

Food Insecurity in Texas: An Overview from Public Health and Pediatrician Perspectives



Alexandra van den Berg, PhD, MPH
Professor, Dept. of Behavioral Sciences and Health Promotion
Associate Director
Michael & Susan Dell Center For Healthy Living
UTHealth School of Public Health Austin Campus

 UTHealth Houston
School of Public Health


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CENTER for HEALTHY LIVING

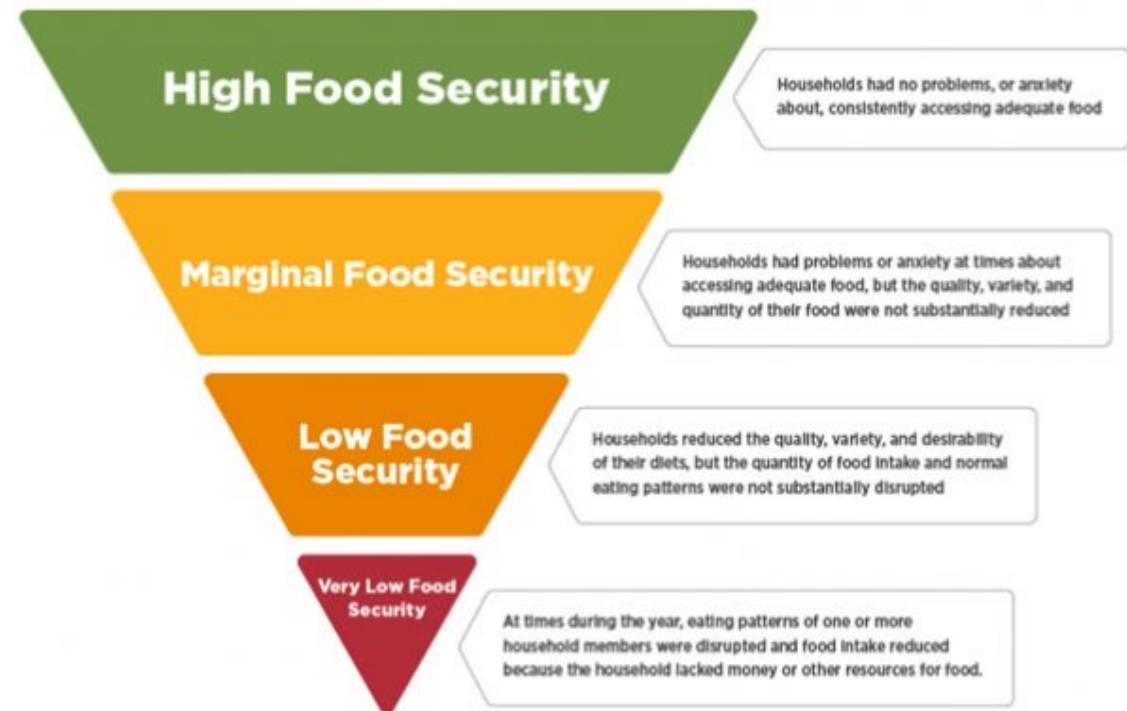
What is Food Security?

When all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life



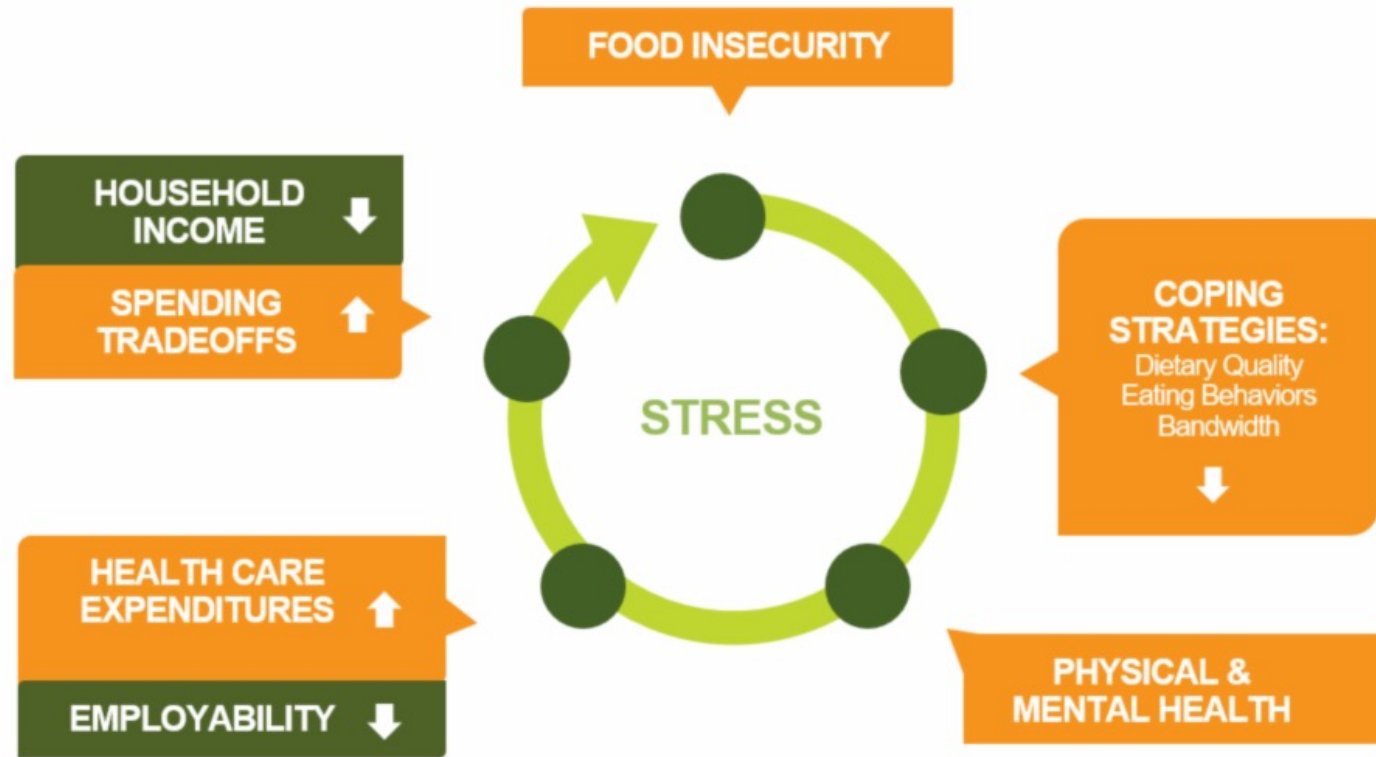
Food security is an economic condition

Food Insecurity is a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. (USDA definition)



Source: Adapted from the USDA Economic Research Service.

Does Food Insecurity Impact Health?



Adapted from Seligman and Schillinger,
New England Journal of Medicine, 2010.

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Consequences of Food Insecurity

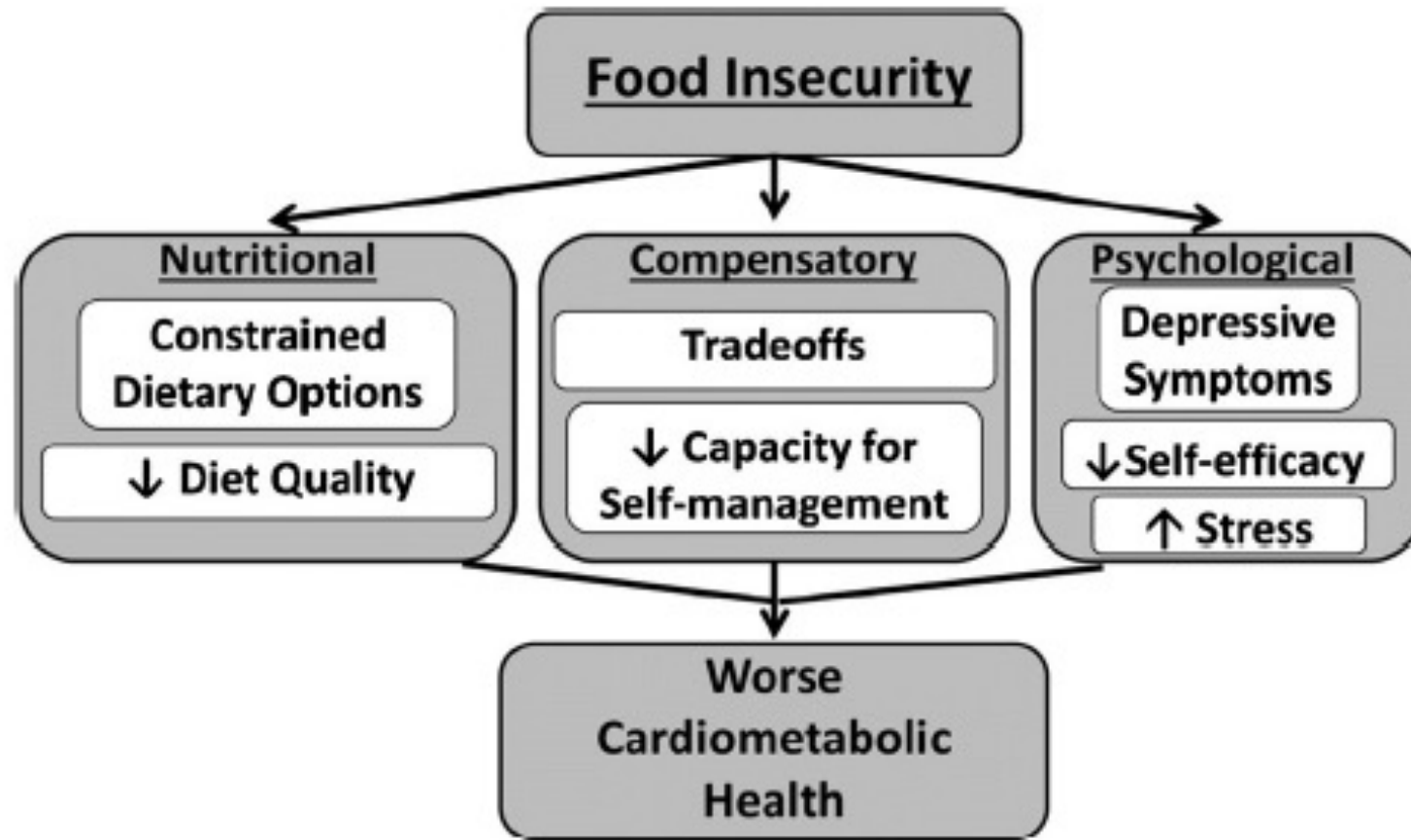


Fig. 1 Conceptual model of the relationship between food insecurity and cardiometabolic health

Source: Vazquez et al., 2021

Conceptual model of how food insecurity impacts chronic diseases such as cardiometabolic health

Consequences of Food Insecurity

CHILDREN

Behavioral and social-emotional problems

Poor educational performance/outcomes

Developmental risk

Iron deficiency anemia

Less physical activity

Worse health status

Worse quality of life

ADULTS

Lower cognitive functions

Nutrient deficiencies

Obesity

Osteoporosis

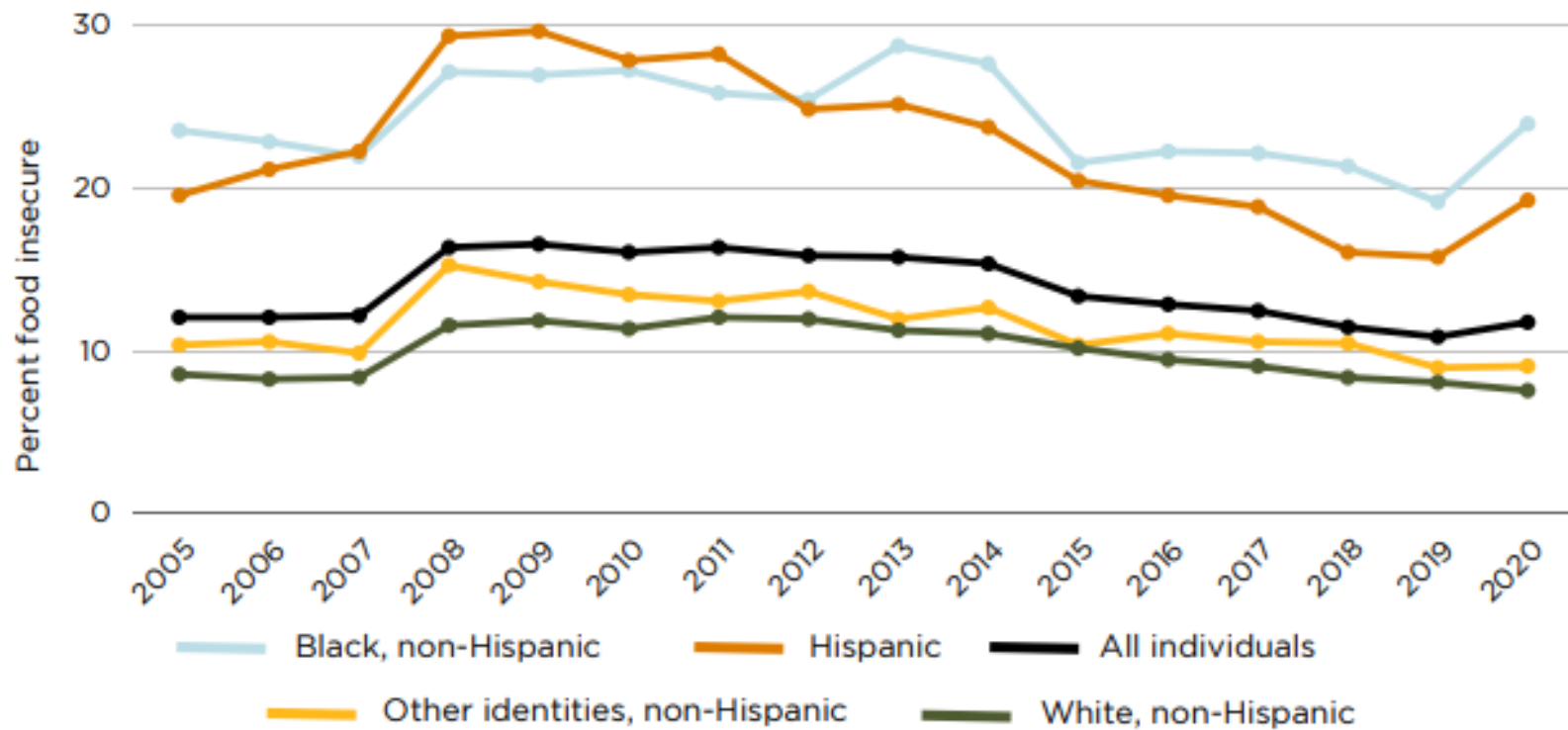
Hyperlipidemia & Hypertension

Poor sleep

Mental Health problems

Cancer

Figure 1. Food Insecurity Among Individuals by Race/Ethnicity, 2005-2020



Source: USDA Economic Research Service

Note: the category of "Other identities, non-Hispanic" includes individuals who identify as Native American, Asian, Pacific Islander, or multiple races (non-Hispanic).

Trends of Food Insecurity in the US

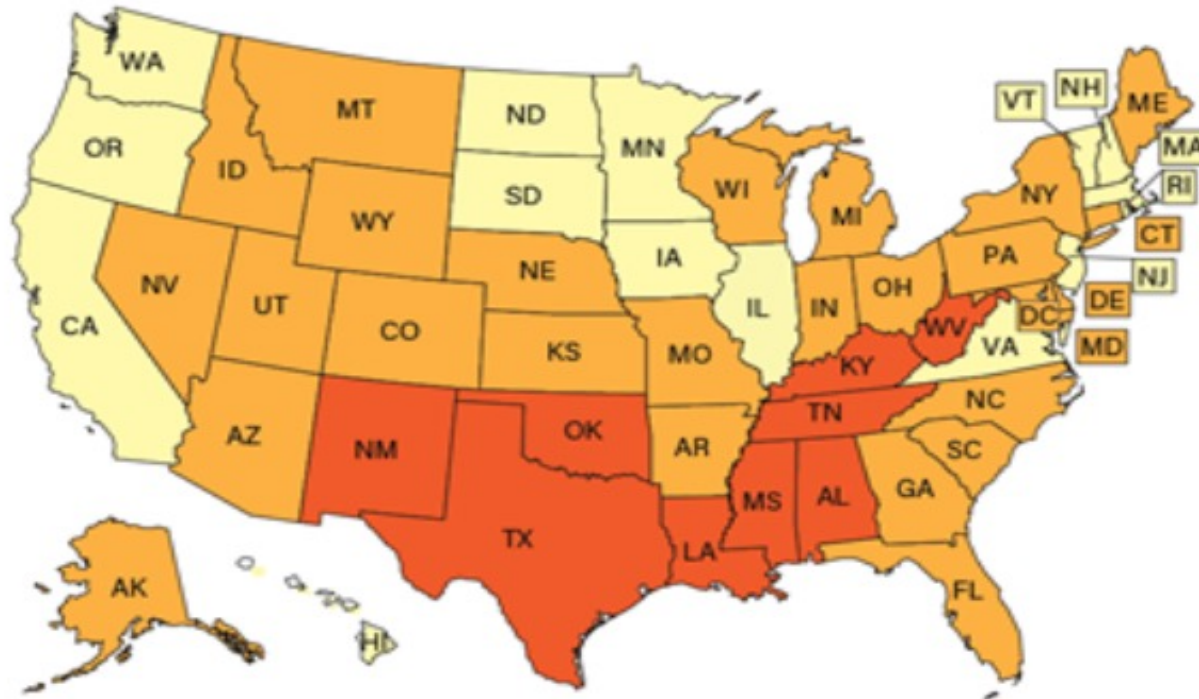


Where does Texas rank in terms of food insecurity among other states in the US?

Texas is 1 of 9 states with prevalence of food insecurity **higher** than national average.

Food Insecurity in Texas

Prevalence of food insecurity, average 2018-20



- Food insecurity below U.S. average
- Food insecurity near U.S. average (10.7 percent)
- Food insecurity above U.S. average

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from 2018-2020 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement

Food Insecurity among Children in Texas

Figure 3. Projected rates of child food insecurity in 2021 by state

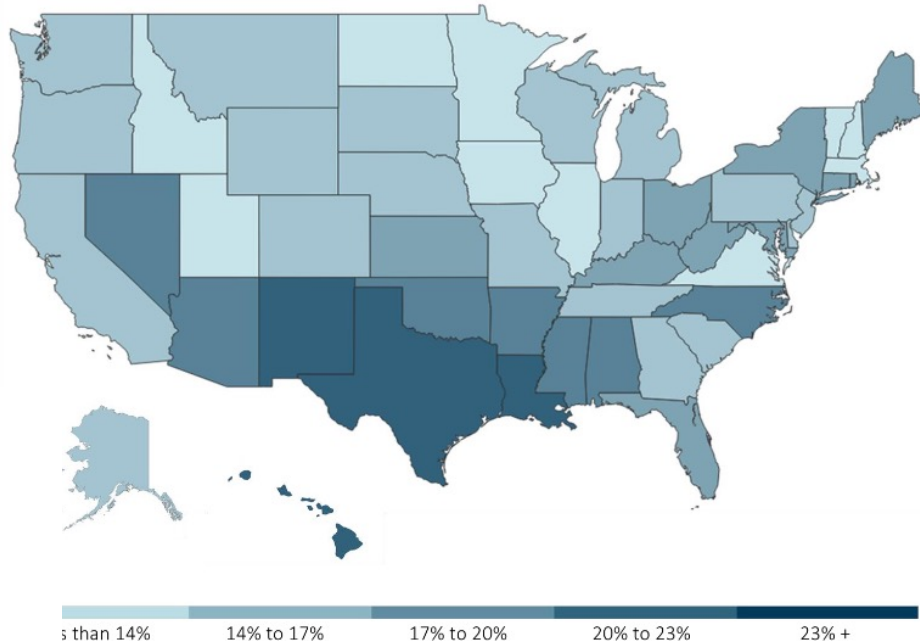


Table. States with the highest projected child food insecurity rates in 2021

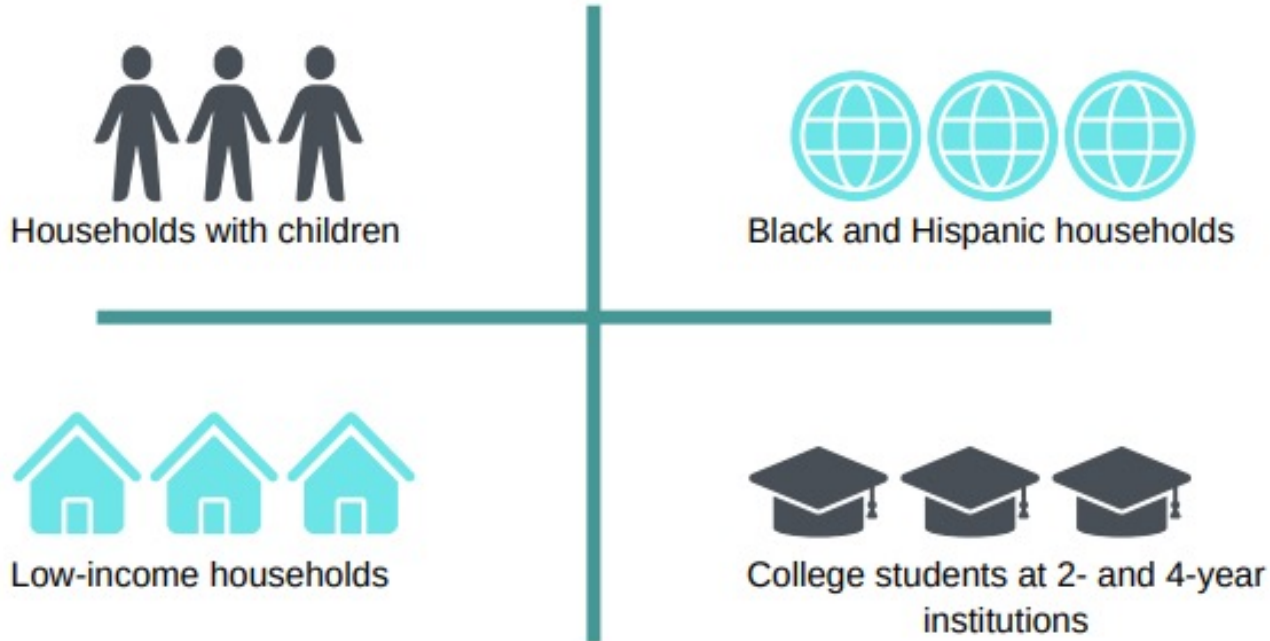
Ranking	State	2021	2020 (ranking)	2019 (ranking)
1	Louisiana	26.0%	27.4% (1)	23.0% (1)
2	Hawaii	24.6%	27.0% (2)	18.3% (9)
3	New Mexico	23.7%	26.2% (4)	22.0% (3)
4	Texas	23.6%	24.0% (7)	19.6% (7)
5	Nevada	23.0%	26.7% (3)	17.7% (12)
6	Arkansas	22.9%	24.4% (6)	21.4% (4)
7	Oklahoma	22.5%	23.8% (8)	20.4% (6)
8	Mississippi	22.2%	24.9% (5)	22.2% (2)
9	Alabama	20.4%	23.3% (9)	20.8% (5)
9	Arizona	20.4%	21.2% (16)	17.6% (14)

Food Insecurity does
not discriminate



Food insecurity can affect anyone

Food insecurity disproportionately affects*:



Although food insecurity does impact certain groups of people at a higher rate, food insecurity can affect anyone.

Food Insecurity in Texas

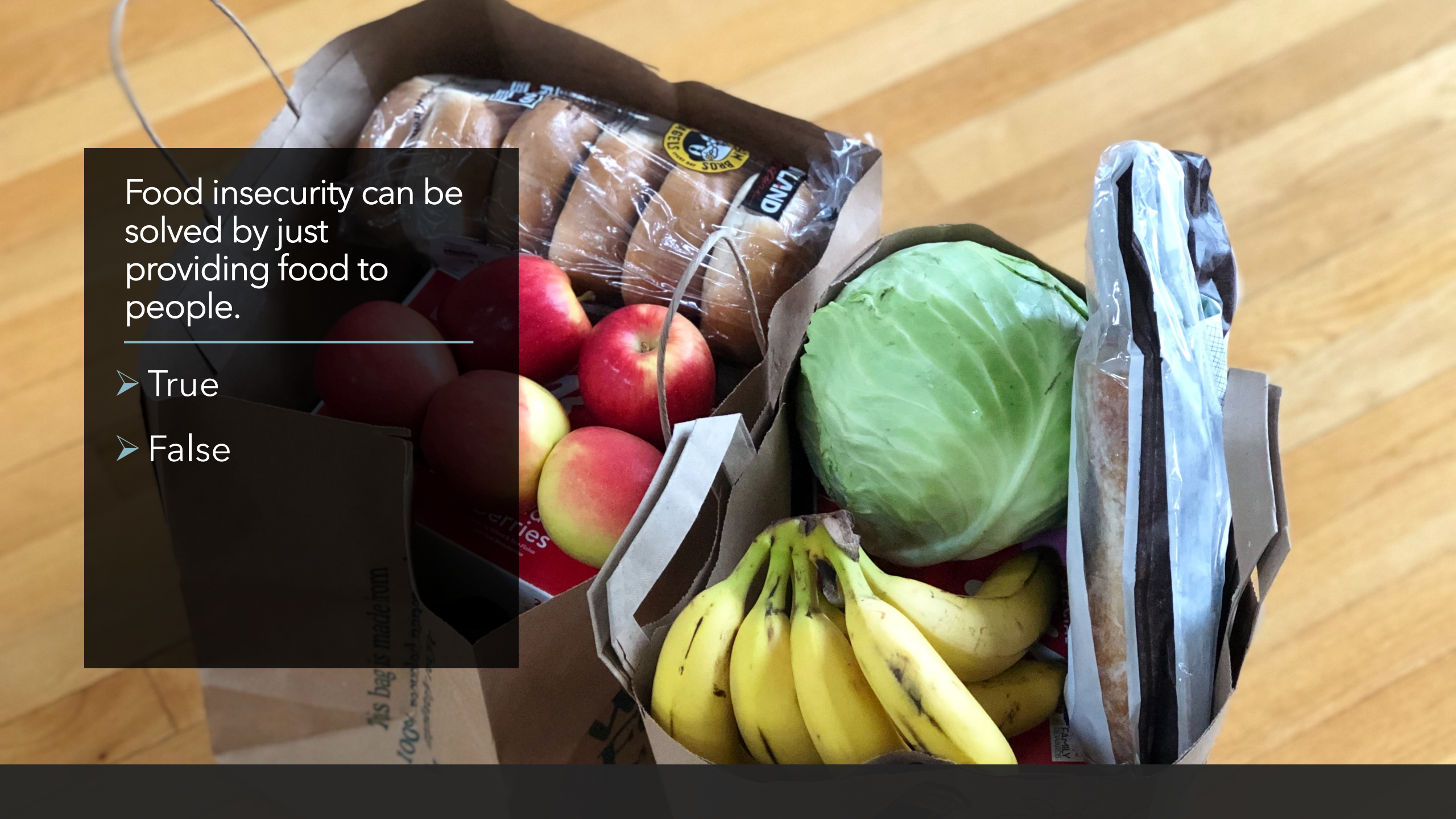
- Statewide, 26.1% of 2nd grade families were insecure (2019-2020) according to the Texas SPAN data

Community type	% Food insecure
Major urban	29.3%
Urban	25.4%
Rural	23.4%

Ethnic group	% Food insecure
Black/African-American	39.5%
Hispanic	30.9%
White/other	15.9%

Food insecurity was estimated based on the percentage of 2nd grade parents who answered either “sometimes true” or “often true” to at least one of the following statements pertaining to the prior 12 months:

- We were worried food would run out before we got money to buy more
- The food we bought didn't last, and we didn't have money to buy more

A top-down view of a brown paper grocery bag filled with fresh food. The bag is placed on a light-colored wooden floor. Inside the bag, there is a large head of green cabbage, a bunch of yellow bananas, several red and yellow apples, and a loaf of bread in a clear plastic bag. The bread bag has a logo that says "LAND" and "50¢".

Food insecurity can be solved by just providing food to people.

- True
- False

Food insecurity involves multiple factors, which require different solutions

Food Insecurity is a complex, economic issue

- Although related to poverty, not a perfect correlation

Low-income households are affected by many overlapping issues

- Low wages
- Housing costs
- Medical costs
- Social isolation
- Economic/social disadvantage

Solutions need to be multi-faceted

References

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Food Insecurity

Sangeeta Jain MD

Texas Pediatric Society

Co Chair Nutrition & Health Committee

The Washington Post H

FOOD SECURITY

A SPECIAL REPORT
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 2012

A crisis point for access to food
Millions are overweight. Millions are malnourished. Washington Post Live convened experts to confront problems connected with the food supply.

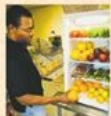

<p>PROVIDING PRODUCE "Healthy Corners" program helps bring fruits and vegetables to a basement store in a "food desert" in Ward 7. Page 3</p> 	<p>TOO MUCH WASTE Farmers, grocers and others are sending tons of food to landfills. Page 2</p> <p>WORLDWIDE CHALLENGE How will we feed 9 billion people? A major collaborative effort is needed. Page 2</p>	<p>THE EXPERTS SPEAK Government officials, legislators, company executives and scholars discuss the issues and offer solutions. Pages 4-5</p> 
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ILLUSTRATION BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS

20 years of food insecurity research shows us that this is...

...Often a hidden condition

That lacks physical or laboratory signs,
Is associated with tremendous social stigma & personal shame,
And will not be revealed unless asked about directly.

Cutts MD, Diana and John cook
PhD. "Screening for Food
Insecurity: Short-term alleviation
and long-term prevention."
American Journal of Public
Health. Nov 2017: 1699-1700.



Common Ways Food Insecurity *May* Present

Inadequate Calorie Intake



Decreased Nutrition Quality



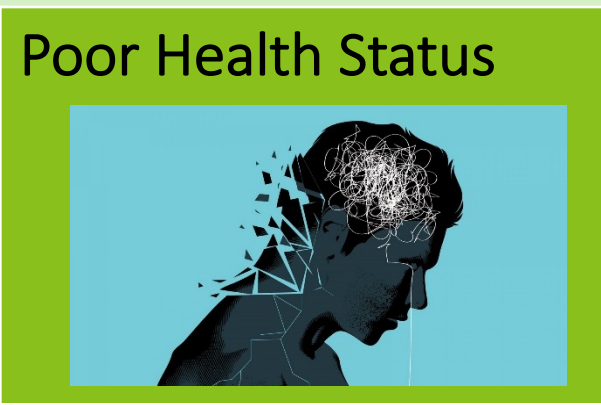
Diet Monotony



Food Anxiety



Food insecurity — even marginal food insecurity — is detrimental to children’s health and well-being.



Newborns: birth complications, birth defects, low birth weight

Underweight or Overweight; Malnourished, iron deficiency anemia

Poor Disease Control (asthma, diabetes, heart disease, dental caries, etc)

Increased ER visits & medical needs



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA-NC

Food insecurity — even marginal food insecurity — is detrimental to children’s health and well-being.

Developmental Risk



Mental Health Problems



Depression

Anxiety

Suicidal Ideation

Poor Educational Outcomes

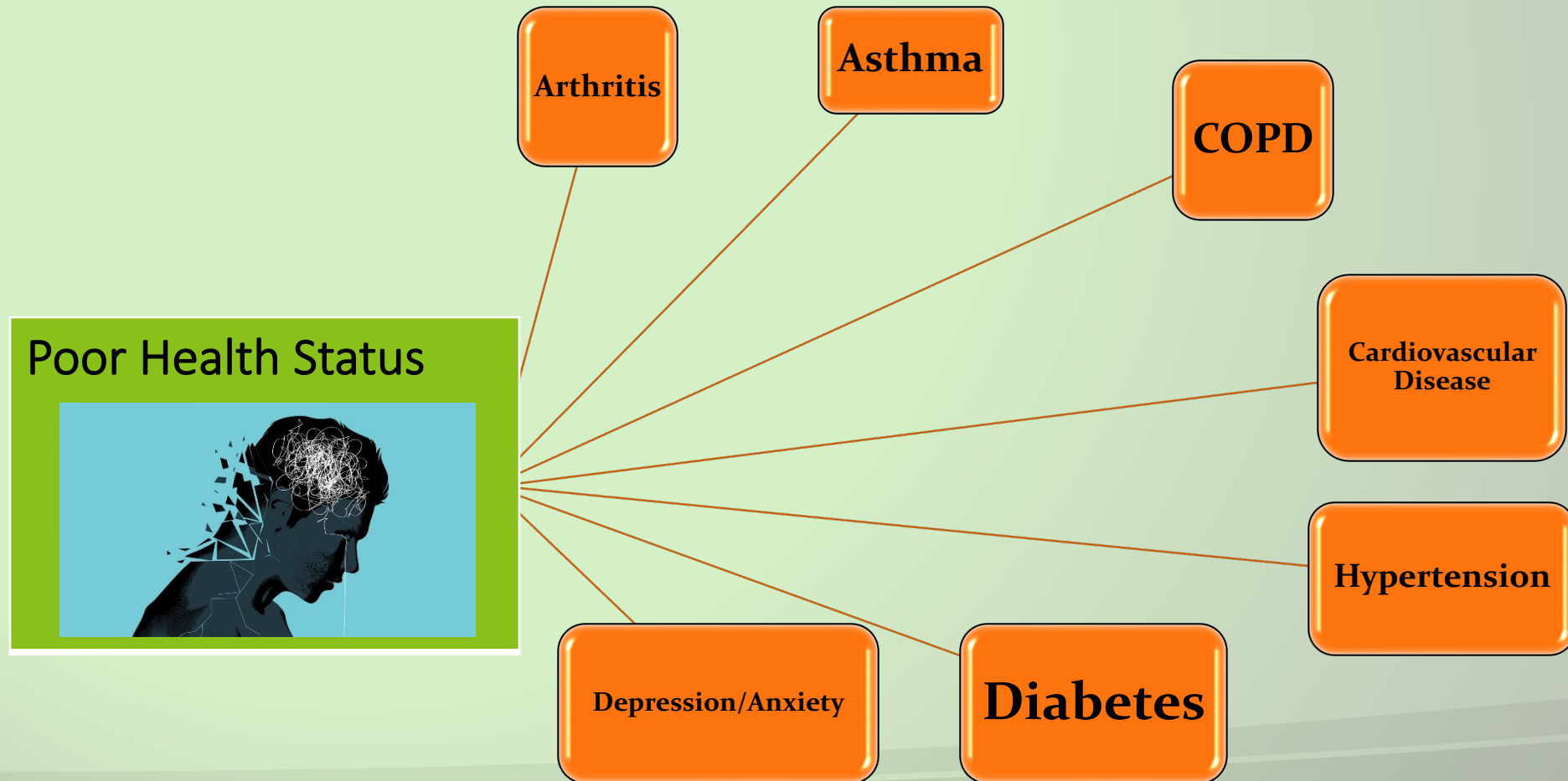


Lower cognitive indicators

Dysregulated behavior

Poor academic achievement

Food insecurity and poor health outcomes in adults:

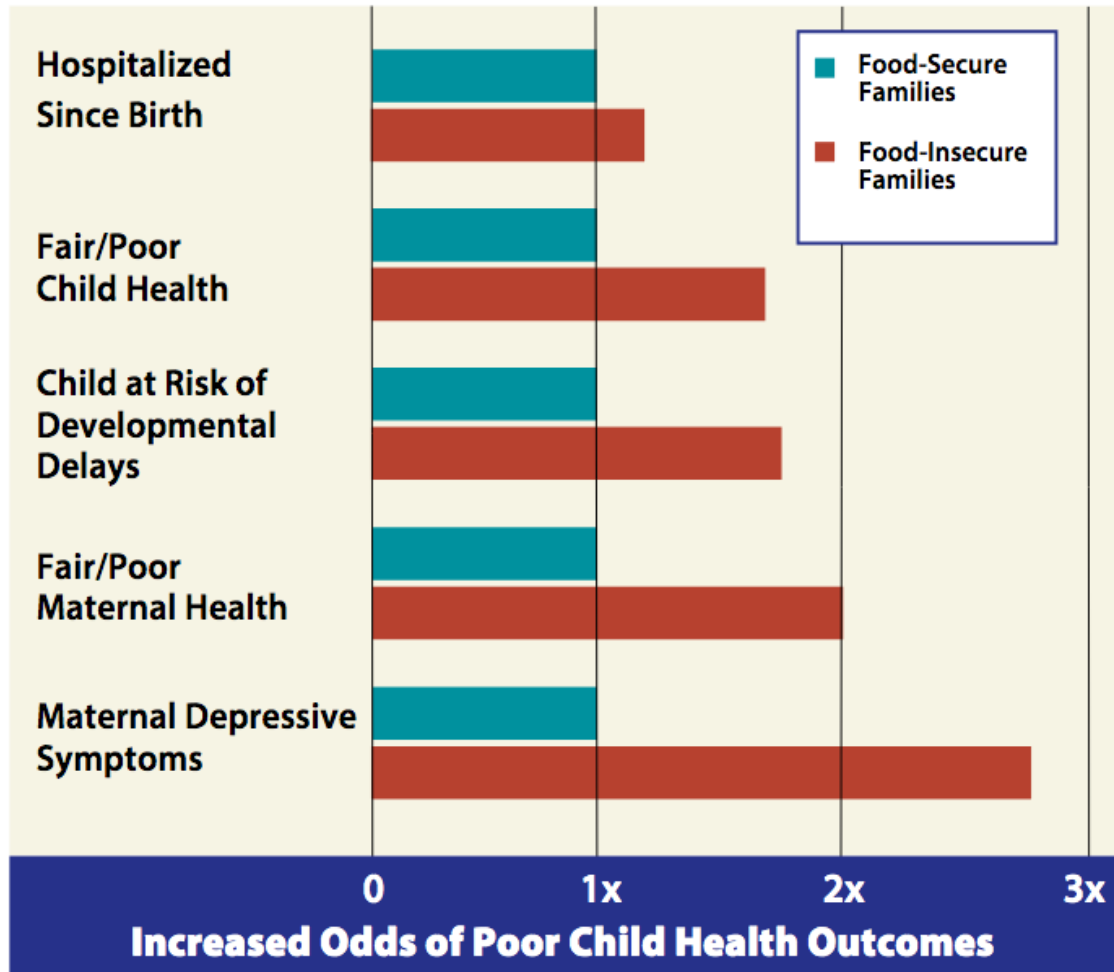


Poor Health Status



Figure 1:

Families at risk of food insecurity had worse child health outcomes and worse maternal mental and physical health.



Source: Children's HealthWatch Data, 1998-2005. All increases statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.



<https://studylib.net/doc/18289701/the-hunger-vital-sign---children-s-healthwatch>

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Addressing Food Insecurity: 3 Steps for Success

PREPARE	SCREEN	INTERVENE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify a “Hunger Champion”• Educate staff on FI prevalence, risk factors, & health outcomes		

Source:
https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/FRAC_AAP_Toolkit_2021_032122.pdf

Address Food Insecurity in a Empathetic, Sensitive, & Culturally effective manner.

SCREENING FOR FOOD INSECURITY

USDA HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY SCALE

Gold Standard for Food Security Measurement & Surveillance

- Part of Current Population Survey
- Administered monthly by US Census Bureau
- 18 questions (only 10 if no children in home)

Divides Families into 3 Categories

Food Secure (positive response to 0-2 questions)

Food Insecure (positive response to >3 questions)

Very Low Food Secure (positive response to 6 or more for families without children and 8 or more for families with children)

Source:
<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/survey-tools/>

SCREENING FOR FOOD INSECURITY

HUNGER VITAL SIGN

- 2 Questions
- More practical tool: easy to use & available
- Validated





1. Within the past 12 months we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.

Never true

Sometimes true

Often true

2. Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have the money to get more.

Never true

Sometimes true

Often true

What is a positive Hunger Vital Sign?

Positive screen is “Sometimes true” or “Often true” for either question.

Negative screen is “Never true” for both questions.



The screenshot shows the 'Hunger Vital Sign' questionnaire. At the top left is a logo with a white heartbeat line on a green background, with the text 'HUNGER Vital Sign™'. Below the logo are two questions, each with three response options: 'Never true', 'Sometimes true', and 'Often true'.

Question	Never true	Sometimes true	Often true
1. Within the past 12 months we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.			
2. Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have the money to get more.			

How helpful is the Hunger Vital Sign?

GOAL:

- Identify food insecure households
- Minimize false negatives

HVS: Screening positive to either 1 or both questions:

- 97% Sensitivity
- 83% Specificity



1. Within the past 12 months we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.

Never true	Sometimes true	Often true
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2. Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have the money to get more.

Never true	Sometimes true	Often true
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Advise caution regarding modifying the HVS

Can I replace the 3 response options with “yes” or “no”?

- Missing nearly 25% of food insecure adults
- Reduces sensitivity to 76%



HUNGER
Vital Signs™

1. Within the past 12 months we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.

Never true Sometimes true Often true

2. Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have the money to get more.

Never true Sometimes true Often true



SCREENING FOR FOOD INSECURITY/SDOH

ADDITIONAL SCREENING TOOLS

- Survey of Well-being of Young Children
- WE CARE: Well Child Care, Evaluation, Community Resources, Advocacy, Referral Education Survey
- SEEK: Safe Environment for Every Kid Parent Screening Questionnaire
- Health Leads
- PRAPARE

Where can I screen?

- Health Care Systems
- Educational settings
- Mental health & chemical dependency programs
- Youth and senior centers
- Places of work & worship



1. Within the past 12 months we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.

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Sometimes true

Often true

2. Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have the money to get more.

Never true

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Often true

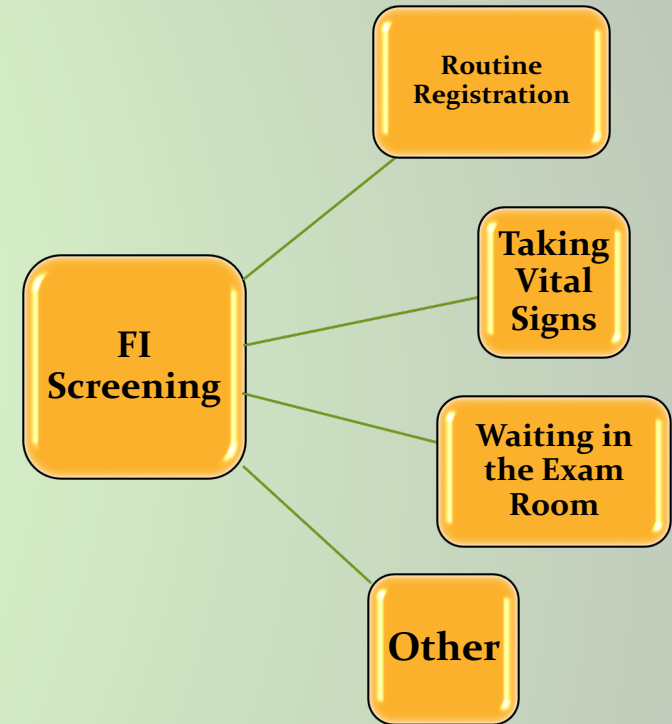
How do I screen?

Written (recommended)

- ✓ Paper survey
- ✓ Touchscreen pads

Verbally

- ✓ Recorded voice response systems
- ✓ Person-to-person interaction



HUNGER Vital Signs™

1. Within the past 12 months we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.

Never true Sometimes true Often true

2. Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have the money to get more.

Never true Sometimes true Often true

What can I do to best address barriers regarding FI?



© 2016, University of Maryland School of Medicine

Food Insecurity: Addressing Possible Barriers

Barrier: **I don't know where to get help**

Response:

- Yes, it's often hard to know where to go
- Would you like me to recommend good [programs](#)
- We have someone who can help, or, here's info on this handout of good websites and places that can help

Barrier: **It'll get better with time**

Response:

- I understand you feel "time will fix things"
- What do you think could help improve things sooner?
- Would you like me to suggest a program that should help?

Barrier: **I don't think it's affecting my child(ren)**

Response:

- I hear you that this may not be affecting your kids
- But, do you think they're getting the food they need to be healthy?
- I see how much you care about your kids

Barrier: **I don't have the time**

Response:

- I hear you that it feels like there's not enough time
- But, this is so important – for you, your family, [you](#)
- Would you like me to suggest a program that should help?
- It won't take a lot of time to sign up

Barrier: **No transportation**

Response:

- I see that transportation is a problem
- Would you like me to see if there's something close to home or a bus route

Barrier: **I'd feel embarrassed**

Response:

- I hear you. Lots of people feel embarrassed about getting help with food
- Lots of families need help, and lots of families are getting help. You're not alone! This is not your fault
- Would you like me to help you get help?

Barrier: **I don't believe people should get help from the government**

Response:

- I understand you don't think people should get help from the government
- But, many people need help at different times, like after a hurricane or losing a job. And, no-one in the US should be hungry
- And, this is so important – for you and your kids to be healthy and grow well
- Also, there are places offering help with food that having nothing to do with the government
- Would you be interested in finding one of those programs?

Barrier: **The application is too much hassle**

Response:

- Yes, I've heard about this. But, we've been able to help people deal with it
- Would you like me to help with this?
- We have someone who can help, or, here's information on this handout of good websites and places to find help

Barrier: **I tried getting help and it did not work**

Response:

- I understand you not wanting to try again. It's hard when you go through the hassle for nothing
- But, this is so important for you, and your kids
- Would you like me to help find a good program? • We have someone who can help, or, here's information on this handout of good websites and places that can help

Source:
<https://seekwellbeing.org/seek-materials/>

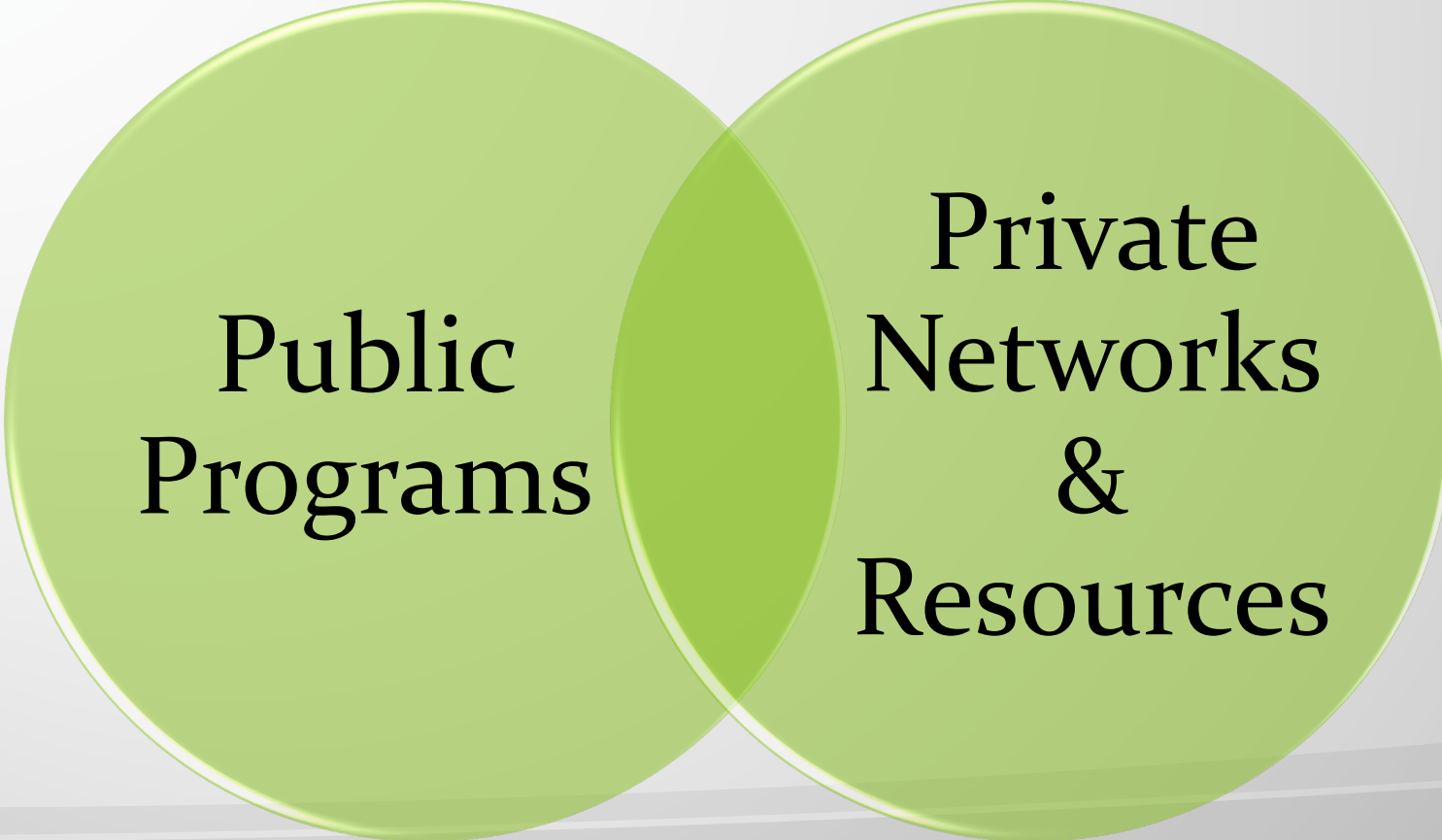
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Address Food Insecurity in a Empathetic, Sensitive, & Culturally effective manner.



Resources for Food Insecure Homes.



Public
Programs

Private
Networks
&
Resources

Resources for Food Insecure Homes.

PUBLIC FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

SNAP

WIC

National School Lunch and National School
Breakfast Programs

Child and Adult Care Food Program

Summer Food Service Program



Resources for Food Insecure Homes.

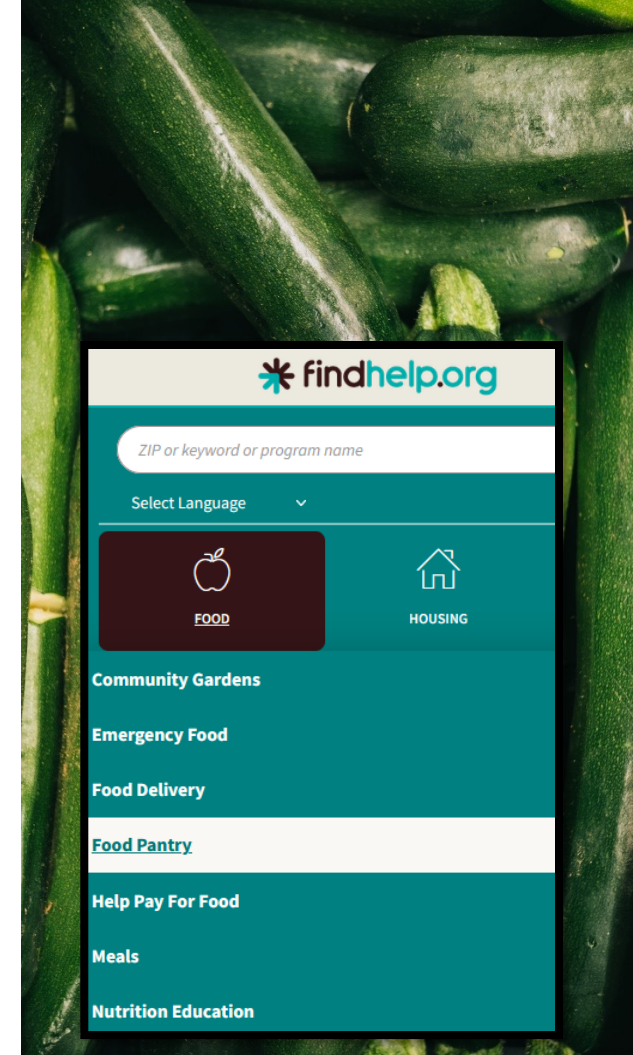
PRIVATE
FOOD
ASSISTANCE
NETWORKS

Food Banks [21 Texas Food Banks](#)

Local resources findhelp.org

Texas Community Partner Program

www.texascommunitypartnerprogram.com



INTERVENE

- Handouts of Food Resources
- Posters
- Referral systems
 - Case manager/Social worker
 - Community Partners
- In-clinic food pantries
- Other

It's scary when there's not enough food for your family.

1 in 6 Texas families have food insecurity or worry about food

FOOD RESOURCES

Immediate Support

2-1-1
www.211.org
free & confidential

Local Food Pantries

Central Texas Food Bank
512-282-2111
www.centraltexasfoodbank.org/food-assistance/get-food-now

Aunt Bertha
auntbertha.com

Longterm Support

SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
To enroll or to learn about food stamps:
2-1-1 or 1-855-366-3401
http://yourtexasbenefits.hhsc.texas.gov

WIC: Women, Infants and Children

- Nutrition education & counseling
- Screening & referrals to health, welfare, social services

1-800-942-3678
http://texaswic.dshs.state.tx.us/wiclessons/english/splash

Seasonal Support

Summer Meals for Kids & Teens
1-866-3-HUNGRY
http://bit.ly/summerfeedingrocks

School Meals
Check your local public school for free, reduced-price, or paid breakfast, lunch, and after school programs

Classes on Healthy Eating & Breastfeeding:
https://www.centraltexasfoodbank.org/get-help/eat-healthy

Farmers Markets accepting SNAP or WIC & Double Dollar Incentive vouchers
http://sustainablefoodcenter.org/programs/sfc-farmers-market

Legal or Paperwork Questions? 888-988-9996

Notes from the field...

Piloted ~6 months

1. Added HVS to existing Well Visit paperwork
2. Eye catching poster for clinic rooms
3. Added paper copies
4. EMR integration

1. How many times per day does your child eat vegetables and fruit?	0-1 Times	2 Times	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 3+ Times
2. How many sugar-sweetened drinks does your child drink per day (such as soda, juice, energy drinks and chocolate milk)? (1 drink = 1 cup)	2+ Drinks	1 Drinks	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0 Drinks
3. What type of milk does your child drink? Milk substitute (almond, soy etc.) <u>1% or 2%</u>	Whole	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 2% <input type="radio"/>	Skim/1%
4. How many servings of milk, yogurt, or milk substitute does your child have per day ?	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0-1	2	3+
5. How many times per week does your child eat take out, fast food or restaurant food?	4+ Times	2-3 Times	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 0-1 Times
6. How many days per week do you eat dinner together as a family at the table?	0-2 Days	3-5 Days	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 6-7 Days
7. How many days per week is your child physically active, for at least 60 minutes? (such as walking, biking, playing)	0-3 Days	4-5 Days	<input checked="" type="radio"/> 6-7 Days
8. How many hours per day does your child spend in front of a screen? (TV, video games, computer, phone)	3+ Hours	1-2 Hours	<input checked="" type="radio"/> <1 Hours
9. What time is usual bed time? <u>9ish</u> What time does your child usually wake up during the week? <u>6:45/7</u>			
10. What foods does your child eat between meals? <u>fruit, granola bars, smoothie, Cheez It</u>			
11. Please circle your answers for these questions below:			
Within the past 12 months we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.			
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Often true	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes true	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Never true	
Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have the money to get more.			
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Often true	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes true	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Never true	

Notes from the field...

Piloted ~6 months

1. Added HVS to existing Well Visit paperwork
2. Eye catching poster for clinic rooms
3. Added paper copies
4. EMR integration

Visit Diagn

Search for new diagnosis + Add Previous ▾ Problems ▾

Common	Upper respiratory tra...	Asthma	ADHD (attention defi...	Allergic rhinitis	Abdominal pain
	Conjunctivitis	Eczema	Influenza-like illness	Otitis media	Acute bronchiolitis d...
	Viral infection	More			

P ICD-10-CM ICD-9-CM PL

1. ◆ Food insecurity Z59.41 V60.89 ▲ Change Dx ✓ 🗑️

It's scary when there's not enough food for your family. 1 in 6 Texas families have food insecurity or worry about food

FOOD RESOURCES

Immediate Support
 2-1-1
 www.211.org
 free & confidential

Local Food Pantries

Central Texas Food Bank
 512-282-2111
 www.centraltexasfoodbank.org/food-assistance/get-food-now

Aunt Bertha
 auntbertha.com

Longterm Support

SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
 To enroll or to learn about food stamps:
 2-1-1 or 1-855-366-3401
 http://yourtexasbenefits.hhsc.texas.gov

WIC: Women, Infants and Children

- Nutrition education and counseling
- Screening & referrals to health, welfare, social services

1-800-942-3678
 http://texaswic.dshs.state.tx.us/wiclessons/english/splash

Seasonal Support

1-866-3-HUNGRY
 http://bit.ly/summerfeedingrocks

School Meals
 Check your local public school for free, reduced-price, or paid breakfast, lunch, and after school programs

Classes on healthy eating & breastfeeding:
 https://www.centraltexasfoodbank.org/get-help/eat-healthy

Farmers Markets accepting SNAP or WIC & Double Dollar Incentive vouchers
 http://sustainablefoodcenter.org/programs/sfc-farmers-market

Legal or Paperwork Questions? 888-988-9996

Addressing Food Insecurity: 3 Steps for Success

PREPARE	SCREEN	INTERVENE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify a “Hunger Champion”• Educate staff on FI prevalence, risk factors, & health outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pick a screening tool• Consider implementation within existing workflow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify sustainable ways to address food insecurity• Incorporate the screening tool & referrals into EHRs• Test-drive & adjust

Address Food Insecurity in a Empathetic, Sensitive, & Culturally effective manner.

SCREENING FOR FOOD INSECURITY

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

■ Pediatrics

- FRAC/AAP co-developed toolkit



■ Seniors

- FRAC/AARP Course





Sources

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*Much thanks to my fellow Hunger Champions at work: Shaili Singh MD, Elizabeth Knapp MD, Marjan Linnel MD, & Nadia Sabri MD.



Questions?

Please enter them into the chat!