

How Much Does Healthy Eating Cost?

City of Hamilton, May 2008

Survey of Stores

Dietitians with the City of Hamilton Public Health Services conducted a survey of the price of nutritious foods at eight grocery stores in the City of Hamilton.

What foods were priced?

Food for the nutritious food basket were selected from among those frequently purchased by Canadians and based on nutrient value. The foods included a variety of less expensive choices from the four food groups of Canada's Food Guide: grain products (breads, cereals, pasta and rice), vegetables and fruit, milk & alternatives, and meat & alternatives.

The foods priced can be used to prepare a week's worth of nutritious meals and snacks. The cost of additional items such as spices and condiments used in meal preparation was factored into the final cost.



What items were not included?

Items with little nutritional value and non-food items were not included in the survey. Therefore, the total cost does not account for purchases like convenience foods, soft drinks, popular snack foods, soap, shampoo and other personal items that most people add to their shopping cart.

Average Cost of Healthy Eating in the City of Hamilton		
	Age (years)	Cost per week (\$)
Child	1	16.06
	2-3	17.06
	4-6	22.63
Boy	7-9	26.90
	10-12	33.38
	13-15	38.94
	16-18	45.15
Girl	7-9	25.69
	10-12	30.70
	13-15	32.75
	16-18	30.87
Man	19-24	42.48
	25-49	41.02
	50-74	37.03
	75+	33.60
Woman	19-24	31.53
	25-49	29.98
	50-74	29.37
	75+	28.60

Average Cost of Healthy Eating in the City of Hamilton during Pregnancy and Lactation		
Age (years)	Trimester / Breastfeeding	Food Cost per week (\$)
13-15	1st	36.21
	2nd and 3rd	38.29
	Breastfeeding	39.50
16-18	1st	35.91
	2nd and 3rd	38.77
	Breastfeeding	39.86
19-24	1st	35.08
	2nd and 3rd	37.53
	Breastfeeding	38.51
25-49	1st	33.58
	2nd and 3rd	35.72
	Breastfeeding	36.52



Use the Nutritious Food Basket to estimate the cost of feeding:

- yourself and your family
- a group of people sharing accommodation (group homes, shelters, students)
- sample scenarios for discussions on home budgeting

Step 1: Write down the age and gender of each person you are feeding.

Step 2: Use the chart on the front page and write down the weekly food cost for each person.

Step 3: Add the weekly food costs together.

Step 4: Make adjustment for family size*

Example		
Gender	Age	Cost (\$)
Man	30	41.02
Woman 1st Trimester		33.58
Girl		25.69
Subtotal		100.29
X Adjustment for 3 people		X 1.05
Total =		105.30

Your Household		
Gender	Age	Cost (\$)
Subtotal		
X Adjustment		
Total =		

***Adjustment:** It costs a little more to feed small groups of people and a little less to feed larger groups. Use the following adjustment for family size if it applies to your situation.

- 1 person - increase cost by 15% (multiply by 1.15)
- 2 people - increase cost by 10% (multiply by 1.10)
- 3 people - increase cost by 5% (multiply by 1.05)
- 4 people - make no change
- 5 people - decrease cost by 5% (multiply by 0.95)
- 6 people - decrease cost by 10% (multiply by 0.90)

Need help with choosing nutritious foods on a budget?

Call the City of Hamilton Public Health Services, Chronic Disease Prevention Program at 905-546-2424 ext. 3521 for the free factsheet “Eat Well, Spend Less”.

