



# Healthy food is important for good health



Getting wholesome, nutritious food is important to maintaining a healthy routine.

**That's why we're sharing helpful resources and tips that can help support you.**

## Trade-offs to putting meals on the table

People who are unable to obtain regular access to healthy food may experience making these trade-offs:

- Eating low-cost, filling foods that lack necessary nutrients
- Repeating the same meals without any variety of foods
- Skipping meals to afford prescriptions or medical care
- Watering down food and drinks to make them last longer



In 2022, **1 in 7 people** didn't have access to enough food for a healthy, active life, including **7.3 million children**.<sup>1</sup>



More than **44 million** people across the United States are food insecure. Many people also face challenges impacting their access to food.<sup>1</sup>

## Food insecurity and health

Food insecurity has direct and indirect impacts on both physical and mental well-being for people of all ages. Eating healthy foods can decrease your risk of common and costly health problems and behaviors, like diabetes and hypertension.<sup>2</sup>



## Your health and well-being

Eating healthy can decrease your risk of the following health challenges:

### Adults<sup>3</sup>

- Arthritis
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Coronary heart disease
- Insufficient sleep and mental distress

### Children<sup>3</sup>

- Behavioral problems
- Developmental delays
- Obesity
- Poor growth

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### Tips for getting the healthy food you need



#### Use your healthcare team for help

Talk with a member of your healthcare team or registered dietitian about making better food and nutrition choices.

They can help you:

- **Identify** healthy food options that support your health.
- **Navigate** the grocery store to find items that are both nutritious and cost-effective.
- **Get connected** to your local food bank and other food assistance programs for help.



#### Tips for safe grocery shopping

- Ensure your **cart has been disinfected** before use.
- Keep your **hands away from your nose, mouth and ears.**



#### Tips for grocery shopping on a budget

- Get **less expensive cuts of meat** that may be in stock and are great to use in casseroles, soups, stews, burritos, etc., for bigger meals with lots of leftovers.
- In place of meat, you can try beans, legumes, eggs, and canned and frozen fish—**less expensive but still nutritious sources of protein** that can be used in many ways. Also, canned fish does not require refrigeration.
- If fresh vegetables are limited, **try frozen and canned vegetables and beans.** Properly rinse and drain them before cooking.
- Powdered milk and/or evaporated canned milk (not sweetened condensed milk) are **lower-cost alternatives to dairy-based milk.** Simply add the amount of water that is recommended on the package or can.



#### Tips for preparing meals

- To help you get the nutrition you need, consider eating a **variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and low-fat/fat-free dairy or dairy-alternative options.**
- If you have one, use a slow cooker or pressure cooker to **prepare soups, stews and other mixed dishes,** which may provide leftovers for more than one day.
- **Keep foods at proper temperatures** before and during cooking and when they are stored after a meal.
- Throw away foods and beverages if past their expiration date.





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Good news. There are numerous options for resources and support that may be available to you.

## Support from your health plan

Some health plans may include benefits that provide eligible members with food resources and assistance, including meal delivery. **Call the number on the back of your medical insurance ID card** to see what benefits may be available.



## Resources for eating on a budget

- **Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Eat Right**  
Offers food fact sheets on nutrition, planning and prepping meals, vitamins and supplements, resources and more.  
[www.eatright.org/food](http://www.eatright.org/food)
- **FoodSafety.gov: 4 Steps to Food Safety**  
Provides steps and guidance on the four simple steps to help keep your family safe from food poisoning at home.  
[www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/4-steps-to-food-safety](http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep-food-safe/4-steps-to-food-safety)



## Federally assisted programs

- **School breakfast and lunch programs for children**  
Offers free or reduced-price healthy meals for income-eligible students of all ages.  
[www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sbp/school-breakfast-program)
- **Summer meals programs for children**  
Gives free healthy meals for students 18 and under.  
[www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program)

- **USDA ChooseMyPlate: Healthy Eating on a Budget**

Offers tips, tools and information for meal and grocery planning, shopping the aisles, preparing healthy meals and more.

[www.myplate.gov](http://www.myplate.gov)

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

Provides money to purchase food at grocery stores, farmers markets and other retailers (formerly known as food stamps). In 2021, the average SNAP monthly benefit was \$216.<sup>4</sup>

[www.fns.usda.gov/snap](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap)

- **Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program**

Donates money to purchase certain healthy foods for pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, as well as infants and children under the age of 5. Nutrition education and breastfeeding support is also provided.

[www.fns.usda.gov/wic](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic)



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## Food pantries and programs

- **Feeding America Affiliate Food Bank**

Offers local resources for feeding programs in your community. Resources and requirements vary by food bank.

[www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank](http://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank)

- **211 Helpline Center**

Provides community information and referrals to social services for everyday needs and in times of crisis, including food support. Calls are free and confidential.

**Dial 211 from any phone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.**

[www.helplinecenter.org](http://www.helplinecenter.org)

- **Humana Community Navigator®**

Search within your community to connect to food resources, transportation programs, utility services, housing support and more.

[www.humana.findhelp.com](http://www.humana.findhelp.com)

### Sources

1. “Household Food Security in the United States in 2022,” U.S. Department Of Agriculture, October 2023, last accessed January 9, 2024, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=107702>.
2. Food Research & Action Center, Hunger & Health, December 2017, last accessed January 9, 2024, <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/hunger-health-impact-poverty-food-insecurity-health-well-being.pdf>.
3. “Screen and Intervene: A Toolkit for Pediatricians to Address Food Insecurity,” last accessed January 9, 2024, <https://frac.org/aaptoolkit>.
4. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Program Information Report (Keydata), 2021, last accessed January 9, 2024, <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/data-files/keydata-september-2021.pdf>.

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