



## Benefits of Traditional Food – Inuit Health Survey Fact Sheet Series

### The Health Benefits of Country Food

Eating country food has cultural and spiritual benefits. It is also a very significant source of nutrients that are vital to promoting physical health. A diet rich in country food is thought to promote heart health and help prevent diseases like diabetes.



#### Did you know?

**Arctic char** is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids, which are healthy fats that promote heart health and help memory and brain performance. Char is also a source of B vitamins, which help our bodies use carbohydrates and help promote overall digestive health.

Similarly, **walrus** and **seal** meat are an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids as well as iron. Our body uses iron to transport oxygen in the blood, which aids in the distribution of energy to our muscles and brain. A diet low in iron can make person feel tired.

**Beluga** and **narwhal** muktaaq are also excellent sources of protein and vitamin A. Vitamin A supports eye health and also promotes immune system function.

The meat or protein from **caribou**, **arctic hare**, **goose**, and **duck** assists with the repair and building of muscles, skin, and blood. The fat content of **caribou meat** is also very low: only 4% as compared to 12% - 20% contained in beef, pork, or chicken.

Wild plants like **mountain sorrel (Qunguli)** and a variety of arctic berries such as **blackberries**, **blueberries**, and **cranberries** are excellent sources of vitamin C, fibre, and carbohydrates. Vitamin C promotes gum, teeth, skin, and blood vessel health. It also helps wounds heal and assists our bodies in fighting off sickness. Our bodies also use carbohydrates for energy and a diet rich in fibre can help fight diseases like cancer.