

CITY OF HAMILTON

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES
Healthy Living Division

TO: Mayor and Members Board of Health	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: October 15, 2012	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Nutritious Food Basket (BOH12025) (City Wide)	
SUBMITTED BY: Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health Public Health Services Department	PREPARED BY: Vicki Edwards (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3632 Donna Weldon (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4892
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That the Board of Health correspond with the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Community and Social Services and the Commissioners of the provincial Social Assistance Review, to stress the immediate need for an evidence-based mechanism for setting annual social assistance rates and higher asset limits that will allow people to meet basic living costs, including the cost of nutritious food;
- (b) That the Board of Health correspond with the Premier of Ontario to request that the province develop a comprehensive Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy that will drive policies so that:
 - Ontarians have access to and the means to obtain safe, healthy, local and culturally acceptable food
 - Ontarians have the information, knowledge, skills and relationships to support healthy eating and make healthy choices where they live, work, learn and play
 - Ontario has a diverse and sustainable food production system that contributes to an equitable and prosperous economy;

- (c) That the Board of Health support development of a comprehensive Food Strategy for the City of Hamilton.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) is a survey tool used to record the cost of 67 foods that represent a nutritious diet based on Canada's Food Guide.

The estimated average cost for a family of four¹ to purchase the NFB in Hamilton in 2012 is \$172.69 per week, or \$747.75 per month. In 2011 the monthly cost was \$718.82, and in 2010 the monthly cost was \$690.59. For families, this represents an increase of 7.64% in food costs alone over the last three years.

Incomes for families receiving Ontario Works (OW) or earning a minimum wage and for single person households receiving OW or the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) have not compensated for the increased cost of rent and food over the last three years. For these households, funds remaining for other expenses have declined in 2012.

The 2012 Hamilton Nutritious Food Basket Scenarios spreadsheet (Appendix A) compares the average cost of food and rent for families and individuals who receive income from OW, minimum wage, ODSP and the Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement, to families with a median Ontario wage.

When housing costs and other fixed living expenses are considered, many individuals and families with a limited income do not have adequate funds to purchase sufficient nutritious food on a consistent basis. This predisposes them to obesity and chronic disease.

This report recommends that the Board of Health advocate for adequate income levels that will allow all residents to buy nutritious food. Advocacy for a comprehensive Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy, and support for a local Food Strategy is needed to address food access and food system issues for those most vulnerable.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 9

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (for Recommendation(s) only)

Financial: OW is cost-shared with the City (for 2012, the city's portion is 17.2%). If social assistance rates increase, this would increase the levy portion as well as the provincial portion, at whatever rate of increase was implemented. Effective January 1, 2018, the province will assume 100% of the cost of OW basic financial assistance.

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Chronology of events)

The Ontario Public Health Standards 2008, Chronic Disease Prevention Standards Requirement #2, states: The Board of Health shall monitor food affordability in accordance with the *Nutritious Food Basket Protocol, 2008* (or as current) and the *Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol, 2008* (or as current).

The NFB is a survey tool that is a measure of the cost of basic healthy eating. It reflects an eating pattern that meets the recommendations from Canada's Food Guide and takes into account actual eating behaviours and food purchasing patterns found in the Canadian Community Health Survey 2.2.

The 67 foods surveyed represent:

- Vegetables and Fruit
- Orange Vegetables and Fruit
- Dark Green Vegetables
- Whole Grains/ Whole Wheat Products
- Non Whole Grain Products
- Milk and Milk Alternatives
- Meat, Poultry, Legumes, Eggs and Fish

A complete list of the foods surveyed can be found on Health Canada's website for the National Nutritious Food Basket.²

The NFB reflects the average lowest price for a specified amount of food, regardless of brand, in the stores surveyed. The total cost includes an additional calculation of 5% to cover common food items used in meals (spices, seasonings, condiments, baking supplies, soups, coffee and tea).

The food items on the survey require food preparation skills. The survey does not make allowances for special dietary needs of individuals, differences in activity levels, or cultural food choices. It does not allow for eating out or inviting friends or other family members over for a meal. The NFB does not include processed convenience foods, snack foods, foods of little nutritional value, or purchases commonly made at grocery stores such as laundry detergent, toilet paper, or soap.

From May 14 to 16, 2012, Registered Dietitians, Dietetic Interns and nutrition student volunteers with Public Health Services (PHS) conducted food pricing in seven grocery stores across the City of Hamilton in accordance with the Nutritious Food Basket

Protocol. The food prices are used to estimate the average cost of feeding up to 22 different age and gender groups and a reference family of four: 2 adults (male and female ages 31 to 50), 2 children (girl age 8, boy age 14).

Food costing is used to monitor both affordability and accessibility of foods by relating the cost of the food basket to individual/family incomes.

For the past five years, the Board of Health has used the NFB data to advocate for increases in social assistance and affordable housing that would allow people with limited incomes to buy nutritious food.

Registered Dietitians in PHS have developed a factsheet, “The Cost of Basic Nutritious Food” (Appendix B), and have updated it annually for the past six years. It is distributed locally to community organizations and/or groups involved in poverty reduction to inform and support their advocacy efforts.

Many other groups are advocating for similar initiatives to reduce poverty and improve access to nutritious food. Examples are the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, Hamilton Emergency Food Strategic Planning Committee, the Ontario-wide ‘Put Food in the Budget’ Campaign, the Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health, and the Ontario Public Health Association Food Security Workgroup.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Social assistance benefits are issued in accordance with rate schedules specified in the OW and ODSP Support Program Acts and Regulations.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The following people have reviewed and/or contributed to the report:

- Dave Brodati, Policy & Program Specialist, Housing & Homelessness Division, Community Services Department provided the housing costs and housing wait list numbers.
- Members of the Food Security Workgroup, Ontario Public Health Association provided the Nutritious Food Basket Scenarios Template.
- Kerry Lubrick, Director of Employment & Income Support Division, Community Services Department reviewed the report and provided provincial rates and changes for Ontario Works, the Ontario Disability Support Program, and the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit.

- Suzanne Brown, Manager, Neighbourhood Development Strategies reviewed the report and asked for support for community-based food activities like community gardens, kitchens, urban farms, etc, that would fit well with proposed neighbourhood action plans.
- Gillian Hendry, Director Social Housing & Homelessness was consulted, but did not contribute any additional information.
- Brenda Osborne, Director, CEO/City Housing Hamilton, Community Services was consulted, but did not contribute any additional input.

ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

(include Performance Measurement/Benchmarking Data, if applicable)

The estimated average cost for a family of four³ to purchase the NFB in Hamilton in 2012 is \$172.69 per week or \$747.75 per month. This is an increase of 7.64% since 2010.

Nutritious Food Basket Summary 2010 – 2012

	Income (\$/month)			Rent (\$/month)			Food (\$/month)		
	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012	2010	2011	2012
Family of four on Ontario Works	1,908	2,011	2,032	874	938	971	690.59	718.82	747.75
Family of four Minimum wage earner	2,514	2,619	2,639	874	938	971	690.59	718.82	747.75
Single parent with 2 children on Ontario Works	1,757	1,836	1,855	767	788	795	523.26	544.08	565.99
One person household on Ontario Works	606	635	642	509	510	536	230.70	240.78	250.45
One person household on Ontario Disability Support Program	1,071	1,103	1,115	509	655*	668	230.70	240.78	250.45
One person household, Income based on Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement	1,201	1,245	1,326	644	655	668	170.53	177.44	184.46

* Changed from bachelor to one bedroom for 2011 to more accurately reflect housing needs of persons with a disability.

Funds Remaining for Other Basic Needs** (after Rent and Food)			
	2010 (\$/month)	2011 (\$/month)	2012 (\$/month)
Family of four on Ontario Works	343.41	354.18	313.25
Family of four, Minimum wage earner	949.41	962.18	920.25
Single parent with 2 children on Ontario Works	466.74	503.92	494.01
One person household on Ontario Works	(133.70)	(115.78)	(144.45)
One person household on Ontario Disability Support Program	331.30	207.22*	196.55
One person household, Income based on Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement	386.47	412.22	473.54

** Transportation, telephone, household and personal care items, childcare, clothing, school supplies, shoes, etc.

The increases in the cost of food and rent leave families, and in particular single OW recipients, without adequate remaining income to cover other basic needs.

Social assistance rates have not increased at the same rate as inflation. There will be a 1% increase applied to OW assistance in December 2012 and 1% to ODSP in November 2012. There will be no increases to the Ontario Child Benefit until 2014.

Appendix A gives a detailed comparison of the 2012 cost of food and rent, to total income, in seven different family situations.

Approximately 9.2 (± 2.4) % of households in Hamilton reported insufficient income to buy nutritious foods in 2009/10.⁴ These households experienced food insecurity (where they compromised the quantity or quality of food they consumed and/or changed their eating patterns) in the previous 12 months. This number likely under-estimates the true prevalence of household food insecurity in Hamilton.⁴

For those who must adhere to a strict budget, the choice is not between a generic and name brand product. It means the choice between food and hunger.

Following the eating pattern in Canada's Food Guide will help all people:

- Get enough vitamins, minerals and other nutrients;
- Reduce the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis; and
- Achieve overall health and vitality.

In addition, research shows that children who have access to nutritious food perform better in school, have less demand on the health system, and exhibit fewer negative psycho-social behaviours.^{5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10}

A woman's nutritional and overall health, before and during pregnancy, influences the health of her developing baby. Eating well, combined with taking a daily multivitamin with folic acid and iron, can give a woman the nutrients she needs to feel good, have energy, and support a healthy pregnancy.¹¹ In addition, a woman's nutrient intake affects the lifelong health of her baby.

Lack of nutritious food has a huge impact on health. Individuals in food insufficient households are more likely to report poor general health, major depression and distress, and multiple chronic conditions including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and food allergies.¹² For women, the experience of household food insecurity has been associated with being severely obese before pregnancy, having greater weight gain during pregnancy, and having a higher risk of developing gestational diabetes and complications of pregnancy.¹³

Canadian adults and adolescents in food insecure households have lower intakes of fruits, vegetables and milk products,¹⁴ lower vitamin and mineral intakes, and a greater risk of inadequate nutrient intakes. The higher estimated prevalence of nutrient inadequacy is widespread and most marked for protein, vitamin A, thiamin, riboflavin, vitamin B-6, folate, vitamin B-12, magnesium, phosphorus and zinc.¹⁵

The Canadian Community Health Survey 2.2 data indicates that Ontario men & women who reported food insecurity had significantly lower intakes of vitamin A, magnesium and calcium.¹⁶

In 2009/10, individuals from only 31.7 (± 9.6)% of food insecure households reported that they ate vegetables and fruit the recommended five or more times a day, compared to almost 38.2 (± 3.2)% of those in food secure Hamilton households.⁴

There is growing evidence that families who cannot afford to buy adequate amounts of nutritious food respond by buying and consuming more energy-dense, nutrient-poor food products (fats, sweets and snacks),¹⁷ and that this is contributing to the rising incidence of obesity in food insecure households.^{18,19,20,21}

Low household income is a marker for increased risk of overweight and obesity in Canadian children and youth.^{22,23} Measured height and weight data from Manitoba children aged 2 to 17 years, showed that 40.7% of those in low income households were overweight or obese compared to 25.2% of those in high income households.²⁴ Obesity is one more risk factor for poor health and chronic disease.

Families need adequate incomes that allow them to buy nutritious food if they are to reduce their risk of health problems, limit nutrient deficiencies, and decrease their incidence of obesity.

Income and Housing

A number of social determinants of health impact the ability to buy food. By far, the most significant factors are income and the cost of housing.

Income levels for too many people in Hamilton (18.1% of residents in Hamilton compared to 14.7% in Ontario) are below the low income cut off measures.²⁵ In fact, 26.4% of children under age six in Hamilton live in poverty.²⁶

In July 2012, there were 13,337 cases (families and individuals) that received OW financial and employment assistance in the City of Hamilton. The caseload is still 33% higher than the pre-recession average monthly caseload of 10,035 in 2008. In July 2012, there were 17,583 cases (individuals or families) received ODSP benefits in the City of Hamilton. The ODSP caseload continues to climb, and is up 4.7% compared to July 2011.²⁷

Hamilton food banks are struggling to meet the high demand for their services. In March 2012, 18,448 people used Hamilton Food Share services.²⁸ Of those who accessed food from a food bank in 2012, 75.66% were in receipt of OW or ODSP assistance.²⁹ Nine percent of households that accessed food banks in 2012 listed employment as their source of income.³⁰ This indicates that neither social assistance nor the current minimum wage provides sufficient income to buy food after paying the rent and other fixed expenses.

The cost of housing is the largest expense for most residents with low incomes, and a lack of affordable housing is a key cause of hunger in Ontario.³¹ Hamilton has a shortage of affordable rental housing and a long waiting list for social housing. The number of active applications on the Social Housing Waitlist was 5,499 as of June 2012.³²

It is anticipated that there will be additional challenges with the elimination of the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit from OW and ODSP in January 2013. The safety net which was available to provide assistance to maintain housing will be lost.

Proposed Strategies to Strengthen our Food System

An Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy that works across government and with partners to promote and support healthy eating and access to healthful food, improve health and reduce health care costs, and strengthen the economy through a sustainable and

environmentally sound food system has been proposed.³³ Such a strategy would address both the sustainability of a healthy food supply and the needs of all Ontarians, particularly those with low socio-economic status.

The City of Hamilton's General Issues Committee passed a motion in August 2012 to have a multi-departmental staff team develop a plan for a Hamilton Food Strategy by the end of 2012. The strategy would link and coordinate all community food initiatives in the City, resulting in a more planned and comprehensive approach to food access, availability and sustainability.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

(include Financial, Staffing, Legal and Policy Implications and pros and cons for each alternative)

The Board of Health can choose not to advocate for improvements in social assistance that enable recipients to buy nutritious food. However, given the health outcomes associated with poor nutrition, and the significant number of Hamiltonians who live on an income below the low income cut off measures, this alternative is not recommended.

Financial: None

Staffing: None

Legal: None

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN (Linkage to Desired End Results)

Focus Areas: 1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization, 2. Financial Sustainability, 3. Intergovernmental Relationships, 4. Growing Our Economy, 5. Social Development, 6. Environmental Stewardship, 7. Healthy Community

Financial Sustainability

- ◆ Delivery of municipal services in a sustainable, innovative and cost effective manner

Intergovernmental Relationships

- ◆ Influence federal and provincial policy development to benefit Hamilton

Social Development

- ◆ Residents in need have access to adequate support services

Healthy Community

- ◆ Adequate access to food, water, shelter and income, safety, work, recreation and support for all (Human Services)

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

Appendix A - May 2012 – Nutritious Food Basket Scenarios, Hamilton

Appendix B - The Cost of Basic Nutritious Food

References:

- ¹ The reference family of four includes 2 adults (male and female ages 31 to 50), 2 children (girl age 8, boy age 14).
- ² www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/basket-panier/index-eng.php
- ³ The reference family of four includes 2 adults (male and female ages 31 to 50), 2 children (girl age 8, boy age 14).
- ⁴ Canadian Community Health Survey 2009/10, Share File, Ontario, Ministry of Health and Long-term Care. This measure of food security is a household measure, so it does not determine the food security status of each individual member residing in the household. It cannot be assumed that all members of a household share the same food security status. The data are weighted using Statistics Canada's household weights that are representative at the provincial level. The weights may, or may not, be representative at the municipal level so estimates should be interpreted with caution. Estimates are likely conservative because certain high risk populations are not represented in the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). Information was not stated for 3.5% of City of Hamilton households.
- ⁵ Alaimo K, Olson CM, Frongillo EA. Food insufficiency and American school-aged children's cognitive, academic, and psychosocial development. *Pediatrics*. 2001;108(1):44-53.
- ⁶ Florence MD, Asbridge M, Veugelers PJ. Diet quality and academic performance. *J Sch Health*. 2008;78:209-215.
- ⁷ Sorhaindo A, Feinstein L. What is the relationship between child nutrition and school outcomes? Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning. Institute of Education: London, UK; 2008.
- ⁸ Kleinman RE, Hall S, Green H, Korzec-Ramirez D, Patton K, Pagano, ME, Murphy JM. Diet, breakfast, and academic performance in children. *Journal of Nutrition, Metabolic Diseases and Dietetics*. 2002;46 (suppl 1):24-30.
- ⁹ Rampersaud GC, Pereira MA, Girard BL, Adams J, Metz J. Breakfast habits, nutritional status, body weight, and academic performance in children and adolescents. *J Am Diet Assoc*. 2005;105(5):743-760.
- ¹⁰ Taras H. Nutrition and student performance at school. *J Sch Health*. 2005;75(6):199-213.
- ¹¹ <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/prenatal/index-eng.php> Accessed August 31, 2010.
- ¹² Vozoris NT, Tarasuk VS. Household food insufficiency is associated with poorer health. *J Nutr*. 2003;133:120-126.
- ¹³ Laraia BA, Siega-Riz AM, Gunderson C. Household Food Insecurity is associated with self-reported pregravid weight status, gestational weight gain, and pregnancy complications. *J Am Diet Assoc*. 2010;110(5):692-701.
- ¹⁴ Nutrition inequities in Canada. *Appl Physiol Nutr Metab*. 35:172-179, 2010.
- ¹⁵ Tarasuk V, Fitzpatrick S, Ward H. Food insecurity is associated with nutrient inadequacies among Canadian adults and adolescents. *J Nutr*. 2008;138:604-612.
- ¹⁶ Vogt J, Tarasuk V. Analysis of Ontario sample in Cycle 2.2 of the Canadian Community Health Survey(2004). 2007. Prepared for Ministry of Health Promotion. Retrieved on August 14, 2012 from <http://www.phred-redsp.on.ca/CCHSReport.htm>

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- ¹⁷ Tarasuk V, Fitzpatrick S, Ward H. Nutrition inequities in Canada. *Appl Physiol Nutr Metab*. 2010;35:172-179.
- ¹⁸ Kerstetter S, Goldber M. A review of policy options for increasing food security and income security in British Columbia: A discussion paper. September 2007.
- ¹⁹ Monsivais P, Drewnowski A. The rising cost of low-energy-density foods. *J Am Diet Assoc*. 2007;107:2071-2076.
- ²⁰ Desjardins E. Food Insecurity and Chronic Disease, Synthesis Paper. Prepared for the Food Security Knowledge Initiative funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada: Revised January 2010.
- ²¹ Food Research and Action Centre. Food Insecurity and Obesity: Understanding the Connections. 2011. Retrieved August 30, 2011 from www.frac.org
- ²² Willms JD, Tremblay MS, Katzmarzyk PT. Geographic and demographic variation in the prevalence of overweight Canadian children. *Obes Res*. 2003;11:668-73.
- ²³ St. John M, Durant PD, Campagna LA, Rehman AM, Thompson LA, Wadsworth RJL, Murphy I. Overweight Nova Scotia Children and Youth. *Can J Public Health*. 2008;99:4:301-306.
- ²⁴ Yu B, Pennner Protudjer JL, Anderson K, Fieldhouse P. Weight Status and Determinants of Health in Manitoba Children and Youth. *Can J Diet Prac Res*. 2010;71:115-121.
- ²⁵ Source: Statistics Canada. 2008. Select characteristics for Hamilton[®] and Ontario. (table). "2006 Community Profiles." "2006 Census: Data Products." *Census*. Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa, Ontario. Statistics Canada, July 14, 2008. Retrieved August 14, 2012 from: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3525005&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&Data=Count&SearchText=hamilton&SearchType=Begin&SearchPR=01&B1=All&Custom=> Statistics Canada. 2007. *Hamilton, Ontario (Code3525005) (table). 2006 Community Profiles*. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007. <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed September 12, 2012).
- A Low Income Cut Off (LICO) is an income threshold below which a family will likely devote a larger share of its income (at least 20 percentage points more) on the necessities of food, shelter and clothing than the average family. On average, households living under the LICO may spend 63% or more of their after-tax family income on food, shelter and clothing. The LICO thresholds are based on the size of the household and the population of the area of residence. When the incomes in social assistance and minimum wage scenarios presented in Appendix A to Report BOH12025 are annualized, all fall below the Statistics Canada 2006 LICOs.
- ²⁶ Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton. *Incomes and Poverty in Hamilton*. April 2009.
- ²⁷ Correspondence from staff in Employment and Income Support, Community Services Department, City of Hamilton, August 9, 2012.
- ²⁸ Hamilton Hunger Count 2012, Hamilton Food Share
- ²⁹ Hamilton Hunger Count 2012, Hamilton Food Share
- ³⁰ Hamilton Hunger Count 2012, Hamilton Food Share
- ³¹ The Ontario Association of Food Banks. *Our Choice for a Better Ontario*. August 19, 2008.
- ³² Correspondence from staff in Housing & Homelessness Division, Community Services Department, City of Hamilton, July 2012.
- ³³ <http://sustainontario.com/initiatives/ontario-food-and-nutrition-strategy> Accessed August 24, 2012.

May 2012 - Nutritious Food Basket Scenarios, Hamilton

	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4	Scenario 5	Scenario 6	Scenario 7
	Family of Four, Ontario Works	Family of Four, Minimum Wage Earner (Full-time/Full-year) ^j	Family of Four Median ONTARIO Income (after tax) ^k	Single Parent Household with 2 Children, Ontario Works	One Person Household, Ontario Works	One Person Household, ODSP	One Person Household, OAS/GIS
Monthly Calculations							
Income							
Income from Employment		\$ 1,777.00	\$ 6,792.00				
Basic Allowance ^a	\$ 448.00			\$ 347.00	\$ 227.00	\$ 590.00	
Maximum Shelter Allowance ^a	\$ 688.00			\$ 634.00	\$ 372.00	\$ 474.00	
Old Age Security/Guaranteed Income Supplement (OAS/GIS) ^b	\$ -						\$ 1,272.00
Child/Family Benefits ^c	\$ 744.00	\$ 743.00		\$ 744.00			
GST/HST credit ^d	\$ 64.00	\$ 64.00		\$ 64.00	\$ 21.00	\$ 29.00	\$ 32.00
Ontario Sales Tax Credit ^d	\$ 88.00	\$ 88.00		\$ 66.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 22.00
Employment Insurance paid ^e		\$ (33.00)	\$ (120.00)				
Canada Pension Plan paid ^f		\$ (74.00)	\$ (312.00)				
Working Income Tax Benefit ^g		\$ 74.00					
Total Income	\$ 2,032.00	\$ 2,639.00	\$ 6,360.00	\$ 1,855.00	\$ 642.00	\$ 1,115.00	\$ 1,326.00
Selected Expenses							
Average Rent (may or may not include heat/hydro) ^{h,m}	(3 Bdr.) \$ 971.00	(3 Bdr.) \$ 971.00	(3 Bdr.) \$ 1,397.00	(2 Bdr.) \$ 795.00	(Bachelor) \$ 536.00	(1 Bdr.) ⁱ \$ 668.00	(1 Bdr.) \$ 668.00
Food ⁱ	\$ 747.75	\$ 747.75	\$ 747.75	\$ 565.99	\$ 250.45	\$ 250.45	\$ 184.46
Total Expenses	\$ 1,718.75	\$ 1,718.75	\$ 2,144.75	\$ 1,360.99	\$ 786.45	\$ 918.45	\$ 852.46
Funds Remaining (for other basic needs e.g. telephone, transportation, child care, household and personal care items, clothing, school supplies etc.)	\$ 313.25	\$ 920.25	\$ 4,215.25	\$ 494.01	\$ (144.45)	\$ 196.55	\$ 473.54
Percentage of income required for rent	48%	37%	22%	43%	83%	60%	50%
Percentage of income required to purchase healthy food	37%	28%	12%	31%	39%	22%	14%

Note: All dollars rounded to nearest whole number.

Scenario References:

- Scenario 1 - 2 adults (male and female ages 31-50), 2 children (girl age 8, boy age 14); on Ontario Works (OW).
- Scenario 2 - 2 adults (male and female ages 31-50), 2 children (girl age 8, boy age 14); income is based on one minimum wage earner, 40hr/wk, \$10.25/hr.
- Scenario 3 - 2 adults (male and female ages 31-50), 2 children (girl age 8, boy age 14).
- NOTE: Income from employment is based on median after-tax income- two-parent families with children (CANSIM Table 202-0605); however, EI and CPP contributions are calculated using median total income-two-parent families with children (CANSIM Table 202-0411). Assumption of a dual income family with a split of 65% / 35% between partners.
- Scenario 4 - 1 adult (female age 31-50), 2 children (girl age 8, boy age 14); on Ontario Works.
- Scenario 5 - 1 adult (male age 31-50); on Ontario Works.
- Scenario 6 - 1 adult (male age 31-50); on Ontario Disability Support Program.
- Scenario 7 - 1 adult (female age 70+); income based on Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement (OAS/GIS).

a - Basic and maximum shelter allowance. OW and Ontario Disability Support Payment (ODSP) rates effective May 2012. Source: Social Assistance, Pension and Tax Credit Rates April to June 2012, Ministry of Community and Social Services.

b - Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement (OAS/GIS) rates May 2012. Source: Social Assistance, Pension and Tax Credit Rates April to June 2012, Ministry of Community and Social Services.

c - Includes maximum Canada Child Tax benefit, National Child Benefit Supplement, & Ontario Child Benefit. Effective July 2011 - June 2012. <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/clcltr/menu-eng.html> (accessed July 17, 2012).

d - Based on net annual income. GST/HST and Ontario Sales TaxCredit are issued on a quarterly basis, but calculated on a monthly basis. Figures derived from GST/HST and related provincial programs calculator, effective July 2011-June 2012. <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/clcltr/menu-eng.html> (accessed July 17, 2012).

e - Reference: Employment Insurance Premium Rates <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/clcltng/ei/cnt-chrt-pf-eng.html> (accessed July 17, 2012).

f - Canada Pension Plan Reference: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/clcltng/cpp-rc/cnt-chrt-pf-eng.html> (accessed July 17, 2012).

g - Reference: Working Income Tax Benefit Online Calculator . <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/wtb/menu-eng.html> (accessed July 17, 2012).

h - City of Hamilton,Community Services Department, Housing Services Division. Data received from Dave Brodati, Policy & Program Specialist, July 17, 2012.

i - Reference: Nutritious Food Basket Data Results 2012 For Hamilton - Includes Family size adjustment factors.

j - Reference: Minimum wage <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/info/minimumwage/> (accessed July 17, 2012).

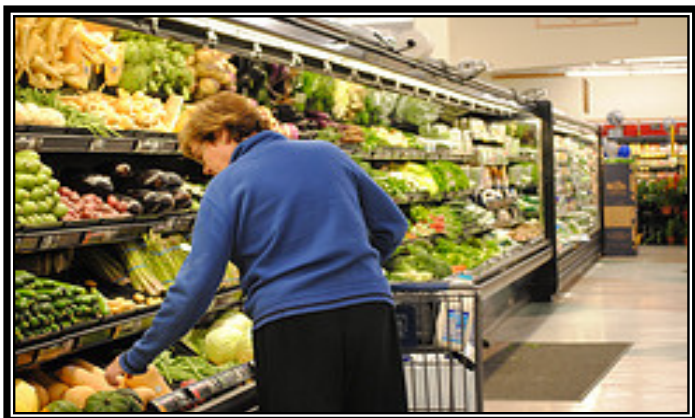
k - Source: Statistics Canada. Table 202-0605 - Median Ontario after-tax income, two parent family with children, 2010 constant dollars, annual (dollars), CANSIM (database). (accessed July 19, 2012).

l - Housing for Scenario 6 was changed from Bachelor to 1-bedroom in 2011. This change reflects a more accurate housing need for persons with a disability. This change will need to be recognized when attempting to compare 2011 and 2012 results to previous years.

m- Average household expenditures; (Ontario). <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/01/cst01/famil130g-eng.htm> (accessed July 23, 2012).

The Cost of Basic Nutritious Food

Nutritious Food is Essential for Health and Well-Being



Following the eating pattern in Canada's Food Guide will help us:

- Get enough vitamins, minerals and other nutrients,
- Reduce the risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis, and
- Achieve overall health and vitality.

Well-nourished children perform better in school, have better health and exhibit less negative psycho-social behaviour than children who are undernourished.

Eating well, combined with taking a daily multivitamin with folic acid and iron, can give a woman the nutrients she needs to feel good, have energy, and support a healthy pregnancy.

Nutritious Food Basket

The Nutritious Food Basket survey determines the average lowest cost of a nutritious diet. In 2012, Registered Dietitians in Public Health Services conducted the survey in seven Hamilton grocery stores.

The 67 foods surveyed included:

- Vegetables and Fruit
- Orange Vegetables and Fruit
- Dark Green Vegetables
- Whole Grains/ Whole Wheat Products
- Non Whole Grain Products
- Milk and Milk Alternatives
- Meat, Poultry, Legumes, Eggs and Fish

The Nutritious Food Basket does not include convenience foods, snack foods, or other purchases such as toilet paper or dish soap. It also makes the assumption that most people have the skills necessary to prepare and store foods, and does not include eating out or cooking for additional friends or family.

How Much Does Healthy Eating Cost in Hamilton in 2012?

In 2012, a reference family of four* living in Hamilton, needs \$172.69 a week, or \$747.75 a month, to meet their nutritional needs.

*2 adults (male and female ages 31 to 50), and 2 children (girl age 8, boy age 14)

Housing and Food Costs in 2012

People with low incomes often live in rental housing. In 2012, the average monthly rental cost for a three-bedroom apartment in Hamilton is \$971. For a family of four receiving Ontario Works (OW) assistance, this represents 48% of their monthly income.

Many individuals and families receiving Ontario Works assistance, Ontario Disability Support Programs or working in minimum wage jobs do not have enough money left after paying the rent to purchase nutritious food on a regular basis.

Monthly income and estimated costs for a reference family of 4, 2 adults (male and female, ages 31 to 50) and 2 children (girl age 8, boy age 14) receiving Ontario Works and living in Hamilton.	
Budget Item	Cost Per Month/2012
Ontario Works income	\$1136.00
Income from other sources (Child/Family Benefits, Ontario Sales Tax Credit, GST/HST credit)	\$ 896.00
Average Hamilton rent (3 bedroom apartment)	\$ 971.00
Cost of Nutritious Food Basket	\$ 747.75
What's LEFT	\$ 313.25

Most people will pay their fixed expenses such as rent, hydro and heat, first. When money is tight, it is challenging to cover any other basic monthly expenses such as telephone, transportation, toiletries, household items, medications, clothing, laundry, child care services, insurance, and unexpected items.

Food Insecurity Affects Health

Food insecurity is defined as a limited or uncertain availability of safe and nutritious foods, or the inability to acquire foods in a socially acceptable way.

A growing body of research has found a strong relationship between food insecurity and health issues:

- Adolescents and adults from food insecure households are at increased risk for nutrient inadequacy.
- Food insecurity may act as a risk factor for multiple chronic conditions including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, obesity, cancer, and high blood pressure.
- Food insecurity is associated with various mental health problems, and is predictive of depression in both adults and children.
- Children living in food insecure households are more likely to experience nutritional, behavioural, emotional, social, and academic problems than children living in food secure households (e.g. higher prevalence of iron deficiency anemia, low serum zinc levels, more likely to gain weight, higher risk for developing depression, more difficulty getting along with other children, greater levels of absenteeism from school, and lower academic scores).



Food Security Solutions

Short-term Responses to Food Insecurity

Food banks, soup kitchens and other emergency food access programs provide immediate relief from hunger.

Food security could be jumpstarted by implementing a monthly \$100 Healthy Food Supplement for social assistance recipients.

Short-term solutions provide temporary relief for individuals facing poverty, and having limited access to nutritious food. They do not change the underlying problems. They must be part of a broader strategy, with a stronger social safety net that reduces poverty.

How Can You Help?

You can advocate for:

- Local food procurement policies.
- Community-based food programs such as good food boxes, community food centres, food co-ops, community gardens, and community kitchens.
- A healthy food supplement to make Ontario fresh vegetables and fruit available in low-income communities.
- Expansion of the Student Nutrition programs to all elementary and secondary students.
- Education about food in the school curriculum at all levels.
- Infrastructure grants for schools to enable them to build kitchens, buy food processing equipment, and create school gardens.

Actions for Community Food Security

Providing food access to all people in Hamilton means promoting long-term, broad-based strategies such as system and policy changes.

These can include:

- Legislation for subsidies and tax incentives to support the agri-food sector.
- Policies for land use and planning that promote a healthy food supply.
- Policies that enhance the ability of the built environment to support healthy eating.
- Regulations that increase access to healthy food choices at all public settings.
- Policies that support adequate income levels for all Ontarians to afford basic necessities.
- A comprehensive Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy that addresses both the sustainability of a healthy food supply and the needs of all Ontarians but particularly those with low socio-economic status.



Policy change is necessary for a secure and accessible food system that is available to all.

Nutritious Food Basket Weekly Costs City of Hamilton, 2012		
	Age (years)	Food Cost per week
Boys	2-3	\$22.63
	4-8	\$29.32
Girls	2-3	\$22.16
	4-8	\$28.38
Males	9-13	\$39.16
	14-18	\$55.43
	19-30	\$53.34
	31-50	\$48.20
	51-70	\$46.63
	Over 70	\$46.15
Females	9-13	\$33.42
	14-18	\$39.97
	19-30	\$41.09
	31-50	\$40.68
	51-70	\$36.10
	Over 70	\$35.50
Pregnant Women	18 and younger	\$44.66
	19-30	\$45.04
	31-50	\$43.97
Breastfeeding Women	18 and younger	\$46.55
	19-30	\$47.84
	31-50	\$46.78

Resources

- www.hamilton.ca/nutrition
- <http://foodnetontario.ca/wp>
- www.hamiltonfoodshare.org
- www.hamiltonpoverty.ca
- www.dothemath.thestop.org
- <http://25in5.ca/take-action/>

Your Nutritious Food Basket

Steps to Calculate Your Weekly Cost

- Step 1.** Write down the gender and age of each person in the household.
- Step 2.** Use the Nutritious Food Basket Weekly Costs and write down the weekly food cost for each person.
- Step 3.** Add the weekly food costs together for the subtotal.
- Step 4.** Multiply the subtotal by the amount below for the number of people in the household.
- 1 person - multiply by 1.20
 - 2 people - multiply by 1.10
 - 3 people - multiply by 1.05
 - 4 people - make no change
 - 5-6 people - multiply by 0.95
 - 7 or more people - multiply by 0.90
- Step 5.** To find out the monthly costs, multiply your total by 4.33.

Example Nutritious Food Basket Cost in a 2-person Household

Gender	Age (years)	Cost (\$)
Woman	27	41.09
Girl	7	28.38
Subtotal		69.47
Total (multiply x 1.10 for 2)		76.42/week
Total x 4.33		330.89/month

Nutritious Food Basket Cost in Your Household

Gender	Age (years)	Cost (\$)
Subtotal		
Total (multiply x ____ for ____)		/week
Total x 4.33		/month