



Empowering Métis Voices in Reproductive Health

Understanding body sovereignty in healthcare is essential for Métis people. It means recognizing our power to make informed decisions about our health and that our experiences empower us, leading to better health outcomes. Access to education on reproductive health—including menstruation, screenings and understanding our bodies—ensures that Métis individuals can take control of their well-being.

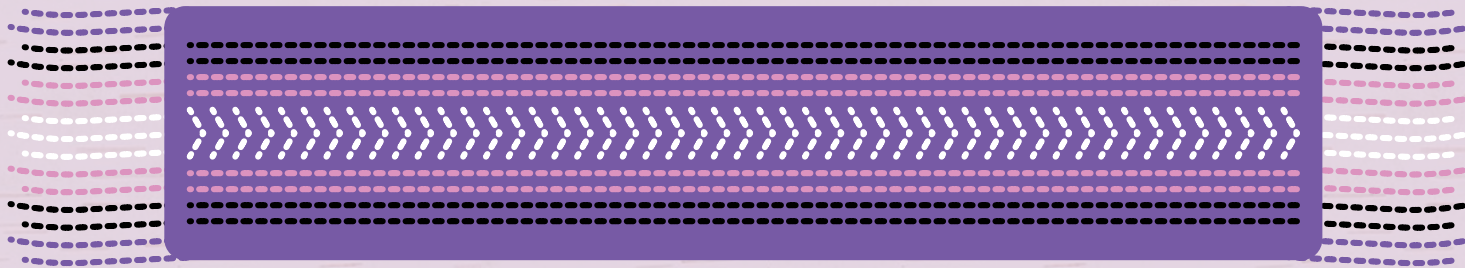
Métis people are diverse, and so too are our bodies. Each of us has a unique relationship with our reproductive health, shaped by our experiences, our histories, and the way our bodies function.

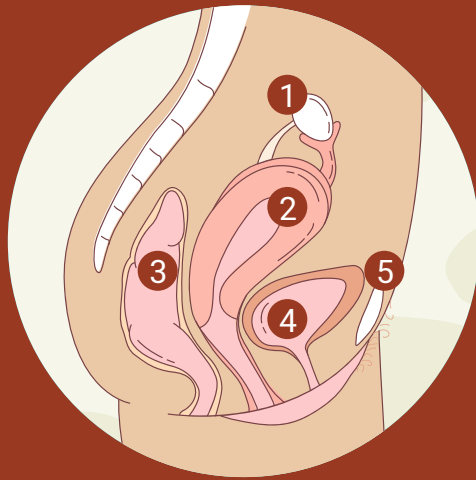
While the way our bodies present and function may vary, one thing is clear: understanding your anatomy is a powerful act of self-care. It is the first step toward taking control of your health and reclaiming your right to make informed decisions about your body.

Disclaimer: These worksheets are for educational purposes only. For medical advice, consult a trusted healthcare provider who respects your cultural values and needs.

Your Right to Be Heard

Identity and storytelling are central to Métis culture. Stories preserve history, teachings, and values through oral tradition for future generations. Through oral storytelling, we can share cultural knowledge, promote healing, foster community, and support Métis holistic health. These stories often include lessons about well-being, mental and physical health, and the importance of relationships with the land, water, and each other.





- 1 Ovary
- 2 Uterus
- 3 Rectum
- 4 Bladder
- 5 Pubic symphysis

Knowing Our Bodies and Naming Our Experiences

Think of your body as a story—a story that belongs to you, shaped by your experiences, your culture, and your biology. You may share experiences with others, but how you feel about and perceive can be totally different because they are influenced by other parts of your life.

Our anatomies and how we relate to them vary and will influence our journey and experiences. This is especially true when it comes to the uterus:

- * Some of us have an anteverted uterus, where the uterus tilts forward toward the bladder.
- * Some have a retroverted or tilted uterus, where the uterus tips backward toward the rectum.
- * Some have a uterus that is anteflexed or retroflexed.

These differences are natural, and they are all part of our personal health stories.

These variations can affect how we experience things like menstruation, pregnancy, or pelvic discomfort. By knowing these variations we begin

to understand that there is no “one right way” for our bodies to function. We can also better name and explain our experiences.

For example, those of us with a retroverted uterus might experience more back discomfort during menstruation or pregnancy. This knowledge can change the way we approach discomfort—it helps us understand that changes or discomforts in our reproductive health are part of our unique health story, not something to be embarrassed about or ignored.

When we name the parts of our bodies, we gain the confidence to speak about them openly. It gives us the language we need to ask for help from healthcare providers, and it allows us to make informed choices about our health. No more silence, no more shame—just clear, respectful communication about what we need and how we feel. Learning about our bodies is a gateway to empowerment—to understanding what’s happening inside us, what’s normal for us, and what we need to feel healthy, respected, and whole.

Understanding Reproductive Examinations

Understanding your body—its anatomy and its differences—is a way to care for yourself and advocate for the care you deserve.

When it comes to reproductive examinations—whether it’s a pelvic exam, an HPV test, or any other aspect of sexual or reproductive care—it’s essential to remember that you are in control. It is your right to feel comfortable and respected during these appointments, and you should always feel empowered to ask for what you need.

Ask about the speculum size: There are different sizes available, and you have the right to request the one that fits comfortably for your body.

Take it at your pace: You can ask the healthcare provider to slow down or stop at any time if you’re feeling uncomfortable. It’s important to listen to your body.

Self-insertion: If you prefer, you can request to insert the speculum yourself. This is your body, and you should have the option to control how much you engage in the procedure.

Communicate your needs: Don’t hesitate to share your previous experiences and how you like to be cared for. Your healthcare provider needs to know your preferences to treat you in the most respectful way possible.

Bring support: If it helps, bring a trusted person along for support. You don’t have to navigate this experience alone.

Self-swabbing: A patient has the right to request a self-swab (vaginal and vaginorectal).



Reflection Questions:

- ✿ How has learning about your reproductive health and the teachings passed down through your culture helped you feel more connected to your overall well-being and in control of your health?
- ✿ How can understanding the unique ways your body works, along with the knowledge of your community and culture, help you communicate more effectively with healthcare providers to ensure they understand your needs?