

MEDIA RELEASE

The Cost of Healthy Eating in Saskatchewan 2015 Moose Jaw & Area, SK - Monday, October 31, 2016

The Saskatchewan Food Costing Task Group has released the results of [The Cost of Healthy Eating in Saskatchewan 2015](#). The purpose of the report is to present the 2015 data on the average food cost of a nutritionally adequate diet in Saskatchewan.

From 2012 to 2015, the provincial average increase in weekly food costs for a Reference Family of Four was 11.5%. This is double the average increase from 2009 to 2012. In southern Saskatchewan, it is estimated that a reference family of four pays on average \$228.64 per week for food costs.

Food costs were calculated from randomly selected grocery stores, both urban and rural, across Saskatchewan using [Health Canada's National Nutritious Food Basket](#) which includes 67 basic nutritious foods commonly eaten by Canadians and meets the recommendations outlined in [Canada's Food Guide](#). The basket includes foods such as fresh and frozen vegetables and fruit, cheese, bread, meat, beans and lentils; foods included are minimally processed and widely available.

Besides cost, food availability is another factor affecting a family's ability to purchase nutritious foods. Rural and northern Saskatchewan stores had more food basket items missing than stores in the rest of Saskatchewan. Many rural communities also do not have local grocery stores and rely on convenience and general stores to purchase foods which tend to be packaged and more processed. Convenience and general stores were not included in this process.

Carol Acton, Executive Director for Hunger in Moose Jaw confirms *“Nutritious food decisions are not simply a matter of individual choice. Both the cost and the availability of nutritious foods in our communities may make eating healthy difficult for families in particular for those living in poverty.”*

Infants and children are another vulnerable group where food security is a concern. Melanie Warken, Public Health Dietitian for the Five Hills Health Region states that *“Supporting mothers to exclusively breastfeed their infants for the first six months, and sustained for up to two years or longer with the appropriate introduction of solid foods, is one way to ensure that infants and children are food secure. This supports their growth and development.”*

We need to continue to work together to help reduce poverty and increase food security for all people in Saskatchewan. This report provides organizations and decision makers with information to support the continuum of food security strategies to ensure that all families in Saskatchewan can afford and access nutritious food. For information on food security in our region, readers can follow us on Facebook or email us at southcentralfsn@gmail.com.

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