Fresh and nutritious foods are essential to good health. But for many, eating a healthier diet is not as simple as choosing to do so. There are often conditions beyond their control that limit their access to healthy foods.1

Did you know?

- 37.2 million people live in food-insecure households.2
- A healthy diet costs $1.48 more per day than an unhealthy one.3
- Produce costs 102% more in convenience stores than chain supermarkets and may be the only local grocer.4
- Access to large supermarkets increases fruit and vegetable intake by 0.69 servings per day.5
- Children refuse unfamiliar food 8-15 times leading families to purchase nutrient-poor food to avoid waste.6

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

Breaking down barriers

Food insecurity and access to foods that support healthy eating
Five things you can do to help

1. **Ask, don’t assume**
   A patient may not be choosing to not eat nutritiously. Be empathetic and talk to your patient about why a behavior may be happening. Read some [critical thinking questions](https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/key-statistics-graphics.aspx#insecure) that may be helpful to understand how to combat the behavior.

2. **Educate your patients**
   Talk to them about what may be an unhealthy coping strategy when facing food insecurity, and provide alternatives to those behaviors. Get [tips and information](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3855594/).

3. **Guide to resources**
   Remind patients to call [211](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3855594/) to get connected with human service agencies and community organizations, such as food banks that can provide assistance. Or introduce them to resources such as [Meals on Wheels](https://www.pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29540244/?from filter=years.2017-2020&from linkname=pubmed_pubmed&from_uid=28809795&--from pos=-7) or [Aunt Bertha](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3855594/).

4. **Organize a food drive at your office**

5. **Suggest lower-cost produce options**
   ‘Ugly’ produce companies sell and deliver lower-cost produce that looks imperfect, but is in otherwise perfect condition.

For more resources visit CareAllies.com.