

# Diabetes and Food Insecurity

## What is diabetes?

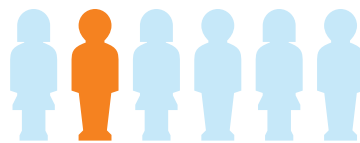
Diabetes affects the body's ability to properly regulate the amount of sugar in the blood. High blood sugar levels over time can damage blood vessels, organs and nerves. This can lead to complications impacting many areas of the body.

## What is food insecurity?

Food insecurity is when individuals do not have regular access to food that is safe, sufficient, nutritious, culturally appropriate and meets lifestyle needs.

### Food insecurity is a growing problem in Canada that impacts:

• 1 in 6 children under the age of 18

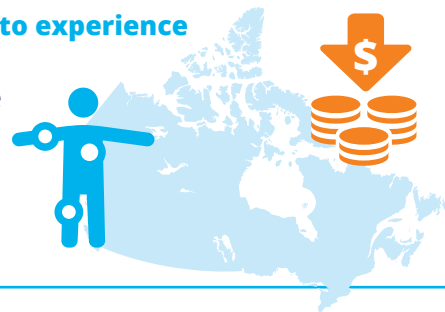


• Approximately 1 in 8 Canadian households



### Individuals are more likely to experience food insecurity if they:

- Have a low household income
- Live with one or more chronic health conditions
- Have unstable employment
- Are newcomers to Canada



## How are diabetes and food insecurity connected?



Food insecurity is associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes and gestational diabetes, and can compromise the management of all types of diabetes. **Adults who experience food insecurity are 2x more likely to live with type 2 diabetes.**

### Food insecurity makes diabetes management challenging because:

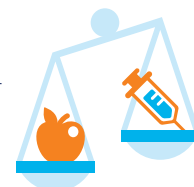
A lack of food can cause inconsistent eating patterns, making it hard to keep blood sugars stable



The stress of acquiring food can contribute to higher blood sugar levels and increased risk of complications over time



People may be forced to choose between purchasing food and paying for diabetes medications and supplies



## Recommendations to Governments

- ▶ **Introduce a basic income guarantee.** This allows people to purchase nutritious and culturally appropriate foods.
- ▶ **Make affordable housing available.** This allows for more money to be spent on food.
- ▶ **Introduce a national school food program.** This ensures children and youth can access nutritious food.
- ▶ **Modify zoning laws to encourage healthy food outlets to set up in all neighbourhoods.** This encourages greater availability of healthy food.



Food insecurity is a complex problem that requires action from all levels of government to resolve. Addressing the problem will lower Canadians' risk of developing type 2 and gestational diabetes, improve outcomes for those living with diabetes, and ultimately decrease healthcare system costs.

For more information on food insecurity and diabetes, please refer to Diabetes Canada's position statement: [www.diabetes.ca](http://www.diabetes.ca)

diabetes.ca  
1-800-BANTING (226-8464)

**DIABETES  
CANADA**