Inequalities in Food Insecurity in Canada
The Experience of Youth, Adults and Older adults

Food insecurity occurs when at least one member of the household does not have the variety or quantity of food they need due to lack of money. Here, food insecurity includes moderate and severe food insecurity as defined in the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). Large inequalities in food insecurity exist in Canada for a number of communities.

Women and youth (girls and boys) are the most impacted by food insecurity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Education Level</th>
<th>Youth (12 to 17 years)</th>
<th>Adults (18+ years)</th>
<th>Older adults (65+ years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower than high school</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community college/Technical school/University certificate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

There are inequalities in food insecurity for youth and older adults related to living arrangement:

- **2.8X** HIGHER for youth living with a single parent, compared to youth living with both parents
- **3.0X** HIGHER single parents living with children, compared to couples without children
- **2.0X** HIGHER for older adults living alone, compared to older adults in other living arrangements

Household education level is a strong determinant of food insecurity, for all age groups:

- **5.0X** HIGHER among youth
- **6.8X** HIGHER among adults
- **3.2X** HIGHER among older adults

Proportion of people with food insecurity increases as household education level decreases

- **Lower than high school**
- **High school graduate**
- **Community college/Technical school/University certificate**
- **University graduate**
Through the life course, the proportion of people experiencing food insecurity is higher among First Nations, Métis and especially Inuit communities, compared to non-Indigenous communities.

Interventions aimed at the social determinants of food insecurity (for example, Universal Child Care Benefit, poverty reduction strategies, affordable housing) are promising solutions for reducing the overall prevalence and severity of food security, but also inequalities between Canadian populations.

Inequities experienced by First Nations, Inuit and Métis populations are anchored in colonial policies and practices that began with Residential Schools, loss of cultural continuity, territories and languages. Unaddressed intergenerational trauma adds to the ongoing challenges faced by Indigenous peoples.

To view these data and others on health inequalities in Canada, visit: https://health-infobase.canada.ca/health-inequalities/data-tool/

Source for all data presented in this infographic: Canadian Community Health Survey 2015-16, 2017-18

References:


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