







Processing and Sharing Country Food During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Wildlife and transmission of the COVID-19

- Risk of wildlife contamination with COVID-19 is very low, according to the current knowledge available.
- A research team captured 500 snow geese in spring 2020. None was carrying the virus.
- Research shows that beluga and narwhales have a genetic predisposition to COVID-19. This information is not enough to say that these species could catch the virus. Even if they could, the risk of human transmission of COVID-19 to marine mammals is extremely low according to Fisheries and Oceans Canada¹.

Precautions when processing country food

- Precautions will help prevent the transmission of the virus from one person to another.
 - o Wash hands often and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
 - o Keep a distance of 2 meters from people who are not from your household.
 - o Wear a non-medical mask or face covering when it is not possible
 - o When outdoors, limit the number of people around the carcass to 25 people.

¹ Informal email exchanges with DFO













Country food distribution

- Delivery to homes is the safest option for elderly and people at risk.
- Take additional precautions when people come to pick up country food:
 - o If possible, put the country food in bags in advance and make sure to respect the distance of 2 meters when the person comes to pick it up.
 - o When people are bringing their own bags, the pieces of country food should be dropped directly into the bag. It is encouraged to wear a non-medical mask or face covering when it is not possible to respect the safe distance of 2 meters.
 - o People should stay outside when they come to pick up country food.
 - o Make sure to wash hands often and clean high touch surfaces with disinfectant.
 - Only one member per household should go pick up country food.
 - Anyone feeling sick should not pick up or distribute country food.

Country food safety during the summer months - reminder

Botulism: Two to four (2-4) cases of botulism (qassuniq) occur each year in Nunavik. Consistent refrigeration of sea mammal products is protective. Freezing products until Fall is recommended for safe igunaq making.

Trichinellosis program: Walrus hunters should keep on testing ALL walrus tongues. A small number of walrus are infected. No case of human trichinellosis (parasite mostly affecting muscles) has been diagnosed in Nunavik in the last 20 years with walrus as a source. The merit of this is the result of hunters' commitment toward the testing program. No distribution of walrus meat should proceed before results are received.

