

Addressing Diabetes and Food Insecurity: Resources for Communities in Need

Prevalence of Food Insecurity in the U.S.

Food insecurity is defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as lacking consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. In the United States, 11.1% of all households were food insecure in 2018. Food insecurity is even more pronounced in low-income populations—in 2016, it was found that 31.6% of low-income households were food insecure.



Common Characteristics

- Households with children headed by a single person
- African American or Hispanic/Latino populations
- Living at or below 185% of the poverty threshold
- Households headed by grandparents
- Households that are unemployed

Food Insecurity and Diabetes

The risk for type 2 diabetes is increased twofold in those with food insecurity and has been associated with low adherence to taking medications appropriately and recommended self-care behaviors, depression, diabetes distress and worse glycemic control. In those with diabetes and food insecurity, the priority is mitigating the increased risk for uncontrolled hyperglycemia and severe hypoglycemia.

What Health Care Professionals Can Do to Help

1. Identify resources within your own community.

- Create a list of food security support resources in your community
- Explore local, state and national organizations and programs that support food security

2. Screen your patients for food insecurity.

- [Hunger Vital Sign™ Screening Tool](#)
- [PRAPARE Assessment Tool](#)
- [AAFP Social Needs Screening Tool](#)
- Use your Electronic Health Record to integrate a screening tool when assessing patients

3. If you find signs of food insecurity, acknowledge and address it.

- Discuss the importance of your patients' clinical needs
- Provide encouragement and address any food security barriers
- Recommend applicable food security resources and support

4. Partner with local food banks.

- Develop an on-site food pantry in your health system or at a community location
- Support a Healthy Food Box program for participants at your local food bank

5. Follow up with your patients.

- Follow up with your patients regarding any past referrals that were made
- Continue to address and support your patients' food security needs

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Resources:

- American Diabetes Association® (ADA)—diabetes.org
 - [Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes: Improving Care and Promoting Health in Populations](#)
- Feeding America—feedingamerica.org
- [Addressing Food Insecurity: A Toolkit for Pediatricians](#)
- [Food Banks as Partners in Health Promotion](#)
- [Food Insecurity and Health: A Toolkit for Physicians and Health Care Organizations](#)
- [Hospitals and Food Insecurity](#)
- [Implementing Food Security Screening and Referral for Older Patients in Primary Care: A Resource Guide and Toolkit](#)
- [No Kid Hungry Resources](#)
- [Social Needs Patient Action Plan](#)
- [The Community Guide: Community Health Workers](#)

National Programs:

- [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#): SNAP provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families so they can purchase healthy food and move towards self-sufficiency.
- [Free and Reduced-Price School Meals](#): Eligible participants are encouraged to submit a school meal application any time during the school year. Contact your local school or district for more information.
- [Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\)](#): SFSP, also known as the Summer Meals Program, was established to ensure that children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. When school is out, SFSP provides free meals to kids and teens in low-income areas.
- [Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children \(WIC\)](#): WIC provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

Local Programs:

- [Diabetes Prevention Program \(DPP\)](#): Find a recognized lifestyle change program near you.
- [Diabetes Self-Management and Education Support \(DSMES\)](#): Find an ADA-recognized DSMES program near you.
- [Feeding America](#): Find a local food bank location in your area.
 - Feeding America's [Access to the Food and Help You Need](#)
- [Meals on Wheels](#): Meals on Wheels offers free or low-cost home delivered meals for seniors.
- [Neighborhood Navigator](#): The EveryONE Project lists local programs and resources by zip code.

Health Education Resources:

- [Diabetes Placemats](#): Find handouts and resources from the ADA.
 - Seven different diabetes placemats are available including Classic, Southern, Hispanic, Vegetarian, Asian, Indian and Pacific Islander. Each provide a simple guide to planning meals and managing portions.
- [Food and Meal Planning](#): Find handouts and resources from Feeding America.
- [Navigating the Food Pantry with Diabetes](#): Find handouts and resources from Michigan University.

ADA's Free Webinar Series: Health Disparities-Community Health Workers' Resources

Webinar: *What Health Care Professionals Need to Know About Addressing Diabetes and Food Insecurity: Resources for Communities in Need*. For more information visit professional.diabetes.org/chwwwebinars