

2014

What is the cost of healthy food?

---

Why does it matter?

---

Why can't some people afford healthy food?

---

Who can't afford healthy food?

---

What can individuals and communities do?

# The Real Cost of Eating Well in Haldimand & Norfolk Counties



Email: [info@hnhu.org](mailto:info@hnhu.org)  
Web: [www.hnhu.org](http://www.hnhu.org)

**Simcoe**  
P.O. Box 247, 12 Gilbertson Drive  
Simcoe, ON N3Y 4L1  
519.426.6170 / 905.318.6623

**Caledonia**  
282 Argyle Street South  
Caledonia, ON N3W 1K7  
905.318.5367

Adapted with permission of Huron County Health Unit

## What is the cost of healthy food?

- Every year, Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit surveys the price of food items from grocery stores across Haldimand and Norfolk Counties using a tool called the Nutritious Food Basket (NFB).
- In 2014, the weekly cost of groceries for a family of four was \$193.86. The cost is determined by pricing 67 food items in six grocery stores and calculating the average lowest retail price.
- Items included in the NFB meet recommendations from Canada's Food Guide. However, the assumption is that people have the time, skill, and equipment needed to prepare food from scratch.
- Prepared convenience foods, personal and household non-food items, such as toothpaste and cleaning supplies, are not included in the NFB.

The monthly cost of groceries for a family of four is now \$839.41. That's an increase of 3.5 per cent in one year.

When income is low and living expenses are high, people don't have enough money for food. In Simcoe alone there are more than 15 supports for emergency and low cost food.

## Why does the cost of food matter?

When money is tight people are often forced to cut into their food budget to pay for other living expenses. People will skip meals, eat fewer vegetables and fruit, drink less milk and fill up on non-nutritious foods because they are more affordable. This is called food insecurity. The result of this unhealthy diet is

- an increased risk of chronic illness, and
- poor growth and development in children.

Income is one of the best predictors of health.

When people are short on money they are more likely to have poor health, such as depression and sickness.

## Why can't some people afford healthy food?








For people living on minimum wage, Ontario Works, or the Ontario Disability Support Program, it is hard to make ends meet. After paying rent, they still have to pay for other necessities such as:

- Heat and hydro
- Transportation, car maintenance and gas
- Child care
- Clothing
- Eye and dental care
- Home maintenance
- School supplies
- Household cleaners and personal hygiene products
- Insurance
- Others

When faced with the choice of paying rent or going hungry, many families are forced to go hungry.

# Who can't afford healthy food?

Close to real life situations for people living in Haldimand & Norfolk Counties:

	Households with Children				Single Person Households		
	 Ontario Works	 Minimum Wage Earner	 Median Ontario Income	 Ontario Works	 Ontario Works	 ODSP	 Senior OAS/GIS
<b>Income</b>							
Total Monthly Income* (After Tax)	\$2,158	\$2,748	\$6,954	\$1,961	\$709	\$1,179	\$1,513
<b>Expenses</b>							
	3 Bdr.	3 Bdr.	3 Bdr.	2 Bdr.	Bachelor	1 Bdr.	1 Bdr.
Monthly Rent** (Apartments not including utilities)	\$778 36% of income req'd for rent	\$778 28% of income req'd for rent	\$778 11% of income req'd for rent	\$663 34% of income req'd for rent	\$505 71% of income req'd for rent	\$627 53% of income req'd for rent	\$627 41% of income req'd for rent
Food***	\$839 39% of income req'd for food	\$839 31% of income req'd for food	\$839 12% of income req'd for food	\$635 32% of income req'd for food	\$282 40% of income req'd for food	\$282 24% of income req'd for food	\$205 14% of income req'd for food
<b>Monthly Income Remaining for Other Expenses</b>							
	\$541	\$1,131	\$5,337	\$663	-\$78	\$270	\$681

\* 2014 Nutritious Food Basket Income Scenarios spreadsheet, August 2014

\*\*Data received from HN Health & Social Services Department, Social Housing Division

\*\*\*Cost of the Nutritious Food Basket priced in Haldimand & Norfolk, May 2014, HN Health Unit

After paying rent and buying food, people and households who earn minimum wage or receive social assistance have little, if any, money left over to cover the cost of other basic monthly expenses. A single male living on Ontario Works has the most difficult time with a shortage of money to cover rent and food and no money for other expenses.

## What can individuals and communities do?

All people in Haldimand and Norfolk counties should have access to adequate healthy food. Each of us has a role to play to ensure it. Learn more about hunger and poverty and take action.

Charitable food programs are not a long term solution. Sustainable solutions are needed to change the underlying problem of inadequate income.

- Participate in coalitions such as the Poverty Action Partnership of Haldimand and Norfolk
- Get involved in programs such as community gardens and community kitchens. Share your skills or donate space.

### For more information:

Here are some places to go for more information on poverty, food security and community food programs.

- Poverty Action Partnership of Haldimand and Norfolk  
<http://paphn.weebly.com/>
- Church Out Serving  
<http://www.churchoutserving.org/#!/cos-projects>
- Haldimand Norfolk Health Unit  
<http://hnhu.org/health-topics/hunger/>
- Campaign 2000-End Child and Family Poverty in Canada  
[www.campaign2000.ca](http://www.campaign2000.ca)
- Food Secure Canada  
<http://foodsecurecanada.org/>



For more details about the Nutritious Food Basket contact the **Haldimand - Norfolk Health Unit.** [www.hnhu.org](http://www.hnhu.org)



**Simcoe:**  
519.426.6170 / 905.318.6623  
**Caledonia:**  
905.318.5367