

Dietitians of Canada Position Statement on Household Food Insecurity in Canada



Household food insecurity is the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints. It is a significant, serious and avoidable public health issue that disproportionately affects racialized households and has profound impacts on the mental and physical health of individuals and strains the health care system.

Dietitians have a vital role to play in addressing the causes and the consequences of household food insecurity through evidence-based advocacy and the provision of dignified, person-centred care to those experiencing food insecurity.

Recommendations

Economic policies that ensure adequate household income are essential to reduce food insecurity. Dietitians of Canada recommends that federal, provincial and territorial governments:

- Develop and implement a basic income so that all people in Canada can meet their basic needs, including purchasing enough safe, nutritious and culturally acceptable food
- Strengthen existing tax credits, transfer payments to individuals and other economic policies that reduce poverty, including indexing these programs to inflation
- Apply a health equity approach when developing economic policies to address the unfair and unjust burden of household food insecurity based on sociodemographic factors including race, education, household structure and home ownership status.

Monitoring and reporting

Regular monitoring and reporting on the prevalence of household food insecurity in Canada is a vital part of evaluating the impact of economic policies. Dietitians of Canada recommends:

- Continued annual collection of data about household food insecurity across all regions
- Annual analysis of and public reporting on the state of food insecurity in Canada
- Regular evaluation of the impact of economic policies on household food insecurity in conjunction with strengthening policies to maximize effectiveness.

Indigenous households have disproportionately higher rates of household food insecurity not only due to inadequate income, but also because of the unique factors affecting the availability, accessibility and utilization of food. Dietitians of Canada recommends using an approach that respects and promotes the autonomy of First Nations, Inuit and Métis to:

- Support Indigenous food systems and the right of communities to define and have decision-making control over their food systems
- Remove policy barriers that restrict or ban land-based food activities
- Implement policies and strategies that improve the availability, affordability and quality of foods at grocery stores.

Read the full position statement at www.dietitians.ca/Advocacy.