COVID Avoidance and How Native American Medicine is a Possible Answer

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COVID is a challenge to all individuals. Worldwide the pandemic continues. It also has impacted many special groups worldwide including Native Americans. Native Americans have many traditional methods to deal with medical challenges. It is not a new challenge. What about COVID? How have Native Americans chosen to avert the COVID challenge? It has been difficult because current suggested face masks and distance separations are difficult due to typical necessary group meetings. What is happening today in these communities? Native Americans have a deep connection to nature that helps establish and maintain balance, health and wellness. Nature is referred to as “Mother Earth” and is adopted into many numerous Native American customs and traditions…including medicine. Do you know about the Native American “Medicine Wheel”? It is not unreal. The Medicine Wheel represents whole body completeness as well as the circle of life travels and teaches how to maintain health and wellness. Each Native American Indian tribe today still uses a medicine wheel to assist with the typical challenges to physical and mental health, including COVID. These practices by “medicine men” occur today through the continued passage to sacred healers from generation to generation as described in many American Indian myths and legends. Why is this important...today...to any individual worldwide? It is about how we relate to our existence and the need to stay in balance with the forces of nature to ensure vibrant health. What is the state of your health and wellness? Native Americans understand how every new challenge can be meet through their relation to higher spirits and their environment.

These medicine wheels, according to various Indian legends, suggest all on Mother Earth spoke the same language. Plants could communicate with the fish, the four legged animals could speak with the trees, stones could speak with the wind and even the most dependent, the two legged humans, could also speak with other parts of creation. All initially existed in harmony.

How does COVID resistance occur in many Native American individuals? The Medicine Wheel, where used, provides a unique answer. How can this fight COVID?

Most medicine wheels, also called sacred hoops, have four common compass points, each with a guiding spirit, that symbolizes the four stages of life and offer lessons and truths that support the development of a balanced life. Also, the number four is sacred to Native American tribes as it represents the four season, the four human needs-physical, mental, emotional and spiritual, the four kingdoms-animal, mineral, plant and human including the four sacred medicines-sweetgrass, tobacco, cedar and sage.

Tribal members consulted their sacred healers for not only medical problems, but also dilemmas in their lives and emotional problems. Common herbs used by the various tribes included Boneset tea as a remedy for colds while Wild Cherry Bark was used for coughs, sore throat and diarrhea. Blue Cohosh root was used as a tea to ease pain during childbirth. Diabetes could be offset by the use of Wild Carrot Blossoms and Devil’s Club. Dogwood, Feverwort and Willow Bark were soothing teas for fevers. Pennyroyal tea was believed to cure headaches and Native Hemlock was the flu remedy. Serious surgeries that required sedatives would usually be prepared with Wild Lettuce, Hops and Wild Black Cherry. Green Hellebore, American Hemp and Dogbane addressed heart and circulatory problems. These plants are very valuable as medicines because of the great chemical powers they contain. If used the wrong way these chemicals can be potentially dangerous. **Note: The information on herbals presented above is provided as a courtesy of the Cherokee National Cultural Resource Center and their trained herbalists.

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Often unknown, as offered in Native American myth and legend, is that the moon, or month, during which one is born determines the starting place on the Medicine Wheel and reflects many characteristics of the personality of the individual and their balanced connection to the Universe. The following comments are taken from the book “Medicine Wheel and Earth Astrology,” written by medicine man, Sun Bear and Wabun (medicine helper) of the Chippewa Indian Tribe. ISBN 0-671-76420-9.

Every individual, based upon when born, has a totem or spirit being, sacred object or symbol that serves as an emblem of the individual. This totem is represented by a particular plant, mineral or stone, animal and clan (family). For example, those born during the second moon of the year (known as the Rest and Cleansing Moon in Indian folklore) have silver as their mineral totem, the otter as their animal kingdom totem and the aspen tree as their plant totem. Individuals born under this moon are usually very intuitive and have the capacity to become telepathic more easily than most other people. They are visionary people, always looking beyond what is obvious to them if others would awaken to their own higher natures. These individuals have the capacity to allow pure spiritual power to flow through them if they have learned to keep their forces balanced and to use their energies correctly. Otter people, with their tie to the moon, have the capacity to be very emotional, enjoy intellectual discussion, and are often difficult to resist in romantic activities because of their attractive natures.

One of the most notable stone Medicine Wheels is in the Bighorn Medicine Wheel located in the Bighorn National Forest in Wyoming, USA. It was made a National Historic Site in 1996 and is used as a sacred site by Crow Indians for fasting and vision quests including the offering of thanks and prayers. It is also notable that although the nearly 80 Medicine Wheels which exist today in North America are smaller than the massive stone structures of the Egyptian pyramids or Stonehenge, these Native American monuments were also constructed with astrological connection.

As a tie to today’s need for better understanding of why an individual is as they are, why they may become physically or mentally challenged and the ways in which individual balance can be restored, the book American Indian Myths and Legends written by Richard Erdoes and Alfonso Ortiz presents 160 tales from 80 tribal groups about Native American mythic heritage. ISBN: 0-394-74018-1. It is recommended reading.

Is Stonehedge a Medicine Wheel?

Journey through your Medicine Wheel to become complete. Good travels! Be Well!