

Budgeting for Food 2011

Eating a nutritious diet is important to help ensure optimal growth and development and to help prevent some chronic diseases. The Health Unit conducts a food cost survey every year in local grocery stores to calculate the cost of eating well in the District of Thunder Bay. These costs are based on a healthy diet including a variety of foods from Canada's Food Guide. Often the money available for food is used to pay for other household expenses. So, you need to make sure to budget money just for food.

How can this information be used?

- To estimate what it might cost to feed individuals, a family or a group of people (like in group homes, shelters, students sharing a house).
- To make up case studies for discussion in budgeting or education programs.
- To discuss the difficulty those with a limited income may have with being able to afford a nutritious diet.

Weekly Costs of Eating Well in the District of Thunder Bay*

Age		Cost (\$)
Child	Boy	
	2-3 years	24.32
	4-8 years	31.40
	Girl	
	2-3 years	23.82
	4-8 years	30.40
Females	9-13 years	35.67
	14-18 years	42.55
	19-30 years	44.10
	31-50 years	43.53
	51-70 years	38.44
	Over 70 years	37.70
Males	9-13 years	41.41
	14-18 years	58.34
	19-30 years	56.72
	31-50 years	51.39
	51-70 years	49.40
	Over 70 years	48.87

Weekly Costs of Eating Well in the District of Thunder Bay*

Age		Cost (\$)
Pregnant	18 or younger	47.39
	19-30 years	48.03
	31-50 years	46.83
Breastfeeding	18 or younger	49.31
	19-30 years	50.80
	31-50 years	49.59

*Based on average prices from 6 stores during May, 2011.

Estimate your food costs

Sample Household Food Cost Sheet		
Person	Age	Cost (\$)
Man	41	51.39
Woman	39	43.53
Boy	14	58.34
Subtotal = \$153.26		
$\$153.26 \times 1.05 = \underline{\$160.92}$ Subtotal x adjustment = cost per week		
$\$160.92 \times 4.33 = \underline{\$696.78}$ cost per week x 4.33 = cost per month		

Sample Household Food Cost Sheet		
Person	Age	Cost (\$)
Subtotal =		
$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times \underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$ Subtotal x adjustment = cost per week		
$\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \times \underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$ cost per week x 4.33 = cost per month		

1. Write down the sex and age for each person in your household.
2. Write down the weekly food cost for each person according to the tables on the other page.
3. Add up the food costs for your household to get a subtotal.
4. Since it costs more per person to feed a small group than to feed a larger group of people, you should adjust the subtotal according to the adjustment factor in the box to the right. Multiply the subtotal by the adjustment factor that is right for your household.
5. The weekly cost can be changed to a monthly cost by multiplying the total by 4.33.

Household Size – Adjustment Factors

If you are feeding:

- 1 person** – multiply by 1.20
- 2 people** – multiply by 1.10
- 3 people** – multiply by 1.05
- 4 people** – make no change
- 5-6 people** – multiply by 0.95
- 7 or more people** – multiply by 0.90

Caution!

- These calculations are a *guideline* for what you could be spending on food in order to stay healthy. It does not guarantee that you will be healthy by spending this amount. Eating a balanced diet based on Canada’s Food Guide is the key to good nutrition.
- The food budget estimate does not include money for convenience foods, snack foods, eating out or for paper, personal hygiene and cleaning products. You need to budget extra money for these items.