THE COST OF HEALTHY EATING IN SASKATECHewan
2015

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Saskatchewan Health Region
Objectives

• How much does a basic nutritious diet cost in Saskatchewan in 2015?
• What are the impacts of food insecurity on health and wellbeing?
• Is healthy food accessible for everyone in Saskatchewan?
• What more can we do to improve food insecurity?
Introduction

This report can be used to:

- Allocate funds for nutrition programs, food grants, and food allowances
- Make decisions regarding health, nutrition, and social policy
- Further assessment of food affordability and monitoring food security
- Support and promote access to nutritious, safe, and personally acceptable foods
Food Insecurity in Saskatchewan

Price of food in Saskatchewan and across Canada is increasing:

• All families are affected by high prices
• As many a 1 in 10 households are food insecure
• 19% of Saskatchewan children are food insecure (almost 1 in 5) (3)

Those most impacted:

• Those receiving income assistance or living on a low income
• Residents of remote communities
• Single parent families
• Families with children
Food Security

Food security exists when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to food, which is safe and consumed in sufficient quantity and quality to meet their dietary needs and food preferences, and is supported by an environment of adequate sanitation, health services and care, allowing for a healthy and active life (1).

Household Food Security Consists of Three Pillars (2):

1. Food Affordability
2. Food Availability
3. Food Use
Impact of Food Insecurity on Health and Wellbeing

The impacts of food insecurity on health and wellbeing include:

- Birth outcomes and maternal health
- Child and youth development
- Chronic disease
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing

Higher healthcare utilization and costs through increased use of:

- Inpatient hospital care
- Emergency department visits
- Physician services
- Day surgeries
- Home care services
- Prescription drugs
Food Costing in Saskatchewan

- Every 3 years in randomly selected grocery stores
- Data is consistently collected in the month of June (to minimize seasonal price fluctuations)
- In 2015, food costing was completed in 104 grocery stores:
  - Urban
  - Rural
  - Northern
  - First Nation’s reserves

The National Nutritious Food Basket

- 67 commonly eaten foods from Eating Well with Canada’s Good Guide
  - Includes: Fresh and frozen vegetables and fruit, cheese, bread, meat, beans and lentils that require some preparation
Weekly Food Costs and Where You Live

A Reference Family of Four includes: a 31-50 year old man, a 31-50 year old woman, a 4-8 year old girl, and a 14-18 year old boy.

NORTH AVERAGE
$314.73 per week
($88.45 higher than average)

PROVINCIAL AVERAGE
$243.64 per week

SOUTH AVERAGE
$228.76 per week
($14.57 lower than average)
Is Healthy Food Accessible for Everyone in Saskatchewan?

Barriers to availability and accessibility, include:

- Lack of grocery stores
- Transportation challenges
- Availability of nutritious foods
Faces of Food Insecurity

Challenge: Groceries are not affordable for everyone

Elaine grew up on a farm and learned to be resourceful. She has good shopping skills such as buying in bulk and scanning flyers for sales to save money on food. She cooks with basic ingredients to stretch her grocery dollars.

Despite her efforts, Elaine still struggles with the cost of food, especially fruits, vegetables, meat and poultry. She feels the high cost of food impacts her ability to buy healthy foods for her family. “I am buying less fresh fruits and vegetables than normal because of the high prices.”
Challenge: Groceries are not accessible for everyone

There are small villages (<500 people) scattered throughout Saskatchewan. If the communities are lucky, there might be a small general store in the village or a few kilometers away. The general store can carry a variety of foods, although sometimes, there is a lack of foods like vegetables and milk before the next delivery truck arrives. Some communities do not have this opportunity and community members are forced to travel long distances to the next large town or city to buy groceries. “It is especially difficult for struggling single parents and seniors without a car, unless the grocery store is willing to deliver,” which will also increase the cost of food.
Pelican Narrows is a remote northern First Nation of 500 people. It is located approximately 450km from Prince Albert and 175km from Creighton/Flin Flon. The people living in Pelican Narrows and Sandy Bay, 75km from Pelican Narrows, rely on the Pelican Narrows grocery store for their groceries and other essential services. In April 2016, their grocery store burned down.

“Without the grocery store, community members either purchase groceries at the convenience stores or leave and travel to Flin Flon for groceries. The convenience stores have higher costs and a limited selection of healthy foods. Travelling to Flin Flon is challenging as many community members, such as Elders or single parents, don’t have vehicles. They either rely on family members or they pay somebody $140 to take them to Creighton/Flin Flon.
# Weekly Food Costs Over Time

Table 1: Average weekly cost for a Reference Family of Four.
A 31-50 year old man, a 31-50 year old woman, a 4-8 year old girl and a 14-18 year old boy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>$205.02</td>
<td>$218.24</td>
<td>$243.64</td>
<td>$38.62</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Average</td>
<td>$252.27</td>
<td>$290.37</td>
<td>$314.73</td>
<td>$62.46</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>$256.95</td>
<td>$273.75</td>
<td>$307.93</td>
<td>$50.98</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East*</td>
<td>$227.48</td>
<td>$253.34</td>
<td>$329.79</td>
<td>$102.31</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far North</td>
<td>$349.99</td>
<td>$394.20</td>
<td>$440.74</td>
<td>$90.75</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Town</td>
<td>$214.32</td>
<td>$229.04</td>
<td>$255.72</td>
<td>$41.40</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Average</td>
<td>$195.14</td>
<td>$204.64</td>
<td>$228.76</td>
<td>$33.62</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>$206.94</td>
<td>$223.60</td>
<td>$246.65</td>
<td>$39.71</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>$202.20</td>
<td>$216.46</td>
<td>$238.66</td>
<td>$36.46</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small City</td>
<td>$188.28</td>
<td>$194.09</td>
<td>$220.46</td>
<td>$32.18</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large City</td>
<td>$184.91</td>
<td>$193.69</td>
<td>$215.20</td>
<td>$30.29</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The amount of groceries you can buy with $50 has *decreased* over time.
How Does Pregnancy and Breastfeeding Affect Food Costs?

**Table 2:** Average weekly and monthly costs of the National Nutritious Food Basket for pregnant and breastfeeding women, Saskatchewan, 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pregnancy</th>
<th>Cost per Week</th>
<th>Cost per Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 years or younger</td>
<td>$62.84</td>
<td>$272.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-30 years</td>
<td>$63.42</td>
<td>$274.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-50 years</td>
<td>$61.93</td>
<td>$268.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breastfeeding</th>
<th>Cost per Week</th>
<th>Cost per Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 years or younger</td>
<td>$65.36</td>
<td>$283.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-30 years</td>
<td>$67.28</td>
<td>$291.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-50 years</td>
<td>$65.78</td>
<td>$284.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Calculating Monthly Food Costs for Various Groups

Use the Food Costing Worksheet on pg. 13 to calculate the cost of a Nutritious Food Basket for different family sizes or groups (24).

Calculating Monthly Food Costs for Various Groups

Use the Food Costing Worksheet to calculate the cost of a Nutritious Food Basket for different family sizes or groups (24).

Food Costing Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Cost per week ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ref to Table 1 on the following page.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 1
Write down the age and sex of all the people you are feeding. Then write down the cost per week based on where you live.

Step 2
Add the costs.

Step 3
Multiply your subtotal by a household size factor.

Step 4
Multiply your total weekly food cost by 4.33 to show cost per month.
Limitations of 2015 Data

Several limitations may have impacted the food costing data collection and interpretation:

• “Snapshot” of food costs
• Seasonal price differences not represented
• Some randomly selected North East stores inaccessible
• Geographic limitations
• Several data collectors
• Potential for human error
• Some food items unavailable
Ensuring Food Security for Families in Saskatchewan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Change</th>
<th>Capacity Building</th>
<th>Short Term Relief</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on addressing problems underlying food insecurity including the social determinants of health.</td>
<td>Provides opportunity for skill development and increased community food access. Requires commitment in terms of time and personnel, and the engagement of people who are experiencing food insecurity.</td>
<td>Provides immediate, but temporary, relief to hunger and food issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies are broader in scope and require a long-term commitment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- National/provincial poverty reduction strategies
- National/provincial food security strategies
- Healthy food available within schools, recreation facilities, public spaces and communities

- Community kitchens
- Community gardens
- Good food boxes
- Bulk buying programs
- Mobile stores
- Cooking skills and nutrition knowledge building

- Food banks
- Soup kitchens
- Community freezer programs
Conclusion

Food security and poverty are important issues that impact many Saskatchewan families.

*The Cost of Healthy Eating* provides decision makers and organizations with:

- Information to support the continuum of food security
- Strategies to ensure all Saskatchewan families can afford healthy, nutritious food.
References (included in full report):


2. World Health Organization. Rome declaration on world food security and the world food summit plan of action.


Thank-You!

Questions?