



### **Food costing survey completed for the Tri-county**

The Health Unit has recently completed Nutritious Food Basket costing for 2013. The annual food costing, done by all Public Units in Ontario, calculates the price of 67 food items from a number of grocery stores in the area. This year, across Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark counties, the cost of feeding a family of 4 (2 adults + 2 children) is \$178 per week (or \$772 per month). This is a 9% increase in the cost of food alone in the past 3 years (since 2010).

“The challenge with the rising cost of food is that as other costs of living, such as household bills and the price of gas, increase there is less and less money available for buying food,” says Dianne Oickle, a Registered Dietitian at the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit. “So not only does it become more difficult to choose healthy foods, it sometimes becomes a choice between eating enough and paying for other family needs like rent and transportation.”

While families who live on a low-income are at risk of not being able to afford healthy food, it is not limited to those who are unemployed or receiving social assistance. According to the Canadian Community Health Survey (2011), 9.3% of people in Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark reported that they were not able to afford the food they needed in the previous year. Oickle notes, “Individuals who are working hard at lower paying jobs may be trying to support themselves or their families with an income that is just not enough to cover everything that is needed. And as families struggle with losing work and less income, their ability to afford healthy food decreases.

The Nutritious Food Basket survey records the lowest cost at each grocery store for 67 foods, and estimates the average cost by age and life stage group. Results can be used to raise awareness of the cost of healthy eating in our community.

To learn more about the health effects of not being able to afford healthy food, go to [www.healthunit.org/nutrition/](http://www.healthunit.org/nutrition/).

-30-

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