



**Let's
Talk
About
Food**



What is food security?

Food security is when people can get enough affordable, nutritious food to stay healthy and active. Many people do not have enough food for healthy meals or enough money to buy them. This is called *food insecurity*, and it affects every community in the United States. In fact, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that more than **37 million people live in food-insecure households, and 1 in 7 children** may not have enough food for an active, healthy life.

People who experience food insecurity are at higher risk for poor health and increased health care costs. Children who experience food insecurity are at higher risk for developmental or behavioral problems in school.

You may be experiencing food insecurity if you:

- Do not have enough food or worry about having enough food at home
- Have to buy food that is lower quality, less varied or less desirable
- Have to eat less food at mealtimes or have fewer meals throughout the day
- Live in an area where there are few places to buy affordable food

How does food insecurity affect people with CF and their parents or caregivers?

There is not a lot of information about food insecurity and people with cystic fibrosis, but evidence and experience suggest that people with CF may be at increased risk for experiencing food insecurity. This could be due to:

- High cost of CF health care and treatment
- Lack of time to prepare meals and snacks
- Need for people with CF to consume more calories and protein than those who do not have CF

Food insecurity is a problem that deserves a solution. So let's start talking.



FOOD INSECURITY:

The lack of consistent access to enough affordable, nutritious food.

People living with CF may be at increased risk.

Why should I talk to my CF care team about food security?

Living with CF is expensive. Although there are ways to make money last longer during the month, some of these ways can harm your health or the health of your family. The Food Research and Action Center gives these examples:

- Going without the foods recommended by your doctor or dietitian (e.g., high-fat, high-protein diets and nutritional shakes)
- Choosing between paying for food or other basic needs (e.g., car payment, rent or utilities)
- Going without food so your children can eat
- Taking less medication than you should or not taking it at all
- Putting off medical care

Because people with CF deal with food insecurity, many CF care teams are asking screening questions about food during clinic visits. If you are struggling with food security, your CF care team can guide you to resources that can help. Keep in mind, **food insecurity can happen to anyone at any time.**

How can I get help if I am experiencing food insecurity?

People who cannot afford basic needs — such as food and housing — might feel ashamed or hesitate to ask for help. **Food insecurity affects many people for many reasons.** No one is at fault.

Several federal and state programs that address food insecurity are available to help the CF community throughout the country. These programs are free, but eligibility and benefits can vary from state to state. To find out options in your community, talk with your CF care team or contact CF Foundation Compass at 844-COMPASS (844-266-7277) or compass@cff.org.



RUNNING SHORT THIS MONTH?

There may be help right in your community. Ask your CF care team or call CF Foundation *Compass*.



Food Resources

Cystic Fibrosis-Specific Resources

CF Foundation Compass helps with insurance, financial, legal and other issues.

844-COMPASS or compass@cff.org

HealthWell Foundation has two different grants to help people with CF afford medications, vitamins and supplements. www.healthwellfoundation.org

National Resources

Feeding America works to get nourishing food to people in need and offers a local food bank finder online. www.feedingamerica.org

USDA National Hunger Line: 1-866-3-HUNGER

Community Action fights poverty through a network of community action agencies. These agencies are in 99 percent of U.S. counties to connect individuals and families with available resources. <https://communityactionpartnership.com>

State and Federal Assistance Programs

Assistance with Food



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps low-income families buy food. www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program



Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides nutrition services to women who are pregnant or breastfeeding until the child's first birthday, women who are not breastfeeding for 6 months postpartum and children until their fifth birthday. www.fns.usda.gov/wic



National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs provide nutrient-balanced meals each day for free or reduced cost to children in public and non-profit schools and residential childcare facilities. www.fns.usda.gov/nslp



Summer Food Service Program provides meals and snacks for low-income families at community centers. www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program



Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) provides time-limited assistance to needy families so children can be cared for in their own homes. www.hhs.gov/answers/programs-for-families-and-children/what-is-tanf/index.html



The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) supplements diets of low-income families by providing free emergency food and nutrition help. www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/emergency-food-assistance-program

Assistance with Health Insurance



Medicaid provides health insurance coverage for low-income people and people with disabilities. Some state Medicaid programs also cover non-medical services, such as transportation, housing or access to foodbanks. www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/eligibility/index.html



Medicare is an insurance program for people aged 65 and older and those with disabilities. Medicare Advantage plans may cover non-medical services, such as transportation or groceries. www.medicare.gov/what-medicare-covers/your-medicare-coverage-choices/whats-medicare



Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) provides financial support for people who have been deemed disabled. These programs are pathways to Medicaid and Medicare, respectively. www.ssa.gov/disability



Earned Income Tax Credit is an anti-poverty initiative that provides tax reductions and cash supplements. www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/earned-income-tax-credit

Assistance with Household Utility Costs



Lifeline Program provides a discount on phone service for qualifying people with low incomes. www.fcc.gov/general/lifeline-program-low-income-consumers



Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps families manage costs related to home energy bills, energy crises, weatherization and energy-related minor home repairs. www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/liheap



Federal program



State program

