

# INFO BITE: *FOOD SECURITY*

## WHAT IS FOOD SECURITY?



When all people, at all times, can access and afford enough safe and nutritious foods to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

## WHY DOES FOOD SECURITY MATTER?

Food insecurity significantly harms the health and well-being of individuals and families. It is a driver of public health costs and contributes to conditions like diabetes, heart disease, mental health issues, and premature death.

**An individual is food secure only when all pillars are consistently and simultaneously met.**



## FOUR PILLARS OF FOOD SECURITY



### 1 | Availability

Enough supply exists to meet the demand for food.



### 2 | Access

People have the necessary income to afford the food they need and the ability to procure it.



### 3 | Utilization

How food is chosen, prepared and distributed throughout a household. Well-balanced food utilization provides an individual with an ideal energy and nutrient intake.



### 4 | Stability

When all three pillars are achieved simultaneously over time, stability exists. Stability can be impacted by weather, political instability, unemployment, rising food prices, inflation, etc.

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## FOUR LEVELS OF FOOD (IN)SECURITY

Experiences with food insecurity vary greatly by country, region, and individual. There are four levels of food security ranging from least to most critical.



### 1 | Food Secure

All household members complete food and nutritional needs are regularly met.



### 2 | Marginal Food Insecurity (Without Hunger)

Some household members feel anxious about running out of food and/or needing to choose lesser quality / lower nutrient-rich foods due to budget constraints. Typically, there is no reduction in food consumption at this stage.



### 3 | Moderate Food Insecurity (Moderate Hunger)

Some household members (often adults) compromise the quality and/or quantity of food due to budget constraints and occasionally experience physical hunger. Typically, children are not directly impacted to experience hunger at this level.



### 4 | Severe Food Insecurity (Severe Hunger)

All household members are having to reduce the amount of food eaten, miss meals, and/or go day(s) without food. At this level, both adults and children are affected.