INTRODUCTION

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

Adults who are food insecure are at increased risk of chronic conditions\(^1,2\) and have more difficulty managing their diseases.\(^3,4\) Food insecurity also impacts social and mental well-being and can increase the likelihood of depression, distress, and social isolation.\(^5\)

Children and youth also suffer the impacts of food insecurity, which is associated with micronutrient deficiencies, as well as increased risk of chronic conditions such as asthma and depression.\(^6,7,8\)
KEY FINDINGS

BRITISH COLUMBIA

LEVELS & RATES OF FOOD INSECURITY

LEVELS OF FOOD INSECURITY

- **MARGINALLY FOOD INSECURE:** 4%
  - Worry about running out of food and/or limit food selection because of lack of money for food.

- **MODERATELY FOOD INSECURE:** 5%
  - Compromise in quality and/or quantity of food due to a lack of money for food.

- **SEVERELY FOOD INSECURE:** 3%
  - Miss meals, reduce food intake and at the most extreme go day(s) without food due to a lack of money for food.

RATES OF FOOD INSECURITY

- **1 in 10 HOUSEHOLDS (12%)**
  - experience food insecurity

- **1 in 6 CHILDREN**
  - live in food insecure households

HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION & RATES OF FOOD INSECURITY

- **34%**
  - Rates of food insecurity are more than 5X higher for single mothers with kids compared to couples without kids.

- **6%**
  - Couples with no kids

- **11%**
  - Couples with kids (under 18)

- **34%**
  - Single mothers with kids (under 18)
BRITISH COLUMBIA

KEY FINDINGS

CHARACTERISTICS OF FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS

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+)
- 1% Other

EDUCATION & FOOD INSECURITY

Households where at least one member
HAS A UNIVERSITY DEGREE

1 in 20 are food insecure

Households where members
DID NOT FINISH HIGH SCHOOL

5 in 20 are food insecure

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE & FOOD INSECURITY

76% of households on social assistance in British Columbia experience food insecurity
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,\(^9\) 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 regional health authority infographics and the full report, visit www.phsa.ca/populationhealth

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i. PROOF is an interdisciplinary research team in Canada exploring policy options to address household food insecurity.
ii. The 2011-12 data represents the most recent data available for the province as BC did not participate in the optional food insecurity module during the 2013-14 CCHS cycle.