

# The Cost of Eating Well in the Timiskaming District

## Nutritious Food Basket Report 2008

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### What is the Nutritious Food Basket?

The Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) is a tool that measures the cost of eating well. Each year the Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) uses the NFB to write a Cost of Eating Well Report.

### How is the Nutritious Food Basket calculated?

In May 2008, the THU used the NFB to carry out pricing in 6 grocery stores across the Timiskaming District. Sixty-six food items are included in the NFB. The lowest cost available, regardless of brand name, is recorded. The average cost of each food item from all grocery stores sampled was used to total the cost of the Nutritious Food Basket using a software program supplied by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

The NFB does *not* include:

- detergent, soap, toilet paper, toothpaste, or personal hygiene products.
- miscellaneous foods such as spices, seasonings, condiments, baking supplies, soup, coffee, and tea.
- cost of eating out or inviting company to share a meal.
- processed, convenience foods, snack foods, and foods of little nutritional value.

The NFB only includes basic food items and this is why it is most economical. It is based on the assumption that people have the skills to prepare most meals from scratch.

*"Community Food Security exists when all citizens access a safe, personally acceptable, nutritious diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes healthy choices, community self-reliance and equal access for everyone."*

Community Nutritionist Council of BC: Ministry of Health Services and the Health Authorities of BC

### How can the Nutritious Food Basket be used?

NFB information can be used to:

- ✓ determine what it might cost for an individual or family to eat well.
- ✓ estimate the cost of feeding a group of people (group homes, shelters, residential facilities, student housing).
- ✓ compare the cost of healthy eating against income and other basic living expenses such as, housing/shelter, transportation, clothing and child care.
- ✓ highlight the potential difficulty of affording a nutritious diet for those individuals and households whose economic means are more limited.

### 2008 Highlights:

The average weekly food cost for feeding a family of four is **\$143.32**. Although there are limitations to comparing NFB results from one year to the next, there has been an increasing trend over the last three years. The 2008 findings represent a 4.1% increase (\$5.70) in weekly food costs over 2007. Adequate income is a strong predictor of healthy eating. Limited economic means is a potentially significant barrier to achieving food security for individuals and households in Timiskaming.

**Remember:** These calculations are a guideline, they do not guarantee that you will be healthy spending this amount. Following Canada's Food Guide is the key to good nutrition. Extra money must be budgeted for convenience foods, eating out, or personal hygiene or cleaning products.



Services de santé du  
**TIMISKAMING**  
Health Unit

## Estimating the Average Weekly Cost of Healthy Eating

**Step 1:** Write down the ages and sex of all the people you are feeding in Table 1.

**Step 2:** Using the figures in Table 2, write in the weekly food cost for each person in Table 1.

**Step 3:** Add the weekly food costs together.

**Step 4:** Since it often costs *more* to feed a small group and *less* to feed a large group, the total weekly cost can be adjusted using the following factors:

Adjustment Factors	
1 person:	multiply total food costs by 1.15
2 persons:	multiply total food costs by 1.10
3 persons:	multiply total food costs by 1.05
4 persons:	make no change
5 persons:	multiply total food costs by 0.95
6 persons:	multiply total food costs by 0.90

Table 1

Estimated Food Costs per Household per week		
Gender/Sex	Age	Weekly Food Cost \$
Sub Total		\$
Adjustment Factor		x
TOTAL		\$

Note: pregnant and breastfeeding women need additional food.  
Ces renseignements sont disponibles en français sur le demande  
For more information contact the **Timiskaming Health Unit**

Table 2

Age/Sex Groups	Total Weekly Cost Timiskaming 2008
<b>CHILD</b>	
1 year	\$16.91
2-3 years	\$17.93
4-6 years	\$23.78
<b>BOY</b>	
7-9 years	\$28.34
10-12 years	\$35.14
13-15 years	\$41.07
16-18 years	\$47.60
<b>GIRL</b>	
7-9 years	\$27.13
10-12 years	\$32.36
13-15 years	\$34.59
16-18 years	\$32.67
<b>MAN</b>	
19-24 years	\$42.86
25-49 years	\$43.35
50-74 years	\$39.20
75+ years	\$35.60
<b>WOMAN</b>	
19-24 years	\$33.36
25-49 years	\$31.77
50-74 years	\$31.13
75 + years	\$30.28

### Example of food costs for a family of four

Gender/Sex	Age	Weekly Food Cost \$
Woman	40	\$31.77
Man	42	\$43.35
Boy	14	\$41.07
Girl	9	\$27.13
Total		<b>\$143.32</b>

