INTRODUCTION

Household food insecurity is when a household worries about or lacks the financial means to buy healthy, safe, personally acceptable food.

Evidence shows that food insecure families struggle to afford a healthy diet and experience greater health and social challenges compared to people who are food secure.

KEY FINDINGS

RATES OF FOOD INSECURITY

16% of households in Northern Health experience food insecurity
LEVELS OF FOOD INSECURITY

BRITISH COLUMBIA

- MARGINAL: 4%
- MODERATE: 5%
- SEVERE: 3%

NORTHERN HEALTH

- MARGINAL: 5%
- MODERATE: 9%
- SEVERE: 3%

MARGINALLY FOOD INSECURE: Worry about running out of food and/or limit food selection because of lack of money for food.

MODERATELY FOOD INSECURE: Compromise in quality and/or quantity of food due to a lack of money for food.

SEVERELY FOOD INSECURE: Miss meals, reduce food intake and at most extreme go day(s) without food due to a lack of money for food.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE & FOOD INSECURITY

79% of households on social assistance in Northern Health experience food insecurity.

BC AVERAGE: 76%

FOOD INSECURITY in HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN vs. WITHOUT CHILDREN

- WITH CHILDREN: 25% (BC AVERAGE: 15%)
- WITHOUT CHILDREN: 13% (BC AVERAGE: 11%)
BRITISH COLUMBIA

KEY FINDINGS

CHARACTERISTICS OF FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS

1 in 6 children live in food insecure households.

1 in 10 households (12%) experience food insecurity.

Of all food insecure households in BC:
The majority are employed.

- 65% Employed
- 15% Social Assistance
- 20% Other

The majority are single people.

- 43% Single People
- 22% Couples Without Kids
- 34% People With Kids (0-18+)

Household composition & rates of food insecurity:

- Couples with no kids: 6%
- Couples with kids (under 18): 11%
- Single mothers with kids (under 18): 34%

Rates of food insecurity are more than 5X higher for single mothers with kids compared to couples without kids.
CONCLUSION

Food insecurity is a public health issue that influences physical and mental health across the lifespan. A recent study shows that people who are food insecure use up to 121% more healthcare dollars compared to those who are food secure, demonstrating that reducing food insecurity could offset considerable public expenditures in healthcare.

The root cause of household food insecurity is lack of income. Policy interventions at the provincial or federal level that address household income can make a significant difference to improve food insecurity.

For more information, including a provincial infographic and the full report, visit

www.phsa.ca/populationhealth