What is Food Security?

People who are food-secure are able to buy enough healthy, safe food to meet their nutritional needs at all times during the year. People who are food-insecure do not eat at times, because food is either not available or they are not able to afford it.

As a result of participants not having enough money to buy food:

In Ontario, people living with HIV are up to 11 times more likely to be food-insecure, compared to the general population.

Who Experiences Food Insecurity?

A survey of 650 people living with HIV in Ontario revealed that 69% of them were food-insecure during the previous year. People living with HIV are up to four times more likely to be food-insecure if they...

Food security is a fundamental requirement to lead a healthy life. In Ontario, people living with HIV who have secure access to food report fewer health issues than those who are food-insecure.

People living with HIV who are food-secure...

- Experience 30% fewer HIV symptoms
- Are 11% more likely to take their HIV medications as prescribed
- Score 17% higher on measures of mental health-related quality of life
- Score 7% higher on measures of physical health-related quality of life
- Report 78% fewer depressive symptoms
- Are 13% less likely to feel stigmatized due to their HIV status

Food security in Ontario is affected by a wide range of social and economic factors. Any solution to food insecurity will require a long-term commitment to reducing poverty.

We must develop holistic programs that address the underlying causes of food insecurity, rather than tackling food insecurity alone.

We must build stronger, broader community partnerships, to address the social conditions under which people with HIV live, work, and age.

We must continue to support benefits such as the Special Diet Allowance offered by the Ontario Disability Support Program.