



National Indian Health Board
**NATIONAL TRIBAL
COVID-19 RESPONSE**

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COVID-19 and Sweat Lodges

What We Know About Temperature and Coronaviruses



- The low and high temperatures that kill SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) have not yet been determined. Studies show that temperatures high enough to inactivate other types of coronaviruses can range from 130°F to as high as 160°F.¹
- The temperature to kill a virus is dependent on the material of the surface on which the virus lies, the surrounding environment and other factors.
- Humans' internal body temperature can only be raised or lowered safely by a few degrees. A raised body temperature may provide some benefits to the immune system, however certain infections may be aided by increased body temperature.^{2,3} The effect of body temperature on COVID-19 is not known.

Sweat Lodges

While the benefits of sweat lodges are many and holistic, using a sweat lodge to prevent or treat COVID-19 may not produce the desired results.

- Once infected, viruses are protected in your cells and do not respond to temperature extremes.⁴
- Temperatures of sweat lodges vary widely and not enough is known about the temperature that can kill SARS-CoV-2 on surfaces.
- The effect of body temperature on COVID-19 is not known.
- Sweat can rid the body of some substances, but not viruses such as SARS-CoV-2.
- In some traditions, people sweat together in a group, making physical distancing difficult, and thereby increasing the risk for all involved.

NIHB HONORS AND RESPECTS TRIBAL TRADITIONS AND CEREMONIAL ACTIVITIES. WE ASK FOR UNDERSTANDING AS NIHB'S INTENTION IS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION THAT WILL BENEFIT TRIBES AND TRADITIONAL PRACTITIONERS - ALLOWING THEM TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS THAT WILL BE BEST FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES AND CITIZENS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

References and Resources

¹ https://www.who.int/csr/sars/survival_2003_05_04/en/

² <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/321889>

³ Berger, L., Rounds, J. "Sweat Lodges, A Medical View". IHS Primary Care Provider. Vol 23, No. 6., June 1998

⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200403-coronavirus-will-hot-drinks-protect-you-from-covid-19>

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