



News Release

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For immediate release

Report released on cost of healthy eating in Northern Saskatchewan

A nutritious food basket costs almost twice as much in the far north of the province as in a large city in the south, according to the latest report on the cost of healthy foods in northern Saskatchewan released today.

The report, entitled *The Cost of Healthy Eating in Northern Saskatchewan 2009*, was prepared by the Population Health Unit for the Athabasca Health Authority and Keewatin Yatthé and Mamawetan Churchill River Health Regions.

“Having a nutritious diet has a significant influence on our physical and mental health,” said Dr. James Irvine, Medical Health Officer for the three northern health authorities. “Knowing the cost of healthy foods is important for both individuals and communities.”

The nutritious food basket contains four food groups from Canada’s Food Guide, including vegetables and fruit, grain products, milk and alternatives, and meat and alternatives. This basket of basic foods meets the nutrient requirements of a family of four for a week.

In June 2009, public health nutritionists visited randomly selected stores across northern Saskatchewan to cost this basket. They found that the same basket that cost \$185 dollars in a large southern city, cost \$227 in the northeast, \$257 in the northwest and \$350 in the far north -- from \$42 to \$165 more per week.

While the cost of other foods was not part of the survey, purchasing healthy food does not need to cost more money than purchasing less healthy food, said Cathryn Abrametz, lead nutritionist on the report. “You can eat healthy on a limited budget by planning ahead, and selecting low cost nutritious foods.”

Your nearest health centre, clinic, or public health department can provide information on healthy eating and extending a food budget.

“Looking at food costs can also help us address food security in our communities,” said Vince Robillard, Athabasca Health Authority Chief Executive Officer. “This information can help us develop appropriate health, nutrition and social policies.”

Food security is the access to safe, sufficient, and nutritious food. Groups identified as having high risk for food insecurity include women, children under two, social assistance recipients, people who do not own their homes, and lone parent households.

The report, with information on calculating your own food costs and ideas on how to address food security in your community, is available online at www.populationhealthunit.ca

The Cost of Healthy Eating in Northern Saskatchewan 2009 is the third report on food costs in the north since 2001.

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