked among people.

Joe Zoe Fish [03/01/93]

Pregnant woman worked normally, even when she was between her 30th and 40th week. They always wandered out in the area. But they always advised one another not to lift things too high. "If you reach your arm too high, the child in you won't feel comfortable, and it's the same thing when you come down the hill."

Elizabeth Mantla [06/07/93]

Bebà Wekw'ia | Umbilical Cord

Ekwòhdzjì

Rotten wood

They searched around for the good rotten wood. Once it's found, they dried it very well. And they crushed it until it's like a powder. After the child was born, they used this rotten wood powder for the child's umbilical cord. They washed the child's cord very well every day and used this rotten wood powder each time they changed the dressing. It took less than a week for the umbilical cord to come off.

Annie Simpson [09/10/92]

K'àhdzà / T'èè kòkwì

Dry willow / Burnt charred wood

They gathered some dry willow and burned it. When they changed the child's moss diaper, they smeared the charred wood around the child's belly button and wrapped their belly with some cloth. Within two days the umbilical cord fell off. That's what happened when they used dry willow for the child's cord.

They used the black coal from dry willow. They burned it and used its black coal. After that, the baby's umbilical cord came. We always have that dry willow black coal wrapped in something, all the time.

When we got ready for bed, we smeared that black coal on the baby's belly. It was burned and it's just like powder. Four days later, the cord falls off. There's no infection. That's what we used.

Celine Eyakfwo [09/10/92]

When a child was born, they used black coal to release the umbilical cord easily. They burned wood until it turned into black coal, and smeared it around the cord. Then the cord fell off. After the cord was gone, they washed the baby.

Rosa Romie [06/10/92]