Appendix A

Peterborough Public Health

Serving the residents of **Curve Lake** and **Hiawatha First Nations**, and the **County** and **City of Peterborough**

No Money for Food is…Cent$less

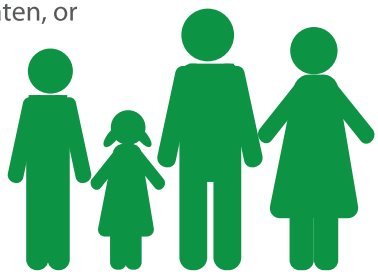
September 2018

Food Insecurity in Peterborough

Food insecurity – inadequate or insecure access to food because of financial constraints – is a serious social and public health problem in Ontario. People who are food insecure cannot afford to buy the food they want or need for good health. Limited incomes are the main reason why people are food insecure in Peterborough.

In 2014, 11.9% or 594,900 Ontario households experienced food insecurity. In the City and County of Peterborough, food insecurity impacts 16.5% or 1 in 6 households.

People living in food insecure households:
- worry about not having enough to eat,
- compromise the quality and/or quantity of food eaten, or
- do not have a variety of food choices on hand.



In Peterborough, food insecurity affects 30% of households with children under the age of 18, compared to 15.5% in Ontario. One out of every 2 female lone parent families are food insecure, compared to the provincial average of 1 in 5 female lone parent families.

Low Incomes Don't Add Up

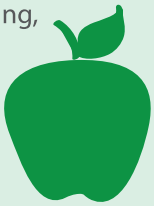
- People living on social assistance find that, after paying for rent and utilities, there is not enough money to buy nourishing food. Food insecurity affects 64% of Ontario households living on social assistance.
- Food insecurity is highest among aboriginal Canadians, low income households on fixed incomes, single mothers and people who do not own a home.
- In Canada, 62.2% of food insecure household report their main source of income as wages, salaries or self-employment. These are people who are part of the labour force by are trapped in low-paying or unstable jobs.

Poverty and Health… Did You Know?

- People who are food insecure report poorer health than people with higher incomes. Being food insecure makes people more vulnerable to chronic diseases (i.e., heart disease, diabetes, cancer) and these risks increase with the level of food insecurity.
- People who are food insecure may eat less fruit, vegetables and milk products because they cannot afford them. They are forced to skip meals or fill up on cheap foods that are not as nutritious.
- Exposure to severe food insecurity and experiences of child and youth hunger impact children's wellbeing. They are at greater risk for conditions like asthma, depression and suicidal thoughts in adolescence and early adulthood.
- Household food insecurity impacts the Ontario health care system. People who are food insecure have higher annual health care costs.

About the Nutritious Food Basket

In May 2018, Peterborough Public Health staff 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. *(See over for results.)*



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 2018 Peterborough Nutritious Food Basket Scenarios**

	Single Person Households			Households with Children			
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** (Ontario Works)	**Family of 4** (full-time Minimum Wage)	**Family of 4** Average Income (after tax)
Monthly Income including Benefits & Credits	$810	$1,251	$1,694	$2,363	$2,582	$3,603	$7,871
Estimated Shelter Cost	$705	$850	$850	$988	$1,190	$1,190	$1,190
Cost of a Nutritious Diet	$303	$303	$218	$678	$898	$898	$898
What's Left?	**-$198**	**$98**	**$626**	**$697**	**$494**	**$1,515**	**$5,783**
% Income Required for Shelter	87%	68%	50%	42%	46%	33%	15%
% Income required for nutritious food	37%	24%	13%	29%	35%	25%	11%
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. NOTE: Shelter costs may or may not include utilities.							

How much do you spend on food in a month?

The cost of feeding a family of four in Peterborough was $898 in May 2018. That represents 11% of an average family's income.

In contrast, the Nutritious Food Basket cost ($898) represents 25% of the income of a family supported by a minimum wage earner or 35% of the income for a family receiving Ontario Works.

Does Food Cost Too Much?

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 Food Insecurity?



Educate yourself. Food insecurity is more than a food problem.

- Learn more about the root causes of poverty and food insecurity. Understand that food banks are not a long-term solution to food insecurity. Find out how food insecurity affects health care and social costs impact everyone.

Advocate for change. Speak up. Your voice can make a difference.

- 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. Consider what improved social assistance rates, increased minimum wage, a living wage, affordable housing, affordable childcare and a national drug plan would mean for people in our community and their food security.
- Learn more about a Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) as a policy that will provide an income sufficient for life's basic needs, guaranteed by the government to all. Visit ***www.basicincomecanada.org*** or ***nourishproject.ca/basic-income-peterborough-network***.
- Support food systems planning that makes healthy, local food a priority. To learn more about the Peterborough Food Charter, visit ***www.foodinpeterborough.ca/food-charter***.

Support local food programs while working to end poverty.

- Food programs provide short-term relief for those in need and offer skill-building opportunities while work continues on longer-term strategies addressing food insecurity. Support programs (i.e., community gardens, gleaning, collective kitchens, community meal programs, food boxes and the Nourish Project) by volunteering your time or fundraising. Visit ***www.foodinpeterborough.ca*** and ***nourishproject.ca***.

For food cost details and references, please call the Nutrition Promotion Program, Peterborough Public Health, at **705-743-1000** or visit ***www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca***.

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