

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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The real cost of eating in northwestern Ontario

Struggling to put food on the table due to finances is a reality for more than 1 in 7 households in northwestern Ontario.

According to a food costing survey done by Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) this spring, the average cost to feed a family of four is \$299.12 per week (or \$1295.18 per month). While the cost of groceries has increased with inflation this past year, the issue runs much deeper than just the price of food.

“The root cause of food insecurity is poverty –too many households are struggling to afford the cost of basic living in northwestern Ontario, especially those on minimum wage and social assistance,” says Zoe Brenner, Registered Dietitian with NWHU. “Many of our neighbors must choose between food on the table or a warm roof over their heads. Which would you choose?”

When money is tight, often enjoyable and nutritious food is compromised to pay for other expenses, like rent and utilities. This can lead to worsening physical health, increased mental illness, and over time, significant costs to our healthcare system.

NWHU believes the gap between income and the cost of living needs to be narrowed and that food is a basic right for all. Affordable housing and childcare, wages, social assistance that reflects the cost of living, and adequate employment security can help reduce poverty and food insecurity.

Learn more about food insecurity, poverty, and recommendations for action by visiting NWHU’s [Food Insecurity webpage](#) or by contacting your local health unit office.

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