

Health Promotion Snippets

Spring 2010

Inside this issue:

- What is food security?
- Food security in the Yarra Ranges
- What factors influences food security?
- Who is at risk of food insecurity?
- The health professional's role
- Useful websites

Welcome to the second edition of the Health Promotion Snippets, which is produced quarterly to provide a forum to share information and an avenue to link resources about health and wellbeing. This edition will focus on Ranges' priority area of promoting accessible and nutritious food (food security).

Your contributions are always welcome. Email articles for Health Promotion Snippets to health.promotion@rangeschs.org.au

What is food security?

Food security is access to a regular supply of safe, affordable, culturally appropriate and nutritionally adequate food from a non-emergency source.

Food security in the Yarra Ranges

Seven per cent of people living in Yarra Ranges experience food insecurity. This is compared to 4.4% for the Eastern Metropolitan Region and 6% for the entire state of Victoria.

Seven per cent is approximately 10,000 individuals. That is greater than the population of Chirnside Park.



People that are food insecure are more likely to skip meals/go hungry, limit variety of foods, be anxious about food, rely on others for food hand outs, be at higher risk of some diseases and obesity

What factors influence food security?

Economics – having adequate income or resources to buy food and/or having affordable food outlets in the local neighbourhood.



Physical ability – ability to walk, drive and carry purchases home.



Physical infrastructure – availability of public transport and/or safe walking route, and geographical isolation.



Living conditions – stable address, adequate food storage and cooking facilities.



Cultural and social – whether there are shops with socially and culturally appropriate foods.

Who is at risk of food insecurity?

- Low income individuals and families.
- Frail elderly people.
- Individuals with a disability or illness.
- People from non-English speaking backgrounds (e.g. asylum seekers, refugees, etc).
- Individuals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.
- Homeless people.
- People affected by alcohol and/or substance abuse.

The health professional's role

- Understand food security and its contributing factors.
- Know how to identify risk factors in those who are vulnerable.
- Know when to refer to other services.
- Be aware of available resources.



Interesting fact:

The 2008 Victorian Population Health Survey reported that only 50% of males and females residing in the Yarra Ranges reached the target of 2 pieces of fruit per day, and less than 10% reached the target of 2 ½ cups of vegetables per day.



Useful websites

Resources

- Brochures for cheap meal ideas www.iechs.com.au/food_brochures.php
- Budgeting resources www.foodcentsprogram.com.au/about-foodcents
- Love Food, Hate Waste www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

Community Initiatives

- Community Harvest www.communityharvest.org.au
- Community Kitchens www.communitykitchens.org.au
- Hawkesbury Harvest www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au
- Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au

Other interesting websites

- VicHealth www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/
- Market Fresh www.marketfresh.com.au/mf.asp
- Strategic Inter-Governmental Nutrition Alliance (SIGNAL) <http://www.nphp.gov.au/workprog/signal/>
- Victorian Local Government Association's Food Security webpage <http://www.vlga.org.au>