

Food Security Screen Fact Sheet

What is Food Insecurity?

Food insecurity is when people cannot get enough safe and nutritious food to maintain a healthy lifestyle because of a lack of resources; or when they experience stress about being able to get enough food.

How does food insecurity affect families?

- Families who experience food insecurity may worry about their children's health and wellbeing.
 - Children in food insecure households experience more hospitalizations and poorer health compared with food secure children.
 - Food insecurity and hunger make it more difficult for children to learn at school.
- To avoid hunger, families may rely on low-cost foods, which often contain more starch, sugar, salt, and fat, but fewer nutrients.

How can we tell who is food insecure?

Researchers found that by asking two simple questions, organizations or care providers can learn more about whether the people they work with experience food insecurity. **Responses to either question of "Often true" or "Sometimes true" mean that a family experiences food insecurity.** This information can help organizations link clients to food and nutrition services.

[\(Development and Validity of a 2-Item Screen to Identify Families at Risk for Food Insecurity\)](#). Hager, et al., Pediatrics, v126, 2010.)



The Food Security Screen (full scale available at: [USDA.gov](https://www.usda.gov))

Below are statements that people have made about their food situation. For each, please decide how often the statement is true in the past year.

- 1) Within the past 12 months we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.
 Often True Sometimes True Never True Don't Know
- 2) Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more.
 Often True Sometimes True Never True Don't Know

Aquí están varias declaraciones que la gente ha hecho acerca de su situación alimenticia. Para cada una de ellas, favor de decidir con qué frecuencia la declaración era verdad durante el año pasado.

- 1) Estábamos preocupados de que se nos acabaran los alimentos antes de obtener dinero para comprar más.
 Frecuentemente A veces Nunca No Se
- 2) Los alimentos que compramos no duraron mucho y no tuvimos dinero para obtener más
 Frecuentemente A veces Nunca No Se

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This fact sheet was developed in collaboration with The Baltimore City Health Department's Healthy Homes & Communities Division & the Congressional Hunger Center (with assistance from the Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows, Hannah Emple and PaHua Cha).

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What can a provider do when a family is Food Insecure?

Link families to food and nutrition resources such as [WIC](#) and [Food Stamps/SNAP](#). Provide information on local services including food pantries and food ministries.

National Hunger, Food Assistance, and Food Security Resources

- [Bread for the World](#)
- [Children's HealthWatch](#)
- [Congressional Hunger Center](#)
- [Feeding America](#)
- [First Call for Help: 2-1-1](#)
- [Food Resource and Action Center](#)
- [MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger](#)
- [National Anti-Hunger Organizations](#)
- [Share Our Strength](#)
- [USDA: Food and Nutrition Service](#)

Examples of Baltimore-Specific resources – similar resources may be available near you:

Hungry in Baltimore: <http://www.baltimorehealth.org/hungryinbaltimore.html>

Growth and Nutrition Division: <http://somyweb.som.umaryland.edu/growth/>

Healthy Homes and Communities, BCHD: <http://www.baltimorehealth.org/healthyhomes.html>