

# Health Unit Media Release

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## Some Residents Forced to Choose Between Paying Bills and Eating Healthy

*Buying groceries after the rent is paid is a health challenge for the poorest in our communities*

Findings released by the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit's 2008 Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) Report highlight that some residents in our communities cannot afford a healthy diet once housing and other fixed costs are paid.

"Some families are being forced to choose between putting a roof over their heads and buying healthy foods", said Carole Chang, a Registered Dietitian at the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit. "We need to address the issue of poverty so hunger will no longer exist in our community."

For the eleventh consecutive year, the Health Unit has calculated the cost of the Nutritious Food Basket, completed under the direction of the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. **The 2008 NFB survey showed that the cost of feeding a family of four (two parents with two children) in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark has increased 5.6% since last year, costing \$137.94 per week or \$597.28 per month.** This increase is almost double the annual inflation rate, making it even harder for low income families to eat a nutritious diet.

"Poor nutrition can lead to increased risk for chronic and infectious diseases, poor pregnancy outcomes with greater risk for low birth weight and negative impact on the growth and development in children," says Carole Chang, Registered Dietitian. **"These conditions cost more to treat and manage than they would cost to prevent by ensuring people are financially able to purchase an adequate and nourishing diet."**

The Health Unit has been working with community partners through networking meetings to address food security concerns in the tri-county. **The Health Unit also has a number of resources for community members and service providers that can help people access healthy foods as well as information on the types of food that are acceptable for donation to food banks.**

For more information about the Nutritious Food Basket, please contact the Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853 (or 613-345-5685) and ask to speak with a Registered Dietitian or visit our website at [www.healthunit.org/nutrition](http://www.healthunit.org/nutrition).

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Contact:  
Carole Chang, MSc, RD  
Public Health Nutritionist  
613-345-5685