



From left: Tribal Council members Bud Lane, Gloria Ingle and Sharon Edenfield; Gov. Kate Brown; and Tribal Council members Delores Pigsley and Loraine Butler



Bud Lane (left) joins Valerie Switzler (Warm Springs) and Perry Chocktoot (Klamath) in a discussion about current cultural practices and teaching.

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Photos by Diane Rodriguez

Tribal elder Ed Ben leads the Color Guard.



Delores Pigsley (below) gives some brief comments, joined by Don Ivey (Coquille) and representatives from each of Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes.



Nutrition for brain health and emotional well-being

By Nancy Ludwig, MS, RD, LD, Siletz Tribal Head Start Nutrition

As part of my role as a consultant nutritionist to Siletz Tribal Head Start, I offer information for families. This segment examines how our ability to handle stress and avoid depression is influenced by your nutrition. Take a moment and consider whether you are doing enough to support your nervous system. Although we can't change the rainy weather or the dark season, we can help ourselves to be more resilient with the help of nutrition.

Nutrition is at the root of many problems, including brain function and mental health. Sub-optimal nutrition could be due to poor diet, unique nutritional needs or food sensitivities.

Poor diet means consuming inadequate nutrients or foods that don't support the alertness or calmness required. Often people with mental health problems have significantly higher nutritional needs than the general population, whereby supplementation is needed to correct deficiency.

Food sensitivities can also create mental health issues.

Poor diet: An optimal diet includes high quality proteins, fats and carbohydrates.

Adequate protein is essential. The diet often is actually too low in protein when depression or lack of clear thinking occurs. While vegetarian diets can be excellent, low protein intake is not always best – especially around mental health. Protein also helps with blood sugar stability and alertness.

High quality fats are critical and include essential fatty acids, especially omega 3 fatty acids from fish, including pacific oysters, mackerel, salmon, bluefish, mullet, sablefish, menhaden, anchovy, herring, lake trout, sardines and tuna.

Plant sources for omega-3 fatty acids include flax seed, hemp, canola, walnut, pumpkin, soy, wheat germ, algae, green plants and perilla seeds.

Additionally, avoiding rancid fats is essential as these promote oxidative damage in our bodies. Smell your oils in your kitchen before you use them and replace them when they begin to smell "off."

High quality carbohydrates mean fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes rather than donuts and candy.

Don't underestimate the power of green leafy vegetables! They are loaded with minerals, vitamins and phytochemicals, and are very low in calories.

Unique nutritional needs: This can be tricky because not all people fit the dietary recommendations.

Orthomolecular nutrition is the science of finding ideal nutrient levels for individuals. Nutrients can be obtained through food, but supplementation may be needed to achieve balance. It is important to consult a health professional when considering high doses.

Vitamin B complex often is needed at higher levels. Occasionally specific B vitamins are needed separately, but I usually also recommend a base of B-complex since these vitamins work in concert with one another.

Vitamin D deficiency is associated with depression. Essential fatty acids, such as omega-3, are important for mental health. Flax oil is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids, but plant sources lack the needed DHA and EPA and some people can't make the conversion.

Fish oil contains DHA and EPA (since the fish ate the plants and converted it to the needed forms). Therefore, fish oil is

highly recommended (if you don't have a fish allergy).

Food sensitivities: Any food can potentially cause symptoms. These symptoms can be physical and/or mental/emotional. There are no hypoallergenic diets – except ones uniquely adapted for individuals.

Over-use (eating the same foods over and over) tends to be the key to developing new sensitivities. The effects of gluten on behavior can be quite profound. Gluten is not the only issue, however, as symptoms often are caused by multiple foods.

Common allergens include milk, egg, wheat, finfish, shellfish, soy, peanuts and tree nuts. Both gluten and casein often are avoided in treating autism spectrum. We often crave the very foods that are bad for us. Food addictions as well as sensitivities can play havoc with mood.

When life feels stressful or hard, remember that ideal nutrition is a powerful ally. Use it to your advantage.

Siletz Tribal Head Start offers my time at no cost to you to support family nutrition over the telephone. Please contact me if you have nutrition concerns about your Head Start child.