

Nutritious Food Basket

Limited Incomes: A Recipe for Hunger

2011

What is the Nutritious Food Basket?

The Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) is a costing tool used to estimate the cost of basic healthy eating for individuals and households. It is based on the National Nutritious Food Basket (2008), and represents recommendations outlined in *Canada's Food Guide*.

The total cost of the NFB in Sudbury and Manitoulin districts is calculated by averaging the lowest retail prices for each of the 67 food items, in specified quantities, as identified by the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport. These foods meet the current nutrition recommendations for individuals of different ages and genders. An additional 5 per cent is included in the NFB cost to account for miscellaneous food items (for example, seasonings, condiments, baking supplies, coffee, and tea). But it does not include convenience food items or other non-food items such as soap, toilet paper, toothpaste, or personal hygiene products. The NFB costing does not take into consideration the additional cost of eating out or inviting company to share a meal.

The Numbers Don't Add Up ...

Year after year, the results show that households with limited income struggle to pay rent, bills, and to put healthy food on the table. The 2011 survey found that it costs about \$189 a week (\$818 per month*) to feed a family of four (two parents, two children) in the Sudbury and Manitoulin districts. Table 1 brings to light everyday struggles faced by people living on social assistance or low incomes.

Impact of Poverty on Individuals and Communities

- Because of the high cost of housing and inadequate income, many residents are forced to choose between paying the rent and buying food and other necessities.
- Individuals from households with low incomes are more likely to report poor health and multiple chronic conditions, including major depression, heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure. They are more likely to experience increased risk of infectious diseases, low birth weight babies, and negative impacts on the growth and development of children and youth.
- Treating and managing these chronic conditions costs more than it does to prevent them. By eliminating poverty, healthy eating would be within everyone's reach.

* This calculation is based upon the cost of healthy eating for one week multiplied by 4.33.

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—[start a conversation in your community](#).

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

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 ^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 (after tax)	\$2,011 ^{a,c,d}	\$2,619 ^{c,d,e,f,g}	\$5,767 ^{e,f}	\$1,836 ^{a,c,d}	\$635 ^{a,d}	\$1,103 ^{a,d}	\$1,245 ^{b,d}
	Expenses						
Rent (Apartments, bachelor–3BR; may not include utilities)^h	\$965	\$965	\$965	\$877	\$534	\$718	\$718
Food (Nutritious Food Basket)ⁱ	\$818	\$818	\$818	\$619	\$274	\$274	\$201
	Monthly Income Remaining for Other Expenses^l						
	\$228	\$836	\$3,984	\$340	-\$173	\$111	\$326

Scenarios:

- **Scenario 1:** 2 adults (male and female ages 31–50), 2 children (girl age 8, boy age 14); receiving 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, 40 hrs./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); receiving Ontario Works.
- **Scenario 5:** 1 adult (male age 31–50); receiving Ontario Works.
- **Scenario 6:** 1 adult (male age 31–50); receiving Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) in a one bedroom apartment.
- **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 2011.
- b) [Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement \(OAS/GIS\)](#). As of May 2011.
- c) Maximum Canada Child Tax Benefit, National Child Benefit Supplement and Ontario Child Benefit. Effective July 2010–June 2011. [** www.cra-arc.gc.ca](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca)
- d) GST/HST and Ontario Sales Tax Credit issued on a quarterly basis, but calculated on a monthly basis. Figures derived from GST/HST and related provincial programs calculator. Effective July 2010–June 2011. [** www.cra-arc.gc.ca](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca)
- 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 2011. Average rent for apartments.^{**}

i) Nutritious Food Basket Data Results 2011, 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. 2009. Spending Patterns in Canada. Catalogue no. 62-202-X. Ottawa.](#)

^{**}Retrieved October 18, 2011.

Disclaimer:

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

Ce document est disponible en français.