

Nutritious Food Basket

The Cost of Eating in the
Sudbury and Manitoulin Districts

2010

Annually, the Sudbury & District Health Unit is required to measure the cost of healthy eating using the Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) survey tool. Year after year, the results show that low-income households struggle to pay rent, bills and to put healthy food on the table. This report brings to light everyday struggles faced by people living on social assistance or low incomes and what you can do to help.

The NFB is made up of a list of 67 foods, and was used to survey nine stores across the Sudbury and Manitoulin districts. The foods that make up this list are based on average Canadian food purchasing patterns and nutrition recommendations outlined by *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*.

The results of the NFB are used to determine the cost of healthy eating for individuals and families living in various circumstances (see Table 1). The 2010 survey found that it costs about \$171 a week (\$740 per month) to feed a family of four (two parents, two children) in the Sudbury and Manitoulin districts.

The Numbers Don't Add Up ...

For many people in our community, the cost of buying healthy food does not fit into the household budget, and limited affordable housing and transportation options often add to their challenges.

The *Do the Math Challenge* is one initiative that raises awareness about hunger in Ontario and demonstrates the need for a \$100 Healthy Food Supplement for people living on social assistance. One element of this province-wide campaign challenges community leaders and public figures to live off the contents of a typical food bank hamper for one week. Recently, over 20 participants from Greater Sudbury experienced, first-hand, the daily challenges of many members of our community.

“I participated in the challenge to deepen my own understanding of the barriers to healthy living that are faced by so many people on low income. People simply need to be able to afford to make healthy choices for themselves and their children.”

Dr. Penny Sutcliffe, Sudbury & District Medical Officer of Health

The provincial government has recently taken positive steps to help tackle the issue of poverty. The annual NFB survey demonstrates that much more needs to be done. The Sudbury & District Board of Health calls on the province to review social assistance programs to reflect the real costs of healthy living, including nutritious food, accessible means of transportation, and affordable housing, to ensure that all Ontarians can make healthy choices. This would include a monthly \$100 Healthy Food Supplement provided to all recipients of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Programs.

What can you do to help?

Speak up about issues that matter to you! If you feel strongly about making sure everyone has access to healthy, affordable food—**make your voice be heard.**

Complete the online *Do the Math* survey to support the province-wide *Put Food in the Budget* campaign.

Educate yourself about the root causes of poverty and hunger and become involved in local efforts that support *Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy*.

Help to advance the local community food security mandate by supporting the programs and networks listed in the *Sudbury and Manitoulin Districts' Community Food Security Directory 2010*.

Table 1: Is There Enough Money for Healthy Food?

	Households With Children				Single Person Households		
	Scenario 1 Family of Four, Ontario Works	Scenario 2 Family of Four, Minimum Wage Earner (full time/full year) ^j	Scenario 3 Family of Four, Median Ontario Income (after tax) ^k	Scenario 4 Single Parent With Two Children, Ontario Works	Scenario 5 One Person Household, Ontario Works	Scenario 6 One Person Household, ODSP	Scenario 7 One Person Household, OAS/GIS
	Income						
Total Monthly Income	\$1,908 ^{a,c,d}	\$2,514 ^{c,d,e,f,g}	\$5,775 ^{e,f}	\$1,757 ^{a,c,d}	\$606 ^{a,d}	\$1,071 ^{a,d}	\$1,201 ^{b,d}
	Expenses						
Rent (Apartments, bachelor–3BR; may not include utilities) ^h	\$942	\$942	\$942	\$823	\$502	\$502	\$677
Food (Nutritious Food Basket) ⁱ	\$740	\$740	\$740	\$561	\$248	\$248	\$182
Monthly Income Remaining for Other Expenses ^l	\$226	\$832	\$4,093	\$373	-\$144	\$321	\$342

Scenarios:

- **Scenario 1:** 2 adults (male and female ages 31–50), 2 children (girl age 8, boy age 14); on Ontario Works (OW).
- **Scenario 2:** 2 adults (male and female ages 31–50), 2 children (girl age 8, boy age 14); income is based on one minimum wage earner, 40hrs./wk, \$10.25/hr.
- **Scenario 3:** 2 adults (male and female ages 31–50), 2 children (girl age 8, boy age 14); income is based on 2005 Ontario median after-tax income, for couple households with children.
- **Scenario 4:** 1 adult (female age 31–50), 2 children (girl age 8, boy age 14); on Ontario Works.
- **Scenario 5:** 1 adult (male age 31–50); on Ontario Works.
- **Scenario 6:** 1 adult (male age 31–50); on Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP).
- **Scenario 7:** 1 adult (female age 70+); income based on Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement (OAS/GIS).

Sources of Data Used to Calculate Income and Expenses:

- a) Basic and maximum shelter allowance. OW and ODSP. As of May 2010.
- b) Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement (OAS/GIS). As of May 2009.
- c) Maximum Canada Child Tax Benefit, National Child Benefit Supplement and Ontario Child Benefit. Effective July 2009–June 2010.*
- d) GST credit issued on a quarterly basis, but calculated on a monthly basis. Figures derived from GST Guideline Table. Effective July 2009–June 2010.*
- e) Employment Insurance Premium Rates*
- f) Canada Pension Plan*
- g) Working Income Tax Benefit Online Calculator*

- h) Rental Market Reports, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Spring 2010. Average rent for apartments.
- i) Nutritious Food Basket Data Results 2010, Sudbury & District Health Unit. Includes family size adjustment factors.
- j) Minimum wage*
- k) Median income of couple household with children. Reference: Statistics Canada. 2007. Ontario (table). 2006 Community Profiles. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007.*
- l) Other “basic” expenses after rent and food include telephone, transportation, child care, household and personal care items, clothing, and school supplies. In addition, other expenses common in many households include personal transportation (a car), the cost of owning and maintaining a home, having pets, buying reading materials, eating out or having guests over for a meal. Reference: Statistics Canada. 2008. Spending Patterns in Canada. Catalogue no. 62-202-X. Ottawa.

*Retrieved July 23, 2010.

Disclaimer:

Comparing and interpreting NFB results requires caution; otherwise, inappropriate interpretations may arise. Please refer to the Nutritious Food Basket Guidance Document (p. 13–14), Ministry of Health Promotion, May 2010.

Ce document est disponible en français.