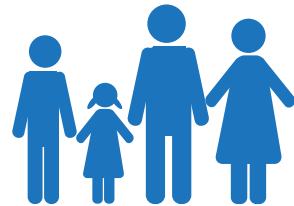


Calculating Food Costs Based on the Nutritious Food Basket

Follow the steps below to find out the cost of a weekly Nutritious Food Basket:

STEP 1:

Write down the age and sex of all the people you are feeding.  
For example: Man, 37 years old; Woman, 37 years old; Boy, 14 years old; and Girl, 8 years old.



STEP 2:

Using Table #2, write down the cost of feeding each person. Add up these costs. This is your subtotal.

STEP 3:

It costs a little more to feed a small group of people and less to feed a large group. So your subtotal estimated in Step 2 will need to be adjusted. Use the following adjustments for household size and record this figure in the “TOTAL (per week)” row below.

- 1 person - multiply by 1.20
- 2 people - multiply by 1.10
- 3 people - multiply by 1.05
- 4 people - make no change
- 5-6 people - multiply by 0.95
- 7+ people - multiply by 0.90

STEP 4:

To determine the cost per month, multiply your total cost by 4.33.

In this example, it would cost \$865.44/month to feed this family.

EXAMPLE	Sex	Age (years)	Cost Per Week (\$)
	Man	37	\$ 55.91
	Woman	37	\$ 47.36
	Boy	14	\$ 63.98
	Girl	8	\$ 32.62
	Subtotal		\$199.87
	Total (per week) \$199.87 x no adjustments		
	Total (per month) \$199.87 x 4.33 = \$865.44		

YOUR HOUSEHOLD	Sex	Age (years)	Cost Per Week (\$)
	Man		
	Woman		
	Boy		
	Girl		
	Subtotal		
	Total (per week)		
	Total (per month)		

Table 2: Food Costs

	Age/Sex	Cost Per Week
Boy	2-3	25.98
	4-8	33.57
	9-13	44.70
	14-18	63.98
Girl	2-3	25.50
	4-8	32.62
	9-13	38.20
	14-18	45.89
Man	19-30	62.02
	31-50	55.91
	51-70	53.86
	Over 70	53.32
Woman	19-30	47.96
	31-50	47.36
	51-70	41.59
	Over 70	40.75
Pregnant Woman	Younger than 18 yrs	51.37
	19-30	52.01
	31-50	50.72
Breastfeeding Woman	Younger than 18 yrs	53.40
	19-30	55.36
	31-50	54.07
Family of 4*		\$199.87
*Man and woman 31-50; boy 14-18 years; girl 4-8 years		

For food cost details and references, please call the Nutrition Promotion Program, Peterborough County-City Health Unit, at **705-743-1000** or visit our website at [www.pcchu.ca](http://www.pcchu.ca).

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Limited Incomes: A Recipe For Hunger

October 2015

Poverty is the Reason People are Going Hungry in Peterborough

Imagine you have worked for the same factory for 10 years. Two years ago, the company was bought out and production moved. Since then, you have taken a skills training program and found some temporary jobs, but nothing permanent. In between jobs, you are forced to go on social assistance.

After you pay rent and utilities, the money you receive leaves you with very few options. You will have other expenses such as telephone, clothing, transportation costs, cleaning supplies, and personal care items like toothpaste and toilet paper.. It is likely that you will have to borrow from your food budget to make ends meet. Will you be able to afford to eat? Will you be able to choose healthy foods? Being in this difficult situation is often referred to as “food insecurity.”

Food Insecurity and Peterborough

Food insecurity – inadequate or insecure access to food because of financial constraints – is a serious social and public health problem in Ontario. In 2013, 12.5% of Ontario households or almost 1.6 million people, experienced food insecurity. Food insecurity is also a local issue, with 11.5% of Peterborough households being food insecure.

This means that they:

- worry about not having enough to eat,
- compromise the quality of food eaten, or
- do not have a variety of food choices on hand.

For an estimated 5% of Peterborough households the situation is severe and people, including children did not have enough to eat because of a lack of money. In local households with children under 18 years of age, 23.6% experience food insecurity compared to 8.7% in Ontario. **This means that one in four children in Peterborough live in a food insecure household.**

Low Incomes Don’t Add Up

- People living on social assistance find that, after paying for rent and utilities, there is not enough money to buy nourishing food. Food insecurity affects 64.5% of Ontario households on social assistance.
- 36% of children living in poverty in Ontario have at least one parent who is working full time year round but not earning enough to lift their families out of poverty.
- 58% of Ontario families struggling to put food on the table are part of the labour force but are trapped in low-paying or unstable jobs.

The root cause of food insecurity is lack of sufficient income. Food insecurity is more common in households with lower incomes, in those receiving social assistance or those headed by a lone-female parent.

Working together to eliminate poverty in Peterborough is the most important thing we can do to increase food security in our community.

About the Nutritious Food Basket

In May 2015, the Peterborough County–City Health Unit priced the Nutritious Food Basket (NFB). The NFB is Ontario’s standardized food costing tool used by Health Units to measure the cost of healthy eating, based on Canada’s Food Guide. The food costs are recorded according to the lowest available price at the grocery store.

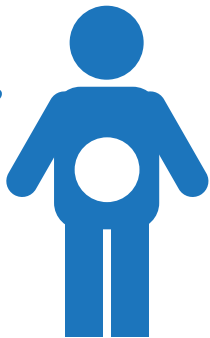


Understanding the Nutritious Food Basket

Generally, highly processed foods and food with little or no nutritional value (such as soft drinks and potato chips) are not included. The food basket does not contain any foods for special diets, such as gluten-free products. Personal and household care items, like toothpaste, soap and cleaning supplies are not included.

The Nutritious Food Basket design assumes:

- most people have the necessary time, food skills and equipment to be able to prepare most meals from scratch; and
- people have access to quality grocery stores.



How Do We Know Some People Don’t Have Enough Money For Food?

A summary of some real life situations for people living in Peterborough appears in Table 1. These scenarios illustrate that after paying for shelter and food, minimum wage earners and households on fixed incomes have little, if any money left over to cover other basic monthly expenses.

Table 1: May 2015 Peterborough Nutritious Food Basket Scenarios

Monthly Income/Expenses	Single Man (Ontario Works)	Single Man (Ontario Disability Support Program)	Single Elderly Woman (Old Age Security/ Guaranteed Income Supplement)	Single Parent 2 Children (Ontario Works)	Family of 4 (Minimum Wage)	Family of 4 (Income Median)
Monthly Income including Benefits & Credits	\$740	\$1,193	\$1,544	\$1,988	\$2,882	\$6,952
Estimated Shelter Cost	\$670	\$819	\$819	\$963	\$1,173	\$1,173
Cost of a Nutritious Diet	\$291	\$291	\$212	\$655	\$865	\$865
What’s Left?	-\$221	\$83	\$513	\$370	\$844	\$4,914
% Income Required for Shelter	91%	69%	53%	48%	41%	17%
% Income required for nutritious food	39%	24%	14%	33%	30%	12%

REMEMBER: People still need to pay for utilities, phone, transportation, cleaning supplies, personal care items, clothing, gifts, entertainment, internet, school essentials, medical and dental costs and other purchases.

References available by emailing [cdoris@pcchu.ca](mailto:cdoris@pcchu.ca).

NOTE: Shelter costs may or may not include utilities.

How Do People Cope?

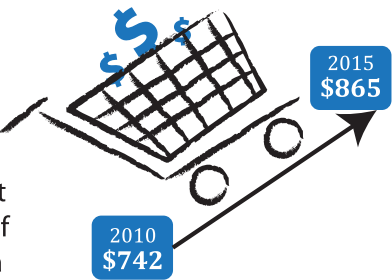
- Research tells us that people know which foods are essential for good health. However, when money is tight, people are forced to adapt by cutting into their food budget.
- People are forced to skip meals or fill up on cheap foods that are not necessarily nutritious.
- They may eat less fruit, vegetables and milk products because they can’t afford them.
- Parents living on low incomes feed their children first. They will go without eating to ensure that their children can eat. As a result, the parents’ nutrition and health suffers.
- As a last resort, people are forced to use food banks. Food banks can only offer about three days worth of food per month.

How much do you spend on food in a month?

The cost of feeding a family of four in Peterborough was \$865 in May 2015. That represents 12% of an average family’s income.

In contrast, the Nutritious Food Basket monthly cost (\$865) represents 30% of the income of a family supported by a minimum wage earner.

To calculate your own food costs, see page 4.



Does Food Cost Too Much?

Local food costs have increased by 16.6% over the past five years. However, the cost of food is not the issue for most people. The issue is that incomes are too low. For people living on low incomes, there is not enough money left to buy healthy food after paying rent and utility bills.

What Can We Do About Poverty and Hunger?

1. Learn more about poverty and hunger. Check out these websites:
  - Peterborough Poverty Reduction Network - <http://ptbopovertyreduction.com/>
  - Poverty Free Ontario - [www.povertyfreeontario.ca](http://www.povertyfreeontario.ca)
2. Speak up! Ask for change. Write to your local MP, MPP or Council member. Use this report to increase their understanding of poverty and its impacts on the most vulnerable in our community.
3. Learn more about the concept of Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) and help spread the word. BIG provides an income sufficient for life’s basic needs, guaranteed by the government to all. [www.basicincomecanada.org](http://www.basicincomecanada.org)
4. Support local food programs while working to end poverty. Food programs include community gardens, collective kitchens, gleaning, community meal programs, student nutrition programs, and food box initiatives. Help by fundraising or volunteering your time. Visit [www.foodinpeterborough.ca](http://www.foodinpeterborough.ca).
5. Buy local foods whenever possible to support local farmers and our local economy.
6. The Nourish Project, through innovative programs focused on growing, cooking, eating and advocating for good food, cultivates health, builds community and promotes fairness. Learn more about the Nourish Project at [www.nourishproject.ca](http://www.nourishproject.ca).



Poverty and Health... Did You Know?

- People living on low incomes have more health problems and die younger than people with higher incomes.
- Children living in low income households are more likely to get sick and are less able to do well at school.
- Being food insecure is strongly associated with becoming a high-cost user of health care.