

Health Unit's Annual Nutritious Food Basket results put cost of basic needs in the context of income

A family of four with one full time minimum wage earner has \$1148.00 left each month after paying for rent and food. That's \$1148.00 for other basics such as utilities, transportation, clothing, phone, toiletries, childcare, school needs and more. On Ontario Works the same family would have \$435.00 left for other basics; the young man on Ontario Support Disability Program \$203.00 and a woman over 65 who depends on Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement would have \$604.00.

"When you look at these low income numbers," says Marie Traynor, Registered Dietitian with the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, "it's easy to understand that in each of these scenarios people are forced to move money budgeted for food to meet other basic needs." Traynor adds, "when money is tight meals are skipped, birth weights, nutritional health, learning and productivity decrease and the risk of disease increases."

This information is available from the Health Unit's 2016 Nutritious Food Basket infographic and can be used:

- to learn more about poverty as the root cause of food insecurity,
- to advocate for solutions such as guaranteed adequate income to meet basic needs, affordable housing, accessible and affordable childcare and transportation,
- when talking with your family, neighbours, students, colleagues and friends about the cost of basic needs,
- if your community group or faith-based community is working towards improving community health, or
- when speaking with local politicians and community leaders.

Look for the infographic http://www.healthunit.org/nutrition/foodsecurity/Nutritious_Food_Basket.pdf or call the Health ACTION Line at 1-800-660-5853.