



## **Evolutionary Medicine: Navajo Nation Kids Learn the History of Evo Med**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 24.05.01, published September 2024  
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During the pandemic, our native people resorted to natural remedies. Traditional herbalists and practitioners of traditional ceremonies turned to plants near Navajo Nation springs, mesas, and mountains. The herbalists and practitioners knew specific plants that were believed to counteract SARS CoV-2 and the COVID disease. A plant called sage familiar to many households near and around the Navajo Nation is not domesticated like the modern sage we cook with in the kitchen. The native plant sage is used to treat various health problems such as the common cold, sprained muscles, broken bones, and respiratory issues. By explanation, Native American Indians knew of viruses and pathogens before Europeans crossed the Atlantic Ocean, and they used local plants known for medication against illnesses. In my unit, I would tie-in medical practices of Native American Indians in history, which could be compared to how more recent understanding of pathogen evolution is perceived in evolutionary medicine that seeks to better understand the health problems in humans through knowledge of evolutionary biology over time. There are similarities and differences, but they have in common the notion of solving human illnesses and it is important to appreciate the history of how medicinal plants helped the Native American Indians address health problems.

(Developed for Science-Life Science, ELA-Reading Informational Text, and History- Earth Science, grade 6; recommended for Earth Science, grades 6 and 8)

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