

# An Intervention to Address the High Prevalence of Food Insecurity and Hunger Among a Primarily Latino, Low Income Patient Population in Chelsea, Massachusetts

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**Food for Families Program**

**Tuesday November 9, 2010**



MASSACHUSETTS  
GENERAL HOSPITAL

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY  
HEALTH IMPROVEMENT



MGH Chelsea  
HealthCare Center

# Presenter Disclosures

## Jeff Milner

- “No relationship to disclose”

# Food for Families Program (FFF) @ MGH Chelsea HealthCare Center

- Began as a research study in the Dept. of Pediatrics (2003) and later became a permanent screening program within the primary care departments to identify patients and families who are experiencing food insecurity and hunger.
- Kleinman, R.E., Murphy, M.J., et al. (2007) “Use of a Single-Question Screening Tool to Detect Hunger in Families Attending a Neighborhood Health Center”. *Journal of Ambulatory Pediatrics*. Vol. 7 (4), 278-284.
- Aims:
  - To connect patients with local and federal resources
  - Promote healthy eating on a budget

# What is Food Insecurity?

Food Insecurity is the lack of access to enough food to fully meet one's basic needs.

Source: [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org)

# Chelsea, Massachusetts

- Urban, dense city adjacent to Boston where poverty rates are more than double the statewide average
- Home to a large number of refugees from distinct cultures.
- Latinos comprise more than 48% of the population and over 58% of residents speak a language other than English (44% speak Spanish)

*Source: 2000 US Census*

# Chelsea Households with Children who are “Food Insecure”

- In Chelsea, 5 out of 6 neighborhoods are classified as ‘poverty census tracts’ (have a high poverty density). 32% of households in these 5 neighborhoods are food insecure.

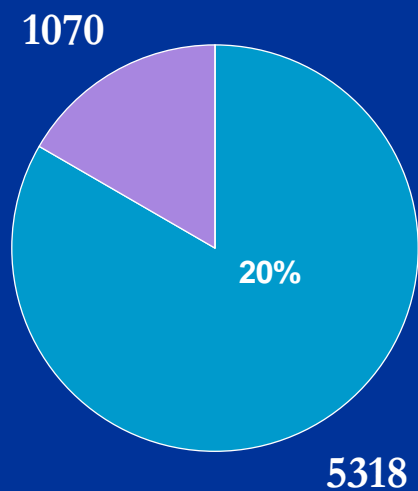
*Source:*

Project Bread Status Report on Hunger 2005

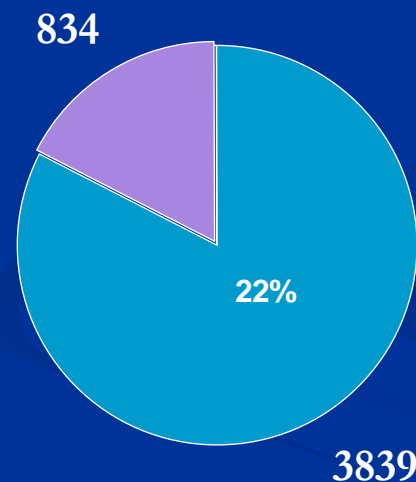
[www.projectbread.org](http://www.projectbread.org)

# Prevalence of Food Insecurity Among Patients Screened by Food for Families

Pediatric Screens



Adult Medicine Screens



Patients seen by Food for Families from 10/1/2009 – 9/30/2010

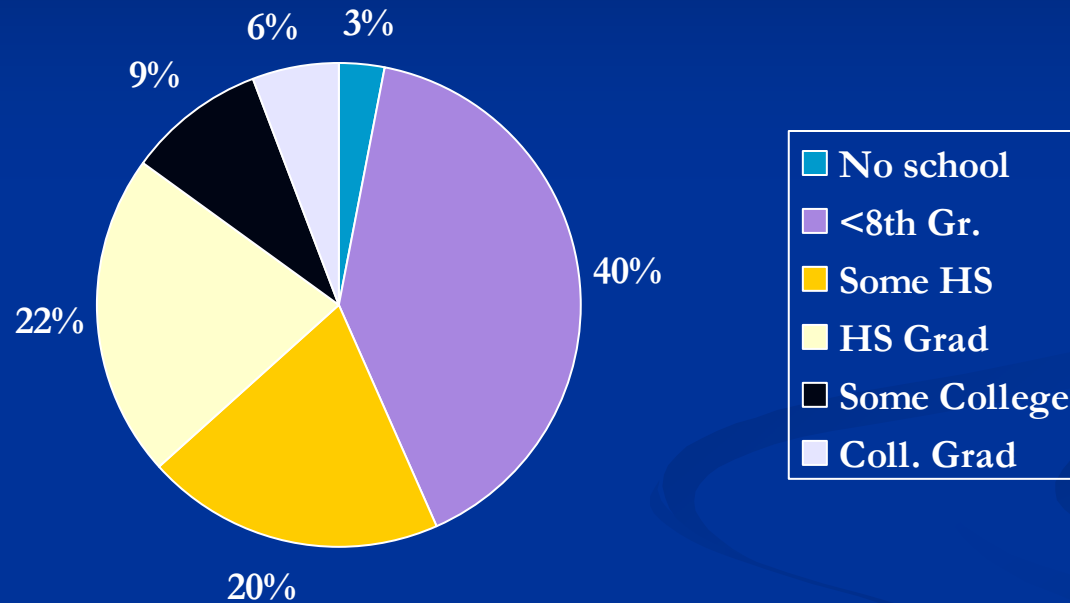
# Why are People Food Insecure?

- Unemployment
- Limited Education and/or lack of English proficiency (lack of job opportunities)
- Undocumented status (hard to find work & access resources)
- Unstable life situations (i.e., homelessness, domestic violence, refugees to the U.S.)
- Chronic illnesses (special dietary needs)



# Demographics

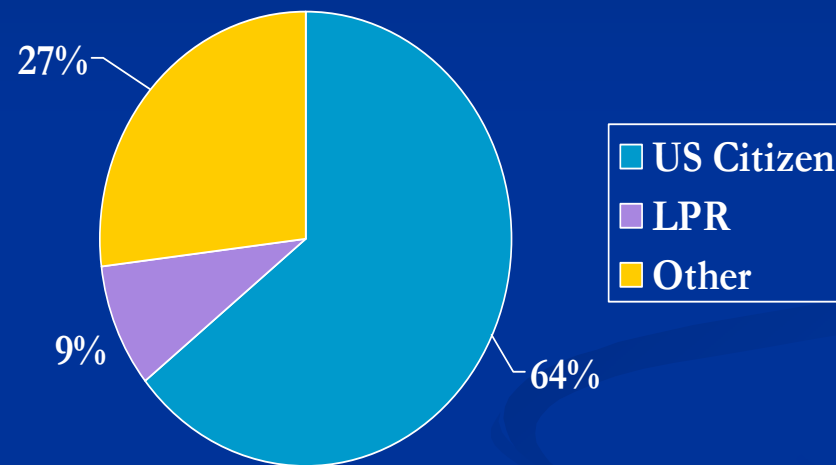
## Level of Educational Attainment



Patients seen by Food for Families from 10/1/2009 –  
9/30/2010

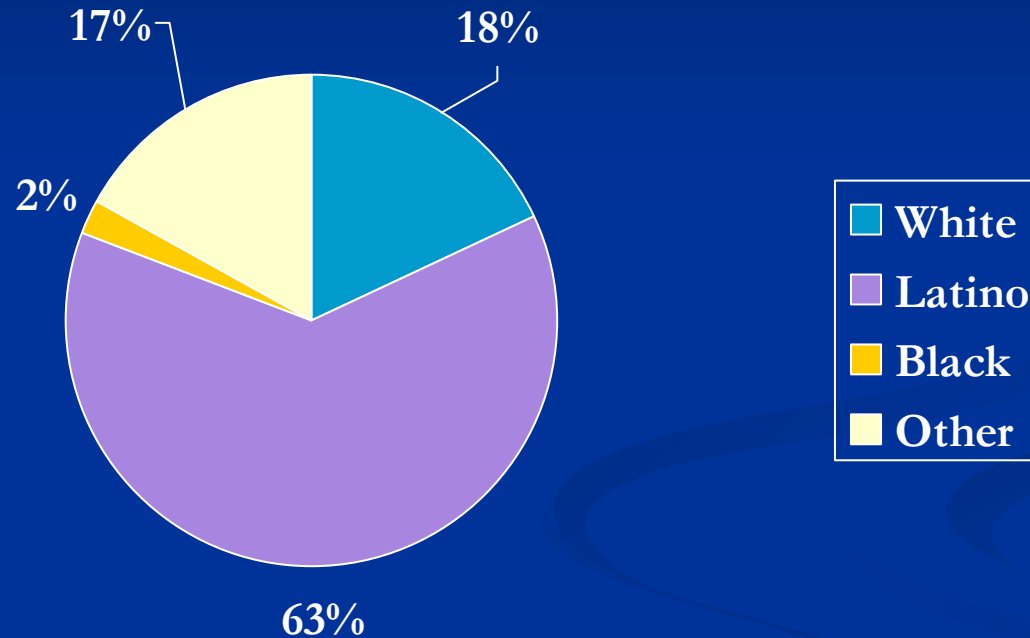
# Demographics

## Immigration Status/Citizenship



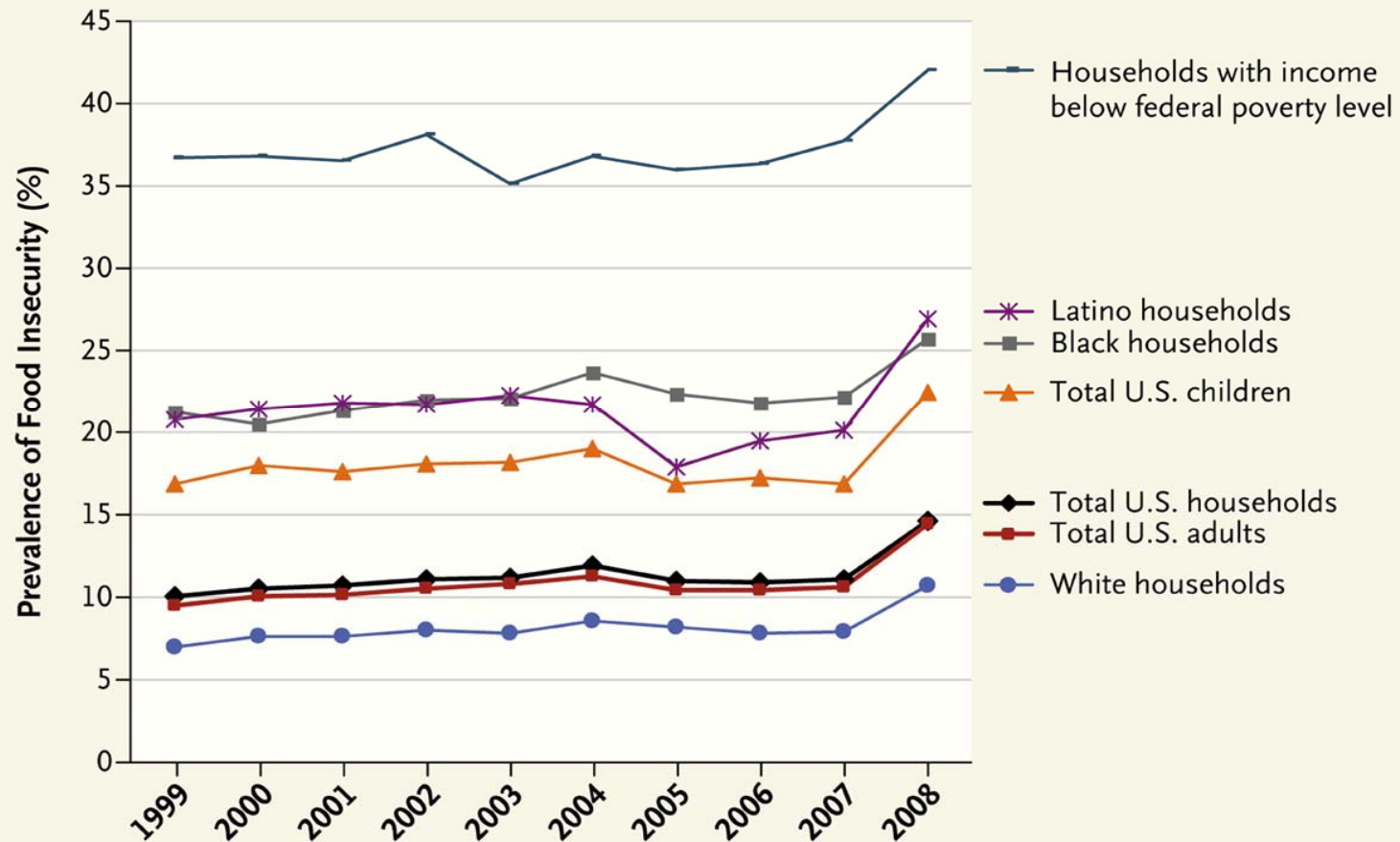
Patients seen by Food for Families from 10/1/2009 –  
9/30/2010

# Race/Ethnicity among FFF patients



Patients seen by Food for Families from 10/1/2009 –  
9/30/2010

# Prevalence of Food Insecurity in the United States, 1999–2008.

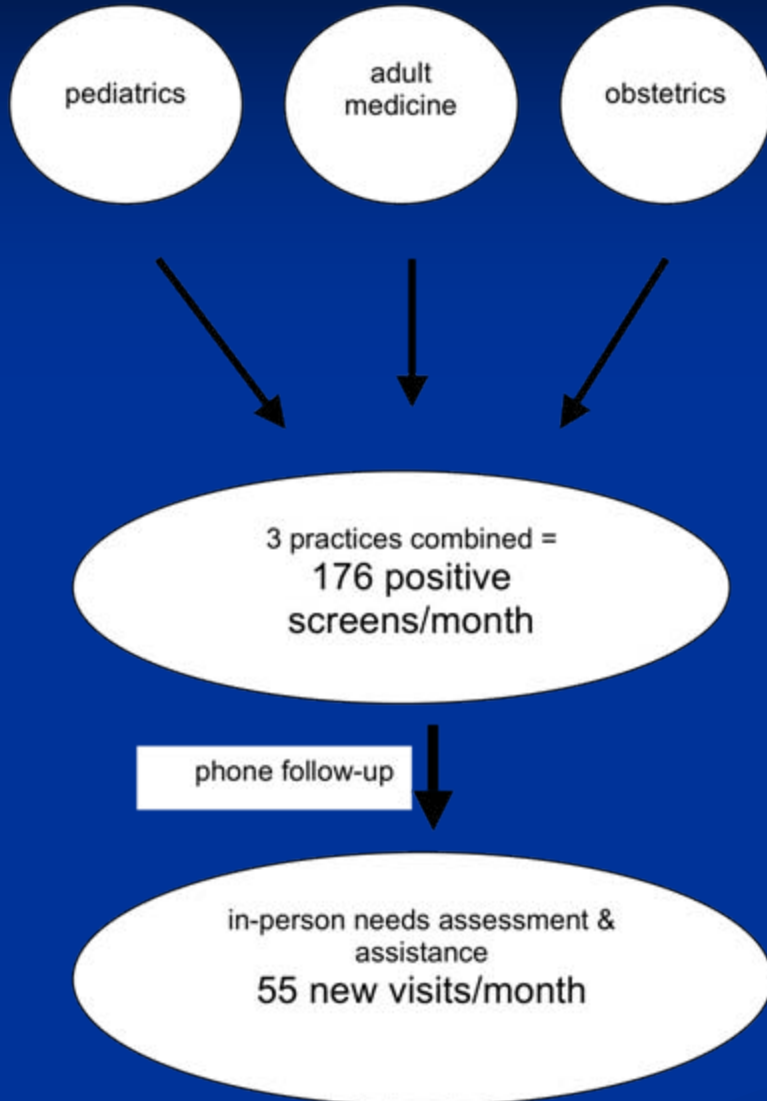


Seligman HK, Schillinger D. N Engl J Med 2010;363:6-9.

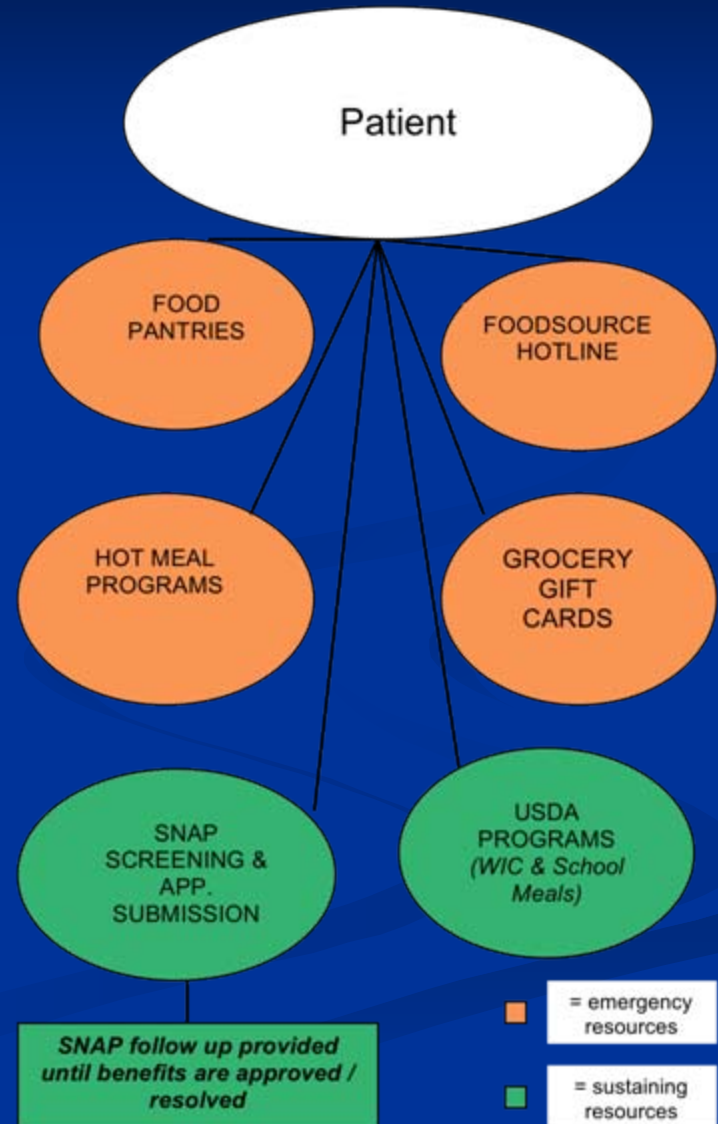


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## Universal Screening in 3 Practices



## Assistance / Intervention



# Healthy Eating on a Budget

- Patients gain life skills to make their own food choices:
  1. Nutrition and Cooking Course
  2. Thumbs Up for Healthy Food Choices

# Share our Strength Cooking Matters Course



- Six week course that focuses on healthy eating on a budget
- Sample Quotes from Participants
  - - “ After the class, my family now uses the nutrition guide to make better food choices”.
  - “Our field trip to the grocery store was an eye-opener. I never thought of reading the ingredients first and then making a decision whether to buy it or not”.
  - “This class taught me different healthy recipes and my kids now love helping me cook and prepare meals”

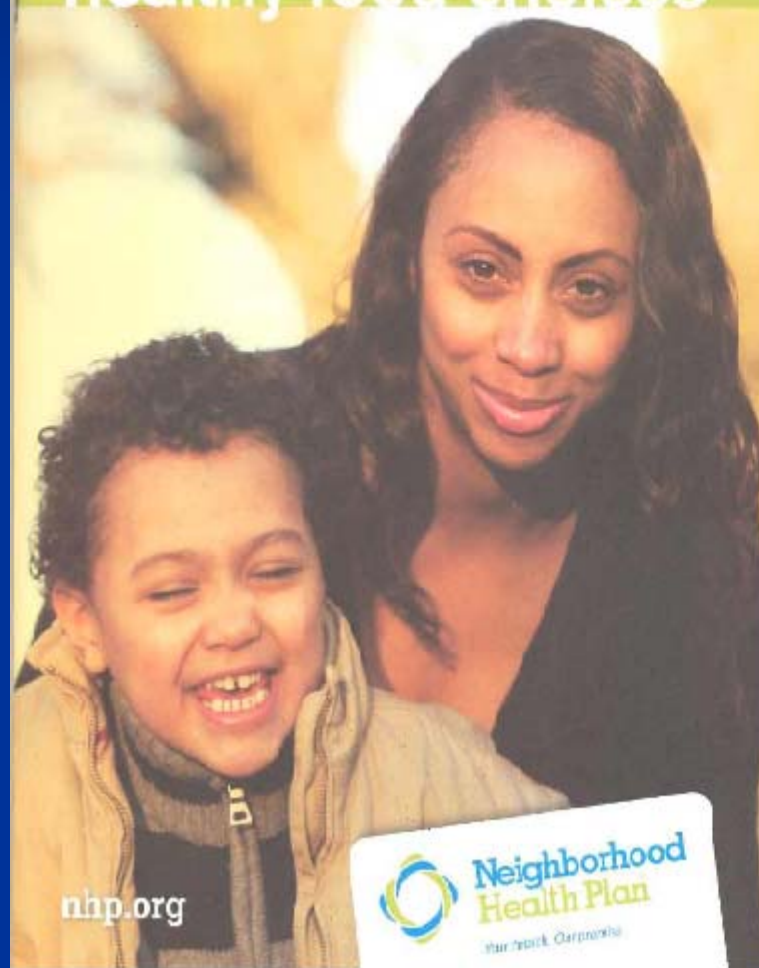
# Thumbs Up for Healthy Food Choices

- Booklet published by Neighborhood Health Plan
- Simple guide that teaches what foods are healthy and unhealthy
- [www.nhp.org](http://www.nhp.org)



Vivan las opciones saludables

# Thumbs up for healthy food choices



nhp.org



There is no special formula in the Thumbs Up guide. Instead, there are simple principles of basic nutrition such as "fresh is best," "no added sugar is best," and "fewer calories are best." A diet high in fruits, vegetables, fresh foods, and fiber promotes better health.

Use this guide to compare products within a food category. Food labels will change over time but the basic principles behind "Thumbs Up" remains the same. These are summarized below:

More Sugar  
More Calories  
Bad Fat  
Less Fiber



Más Azúcar  
Más Calorías  
Mala Grasa  
Menos Fibra

Less Sugar  
Fewer Calories  
Good Fat  
More Fiber



Menos Azúcar  
Menos Calorías  
Buena Grasa  
Más Fibra

**Disclaimer:** The purpose of this booklet is to help readers make healthy choices when food shopping and meal planning. The "thumbs up" and "thumbs down" symbols seen throughout the booklet indicate which foods—when comparing total calories, sugar, fiber, and/or type of fat—are higher or lower in a particular nutritional value. This information is obtained from the food label of such products and could change. NHP expresses no statement or opinion as to the taste, manufacturing quality, or other extraneous elements of any product shown.

This booklet is intended to provide general information related to food and nutrition. It is not a substitute for medical advice which should be obtained by a doctor, dietitian, or other qualified health care professional. It should not be relied upon for the treatment of any disease or medical condition.

Developed by Susan Oliverio, M.D., MPH.  
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No hay fórmula especial en la guía *Vivan las Opciones Saludables*. En lugar, hay principios simples de la nutrición básica tales como "fresco es el mejor," "ninguna azúcar agregada la mejor," y "pocas calorías son las mejores." Una dieta alta en frutas, verduras, alimentos frescos, y fibra promueve una mejor salud.

Utilice esta guía para comparar productos dentro de una categoría del alimento. Las etiquetas del alimento cambiarán en un cierto plazo pero los principios de base detrás de los "pulgares para arriba" siguen siendo iguales. Éstos se resumen abajo:

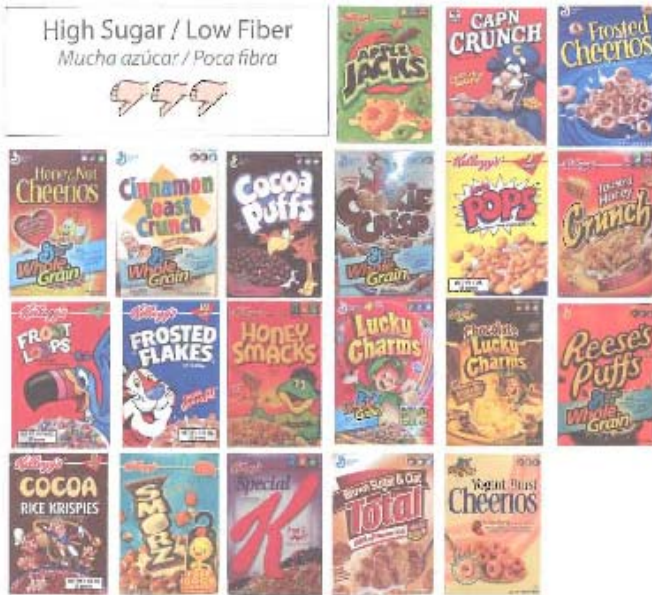
**Desargo de responsabilidad:** El propósito de este folleto es ayudar a los lectores a elegir alimentos saludables al hacer la compra y planificar sus comidas. Los símbolos "pulgar arriba" y "pulgar abajo" que se ven por todos este folleto indican qué alimentos, cuando se comparan las calorias, azúcares, el azúcar, la fibra y/o tipo de grasa, tienen más o menos de un valor de nutrición específico. Esta información se obtiene de las etiquetas de los alimentos de sus productos y puede cambiar. El NHP no expresa ninguna declaración ni opinión sobre el sabor, la calidad de fabricación o cualquier otro elemento de nutrición de los productos mostrados.

El propósito de este folleto es proporcionar información general sobre la salud y la nutrición. No es un sustituto del asesoramiento médico, que se debe obtener de un médico, dietista o otro profesional de la salud cualificado. No se debe usar como fundamento para el tratamiento de ninguna enfermedad o condición médica.

# Cereals

## Cereals | Cereales

High Sugar / Low Fiber  
 Mucha azúcar / Poca fibra

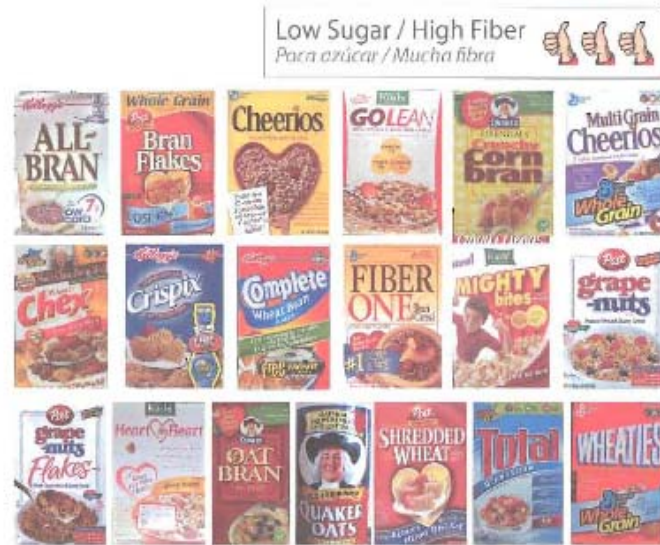


High Sugar / High Fiber  
 Mucha azúcar / Mucha fibra



## Cereals | Cereales

Low Sugar / High Fiber  
 Poca azúcar / Mucha fibra



Low Sugar / Low Fiber  
 Poca azúcar / Poca fibra



# Future Goals

- Continue targeting new patients that are experiencing food insecurity and hunger
- Expansion of Cooking Matters course to more patients, and some specific populations (i.e., parent-child, and teen mothers)

Thank you

Questions?