

# Food Security

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Having access to healthy, fresh foods is crucial to eating a healthy diet and aging and living well. The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines food security as “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.” Unfortunately, many Americans do not have that access. In 2018, 5.3 million Americans over the age of 60 were food insecure, and this number is projected to increase by 50 percent in 2025.

There are a variety of reasons why people experience food insecurity, including limited income, food deserts (rural or underserved areas with no grocery stores), lack of personal or public transportation, social isolation, and mobility and oral health issues.

If left unaddressed, food insecurity can have a major impact on overall health and lead to malnutrition. Food insecurity significantly increases the risk of malnutrition, with one out of two older adults at risk of malnutrition.

Older adults who experience food insecurity are:

- 60 percent more likely to experience depression.
- 53 percent more likely to report a heart attack.
- 40 percent more likely to experience congestive heart failure.
- 22 percent more likely to experience limitations in their daily living activities.

The good news is there are things individuals and communities can do to prevent food insecurity.

If you or a loved one is at risk of experiencing food insecurity:

- Identify the underlying issue leading to food insecurity.
- Learn about the issue and any available resources.
- Engage in opportunities to develop healthy eating skills, such as healthy cooking classes.

Organizations and communities can:

- Assess the community and identify barriers to food security.
- Plan how to address food insecurity.
- Create opportunities and collaborate with other organizations.
- Advocate for access to healthy foods.

**Table 1: Resources**

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| <b>Food Insecurity</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service</b><br/><a href="https://ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us">ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us</a></li><li>• <b>United Health Foundation America's Health Rankings</b> <a href="https://americashealthrankings.org">americashealthrankings.org</a></li><li>• <b>Feeding America</b> <a href="https://feedingamerica.org">feedingamerica.org</a></li></ul>   |
| <b>Malnutrition</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Defeat Malnutrition Today</b> <a href="https://defeatmalnutrition.today">defeatmalnutrition.today</a></li><li>• <b>National Council on Aging</b> <a href="https://ncoa.org/older-adults/health/diet-nutrition/malnutrition">ncoa.org/older-adults/health/diet-nutrition/malnutrition</a></li></ul>  |
| <b>Nutrition Support Programs</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Area Agencies on Aging</b> 800-252-9240</li><li>• <b>Aging and Disability Resource Centers</b> 855-937-2372</li><li>• <b>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)</b><br/><a href="https://hhs.texas.gov/services/food/snap-food-benefits">hhs.texas.gov/services/food/snap-food-benefits</a></li><li>• <b>Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program</b><br/><a href="https://squaremeals.org/Programs/SeniorFarmersMarketNutritionProgram.aspx">squaremeals.org/Programs/SeniorFarmersMarketNutritionProgram.aspx</a></li><li>• <b>Commodity Supplemental Food Program</b><br/><a href="https://squaremeals.org/Programs/CommoditySupplementalFoodProgram.aspx">squaremeals.org/Programs/CommoditySupplementalFoodProgram.aspx</a></li></ul> |
| <b>Food Pantries and Banks</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Feeding America</b> <a href="https://feedingamerica.org">feedingamerica.org</a></li><li>• <b>Food Pantries Database</b> <a href="https://foodpantries.org/st/texas">foodpantries.org/st/texas</a></li></ul>   |
| <b>Healthy Recipes</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Dinner Tonight</b> <a href="https://dinnertonight.tamu.edu">dinnertonight.tamu.edu</a></li><li>• <b>MyPlate Kitchen</b> <a href="https://myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen">myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen</a></li><li>• <b>AARP</b> <a href="https://aarp.org/healthy-living">aarp.org/healthy-living</a></li></ul>   |
| <b>Food Safety</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>USDA</b> <a href="https://usda.gov/topics/health-and-safety">usda.gov/topics/health-and-safety</a></li><li>• <b>Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics</b><br/><a href="https://eatright.org/homefoodsafety">eatright.org/homefoodsafety</a></li><li>• <b>Texas AgriLife Extension</b><br/><a href="https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/library/health-nutrition/">https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/library/health-nutrition/</a></li></ul>  |