

Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit

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Juggling the budget is an increased challenge when income source is minimum wage or social programs

A family of four with one full time minimum wage earner, a single, female-led family with two children receiving Ontario Works or a male on disability benefits all struggle to cover the cost of basic living needs. In Leeds, Grenville and Lanark, almost 10% of our total households are food insecure. Food insecurity means not having enough money to buy nutritious food. Those who are food insecure are at higher risk for poor physical, oral and mental health.

“Food charity is not the solution,” says Marie Traynor, Registered Dietitian. “It is a short-term relief strategy and an emergency response to dire need, rather than a solution to the root causes of food insecurity. Food insecurity is an income-based problem, not a food-based problem.”

Imagine not having enough money for your basic needs every month which leads to choosing between nutritious food and other basic living costs. Traynor adds, “when money is tight meals are skipped, birth weights, nutritional health, learning and productivity decrease and the risk of disease increases.”

See the Health Unit’s 2017 Food Insecurity infographic for the numbers and use them

- to raise awareness of the financial constraints of poverty that are the root causes of food insecurity and;
- as a call to action for economic policy changes.

Look for the infographic at

http://www.healthunit.org/nutrition/foodsecurity/Nutritious_Food_Basket.pdf

or call the Health ACTION Line at 1-800-660-5853.