

# The impact of food insecurity: Overeating, poor nutrition, childhood trauma

By Nancy Ludwig, MS, RD, LD, Siletz Tribal Head Start Nutrition

As part of my role as a consultant nutritionist to Siletz Tribal Head Start, I offer information for families. This article explores the impacts of food insecurity, meaning fear of not being able to get enough food.

Adult eating behaviors are influenced by early experiences, including not having enough food as a child or being called fat and having food restricted. As a result, food choices are based on “fear of not enough” rather than based on needs. As such, the ripple from it affects us all.

For clarity, the terms food security and food insecurity are defined below. The roles of Oregon Food Bank and SNAP are also discussed.

Whatever the cause, whether it is financial or emotional, the impact of food insecurity lasts for a lifetime. When I see an adult with a tendency to overeat, often there was a history of childhood food insecurity.

Commonly, children and adults who are (or were) food insecure are overweight. Nutrition is not just about getting enough to eat. Often the foods available from food pantries fill the belly but are nutrient-poor (low nutrient density). As such, they do not support health or fully satisfy, which leaves the body seeking further nutrition and a physiologic desire to keep eating.

Most of the focus on the root cause of food insecurity is economic, such as poverty, unemployment or health-related financial pressures. However, food insecurity is not limited to financial matters.

In some cases, well-intended concerns around a child’s rapid growth (or weight gain) result in comments around withholding food. When a child is faced with food restrictions, a similar insecurity is experienced and often results in the tendency to eat when food is available rather than eating to satisfy hunger.

Likewise, foster children, who are removed from their homes, are often insecure around food and may eat more than required at a meal as they may not be confident that meals will be available regularly.

Childhood food insecurity can be viewed as a form of childhood trauma. There is a great deal of research around ACE (adverse childhood experiences) as well as Tribal trauma that are associated with lifelong poor health.

Head Start families facing food insecurity may want to contact their child’s teacher or family advocate who may be able to support by helping to connect them to services. Furthermore, as the Head Start consultant nutritionist, I am available to support families by discussing nutrition-related concerns via telephone. Food insecurity is a large issue facing entire communities.

**Food security** for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum:

1. The ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods
2. Assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies).

**Food insecurity** is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

(Definitions are from the Life Sciences Research Office, S.A. Andersen, ed., *Core Indicators of Nutritional State for Difficult to Sample Populations*, *The Journal of Nutrition*; 120:1557S-1600S, 1990.)

The Oregon Food Bank (OFB) is a statewide network that supplies food to local distribution centers and pantries. OFB is unique nationally because it looks seriously at the root causes of hunger and identifies factors in order to tackle them head-on because it’s more than just provid-

ing food for today, it’s about providing food for tomorrow and food for all.

The mission of Oregon Food Bank is to eliminate hunger and its root causes ... **because no one should be hungry.**

Despite the improving economy, lower unemployment rates and better access to health care, many families still struggle to put food on the table:

- 28 percent worry always or often about where their next meal is coming from
- 82 percent report that there have been times in the last 12 months when they did not have enough money to buy food that they or their family needed
- 38 percent of households reported watering down food or drinks to make them last longer, 31 percent of households with kids report cutting kids’ meals

Oregon’s food insecurity rate continues to remain above the national average. For Oregon households, 16.1 percent are considered food insecure according to the USDA ERS 2014 Food Insecurity Report. The national average is 14.3 percent.

Check out the following links for more information from Oregon Food Bank:

- [oregonfoodbank.org/our-work/hunger-in-oregon/factors-of-hunger/](http://oregonfoodbank.org/our-work/hunger-in-oregon/factors-of-hunger/)
- [oregonfoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Hunger-Factors-FullRpt-v8-2.pdf](http://oregonfoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Hunger-Factors-FullRpt-v8-2.pdf)

SNAP or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as food stamps) is a federal program that provides assistance to eligible low-income people nationwide. By improving the purchasing power of participants, SNAP can help alleviate the need to access food through the charitable network.

According to the most recent information available, an estimated 73 percent of all Oregonians eligible for SNAP receive benefits. (Source: *2013-14 Participation Report SNAP: Supporting Healthier Oregonians, Partners for a Hunger Free Oregon*; <https://oregonhunger.org/blog/2013-14-snap-participation-report>)

*Food insecurity is at the root of many health problems and eating behaviors. This issue is greater than OFB and SNAP resources can fully address. We all need to work together to support food security for our community.*

## 2018 Tribal Council Application

Application for names to be placed on the 2018 ballot for candidates in the Siletz Tribal Council election

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Roll# \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand I must be an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon and 18 years of age or older. This application must be filed with the Election Board by **4 p.m. on Dec. 15, 2017**. I also understand that if for any reason I decide to withdraw my application for Siletz Tribal Council, I must withdraw in writing by **4 p.m. on Dec. 22, 2017**. Otherwise, my name will appear in the Voter’s Pamphlet and on the ballot.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your application to: CTSI Election Board, P.O. Box 549, Siletz, OR 97380-0549.

### Voter’s Pamphlet and Statement

If you would like your candidate’s statement and photo to appear in the Voter’s Pamphlet, please submit your statement and a recent 3x5 photograph of yourself along with your application. Deadline for statements and photos is **4 p.m. Dec. 15, 2017**.

Candidate statements must be no longer than 750 words and must not be derogatory or contain personal attacks on any one individual. Statements and photos will appear in the Voter’s Pamphlet. Photos will be included on the ballot. Mail your statement and photo to CTSI Election Board, P.O. Box 549, Siletz, OR 97380-0549.

The candidate is responsible to ensure receipt of application and statement by the deadline. Letters will be sent to all candidates after review and certification by the Election Board.

Candidates can call 800-922-1399, ext. 1256, or 541-444-8256; or e-mail [elections@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:elections@ctsi.nsn.us) to confirm receipt of application and candidate’s statement.

### Election Deadlines

4 p.m.	Dec. 15, 2017	Deadline to file for candidacy
4 p.m.	Dec. 15, 2017	Deadline to submit a photo and/or candidate’s statement for inclusion in the Tribal Voter’s Pamphlet
4 p.m. Week of Dec. 26-29, 2017	Dec. 22, 2017	Certified Candidate’s List posted Absentee ballots mailed out/Voter’s Pamphlet
9 a.m. – Noon	TBA	Candidates Fair – Chinook Winds
4 p.m.	Jan. 26, 2018	Deadline to request a mail-in ballot
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Feb. 3, 2018	In-person Voting – Tribal Elections, Tribal Community Center, Siletz
4 p.m.	Feb. 3, 2018	Deadline for returning absentee ballots

## Attention Siletz Contract Health-eligible Tribal members!

If you receive Contract Health Services approval to see providers/facilities outside of a Tribal clinic, please be sure to inform them at your visit that you have Contract Health Services as a form of payment.

We have seen a number of patients billed for services from their medical/dental/optical providers because the patient did not inform the office that they have Contract Health Services.

If you have primary insurance (through employment, Medicare, Medicaid, etc.), we would be secondary to the primary insurance.

If you fail to provide this information to your providers and they don’t bill us in a timely manner, you could be liable for the charges. Please let your providers know that they can submit claims for payment to Siletz Contract Health, P.O. Box 320, Siletz, OR 97380.