



The Cost of Healthy Eating in Saskatchewan 2009: Impact on Food Security

Executive Summary

For complete report:

www.foodsecuresaskatchewan.ca

Written by the Public Health Nutritionists of Saskatchewan Working Group with the support of Saskatchewan Regional Health Authorities—April 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why Care About the Cost of Healthy Eating?

Eating a nutritious diet is important for health. However, the cost of healthy food may make eating healthy difficult. Food and nutrition decisions are not simply a matter of individual choice. Economic and social factors, coping skills, environment and working conditions all impact a person's capacity to make food and nutrition choices.¹

Many people in Saskatchewan, including those receiving social assistance, lone-parent households, off-reserve Aboriginal households and those who do not own their own dwelling are at risk for experiencing food insecurity.² Canadians in the lowest income category had the highest percent (48%) of food insecurity.²

Food Costing in Saskatchewan

Calculating food costs provides valuable information for monitoring food insecurity by determining the cost of nutritious foods. The 2008 National Nutritious Food Basket, which is based upon current recommendations in *Canada's Food Guide*, was used to calculate food costs in Saskatchewan.³ Costing the National Nutritious Food Basket assesses the affordability of a nutritious diet, assists health and social agencies to monitor the cost and affordability of food and assists policy and decision makers to develop health, nutrition and social policies.³

Highlights

- In Saskatchewan, the cost of the National Nutritious Food Basket for a reference family of four is \$205.02 per week. In northern Saskatchewan, that same reference family of four would have higher food costs (\$252.27 per week).
- Outside the north, the food costs for a reference family of four are lowest in large cities (\$184.91 per week), and most expensive in rural areas (\$206.94 per week).
- Food costs are highest for those 14 to 18 for males and 19 to 30 years of age for females.
- The male food costs are higher than female food costs in each age group.
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women need more healthy food in order to nourish their growing child, thus their food costs are higher than females who are not pregnant or breastfeeding.

Building a Brighter Future

Food insecurity is a complex problem but there are solutions. The *Cost of Healthy Eating in Saskatchewan 2009: Impact on Food Security* provides information and tools to support food security in Saskatchewan. All individuals and organizations have a role to play in creating a food secure Saskatchewan. Collaboration between agencies, communities, families and individuals is required for long-term and sustainable solutions that address the complexity of not just food costs but of food security.

Table A1: Weekly food costs for the National Nutritious Food Basket 2009.

Males age (years)	Northern Saskatchewan *	Southern Saskatchewan +
2-3	\$ 34.36	\$ 26.16
4-8	\$ 44.21	\$ 33.68
9-13	\$ 57.20	\$ 44.10
14-18	\$ 78.85	\$ 61.63
19-30	\$ 77.45	\$ 60.12
31-50	\$ 70.47	\$ 54.64
51-70	\$ 67.42	\$ 52.49
over 70	\$ 66.59	\$ 51.92
Females age (years)	Northern Saskatchewan *	Southern Saskatchewan +
2-3	\$ 33.71	\$ 25.60
4-8	\$ 42.90	\$ 32.56
9-13	\$ 49.88	\$ 38.20
14-18	\$ 59.18	\$ 45.40
19-30	\$ 61.04	\$ 46.97
31-50	\$ 60.05	\$ 46.32
51-70	\$ 53.11	\$ 40.97
over 70	\$ 51.93	\$ 40.25

Table A2: Weekly food costs for the National Nutritious Food Basket 2009: Pregnant or breastfeeding women.

Pregnancy age (years)	Northern Saskatchewan *	Southern Saskatchewan +
under 18	\$ 65.39	\$ 50.45
19-30	\$ 66.44	\$ 51.16
31-50	\$ 64.52	\$ 49.87
Breastfeeding age (years)	Northern Saskatchewan *	Southern Saskatchewan +
under 18	\$ 68.06	\$ 52.44
19-30	\$ 69.50	\$ 53.92
31-50	\$ 67.58	\$ 52.63

* Northern Saskatchewan refers to the three Northern Health Authorities, including Athabasca Health Authority, Keewatin Yatthé & Mamawetan Churchill River Regional Health Authorities. +Southern Saskatchewan refers to the 10 other Health Regions in Saskatchewan.

Visit www.foodsecuresaskatchewan.ca for a copy of *The Cost of Healthy Eating in Saskatchewan 2009: Impact on Food Security* report. If you have any questions about food costs in Saskatchewan, contact your local Public Health Nutritionist.

Questions and Answers:

- 1. Does my monthly food basket cost include everything that I would buy from a grocery store in one month?** No, the basket does not include convenience foods or non-food items such as cleaning supplies, toilet paper and personal hygiene items.
- 2. If I follow a special diet, do these food costs apply to me?** It depends on the restrictions of the special diet. Your Registered Dietitian can help you figure out if you have extra costs.
- 3. What if I eat out a lot?** The National Nutritious Food Basket does not include restaurant foods. Eating out would add extra cost to your monthly food bill.
- 4. Why are the costs less for women than for men?** Women are generally smaller than men and need less food to meet their energy and nutrient needs. Breastfeeding and pregnant women will have greater needs to help their baby grow or to produce milk.
- 5. What if the foods in the National Nutritious Food Basket aren't what my family normally eats?** The foods in the basket were chosen based on recommendations in *Canada's Food Guide*. Though it may not be exactly how your family would eat, it does provide a minimum amount that it would cost to eat well in Saskatchewan.
- 6. Why aren't children under the age of two listed in Table A1?** *Canada's Food Guide* makes recommendations for those two and older. The amount of food children under two require can vary widely depending on age, activity level, growth rate and appetite. The cost of food they require cannot be suggested.