

A-Z of HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Food security is when all community members obtain a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self-reliance, and equal access for everyone.¹

Household food insecurity is the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints. It is a serious problem that negatively impacts physical, mental, and social health, and costs our healthcare system considerably.²

IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY

Improving food security at a population level is a shared responsibility of all levels of government and across multiple sectors.

Community programs such as food banks, food literacy, community gardens, collective kitchens, good food boxes and community food hubs help those struggling with food insecurity and promote healthy eating.

Local governments can help to foster a healthy and vibrant local food system from production to consumption.

Provincial and federal governments can enact legislation to reduce poverty, provide supports for local food production, and create positive food environments.

Advocacy is needed for policies that address the root cause of food insecurity and support healthy eating.

FOOD SECURITY AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Food security is important to communities for a variety of reasons:

- Better physical and economic access to healthy food increases the likelihood of healthier eating, healthier weights and reduced rates of diabetes.⁵
- Community members need healthy foods to be readily available and affordable, as well as the skills and knowledge to make sound food choices.
- Support for local food production may increase the availability of healthy and fresh food, including fruits and vegetables, in communities while supporting local economies.
- The food environment in communities affects the availability and accessibility of healthy food; for example, lack of transportation, overabundance of fast food outlets and exposure to unhealthy food marketing.

SOME USEFUL RESOURCES FOR FOOD SECURITY

Food Secure Canada. foodsecurecanada.org/

Proof Food Insecurity Policy Research. <http://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/>

Healthy Eating & Food Security. PlanH Action Guide. BC Healthy Communities Society 2013. <https://planh.ca/resources/action-guides/healthy-eating-food-security>

Healthy Food, Healthy Community. Ontario Healthy Community Coalition <http://www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/healthy-food-healthy-community>

REFERENCES

¹S. Haering and S. Syed, [Community Food Security in United States Cities: A Survey of the Relevant Scientific Literature](#) (Baltimore: John Hopkins Centre for a Liveable Future, 2009).

²Household Food Insecurity in Canada. [Proof Food Insecurity Policy Research: Food Insecurity Policy Research.](#)

³Heart and Stroke Foundation. (2013). [Position Statement: Access to affordable, healthy and nutritious food \(“food security”\)](#)

UCLA Centre for Health Policy Research, [The Link Between Local Food Environments and Obesity and Diabetes](#) (Oakland: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, 2008, pg. 6).



Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
Coalition des communautés en santé de l'Ontario



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