

## Welcome!



This is a kit designed to improve the health of rural, remote and northern women across Canada by making sure that women have a say in how health programs, plans and policies are developed.

No one is more important in this process than you. No one will have more passion about improving rural women's health than rural women. No one has more insight into the challenges or the solutions.

This kit was developed from a national project that included consultations with women who live in many different rural or remote places throughout Canada – from the high arctic to the prairies to coastal regions and everywhere in between – and it reflects their concerns. The final report *Rural, Remote and Northern Women's Health: Policy and Research Directions* was released in June 2004.

Women who were part of the national project said that a practical kit like this one would give them the information they need to make helpful changes in their communities. We hope you think so too.

Each person has specific concerns about rural women's health. This kit will help you find ways to express your concerns to the right people. It also provides you with links to good resources and other people who share your concerns.

We hope this kit meets your needs and helps make changes that improve your participation in change and in getting good health care for you, your family and your community. Let us know how the kit helps you make a difference, and how we can make it better. Together we can improve rural women's health!

One important note about the report - when the term "rural women" is used in this kit, it refers to women living in rural, remote and northern parts of the country.



## THIS KIT HAS SEVERAL PARTS

**1. Where did all of this come from?**

The kit includes pages (“backgrounders”) that describe the national research project process that led to these messages and this kit.

**2. Who is part of the process of change?**

This section shows how the process of change involves ordinary people, policy makers and researchers working together.

**3. What are the key messages from the national project?**

During the national consultation rural women repeatedly offered four key messages. These messages are provided here, and can be explained to the various groups involved in the process of change.

What’s New? Answers the question that reporters and policy-makers will ask.

**4. How do you communicate the messages?**

This section offers tips, examples and samples of lots of ways to communicate the key messages to different audiences.

**5. What are your issues?**

Each area and every group has its own important issues – these are some questions you can use to lead discussions.

## HOW TO USE THIS KIT

This kit is the result of talks with women across Canada about the issues in rural women’s health today. It explains the key issues raised by rural women and researchers. It offers specific ways to help make change happen.

Use this kit and the report to reinforce the support you need to make changes in your community. Of course it will be important to determine what your local health priorities are, and set achievable objectives for changes you would like to have happen. Be sure to include issues important to your area that may not have been covered in this kit. Although the full report is very comprehensive, there may be issues that it did not include, or that will come up as time goes on.

Work with a group or if no group is covering these issues, form a group if you can. Even if it is a small group with an informal structure, having a name will make it easier for the media, politicians, and bureaucrats to know who you are and how to contact you for your opinions. Being a group may also make it possible for you to apply for funding for travel and meetings.

