



Pharmacy Phacts

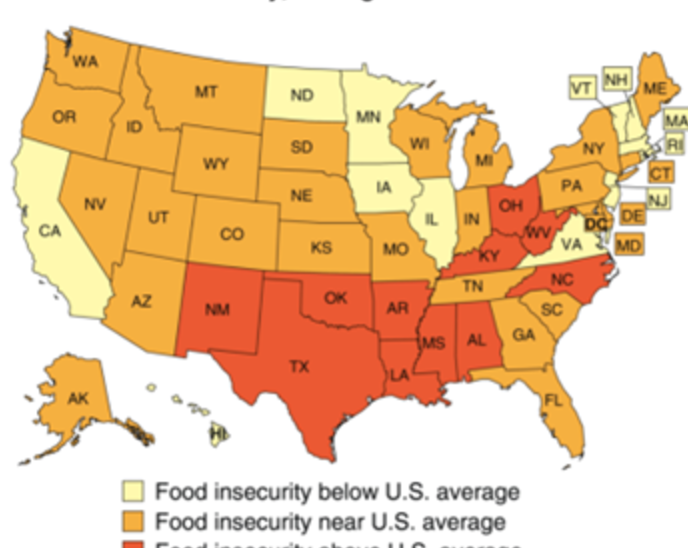
In this issue PharmD candidates discuss Food Insecurity

Food Insecurity

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According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), a food desert is an area where individuals have limited access to a variety of healthy and affordable foods¹. Those who live in food deserts may find it challenging to get healthy and nutritious foods affecting their health due to mental, physical, and financial stress. For example, many households that struggle with food insecurity include one or more family members living with chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, or anxiety. A combination of stress and poor nutrition management can make it challenging to manage one's chronic disease states².

Prevalence of food insecurity, average 2017-19



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2017, 2018, and 2019 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

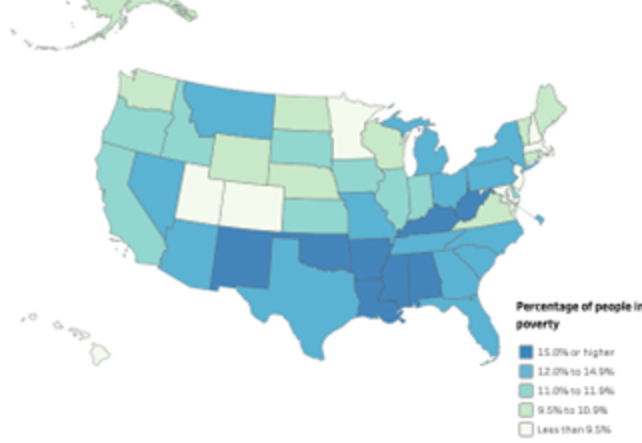
What is food security versus food insecurity?

Households that have access, at all times, to enough food for an active, healthy life, have high food security. Marginal food security includes families with problems accessing adequate food; however, the quality and quantity of food are not reduced substantially. In comparison, food insecurity affects households when it is uncertain, or they are unable to acquire enough food to meet the needs of all members due to insufficient financial means. The USDA further breaks down food insecure households into two categories: low food security and very low food security. Homes considered to be low food security use various strategies to avoid disrupting their eating patterns or reducing food intake. Some examples of methods they may use include eating the same meal daily, participating in Federal food assistance programs, or getting food from community pantries. In households considered to be very low food secure one or more family members' everyday eating habits may be disrupted, and food intake is reduced at times during the year due to inadequate money or other resources for food³. Finally, hunger is a consequence of food insecurity. Hunger is defined as a prolonged state of the lack of food that results in discomfort, illness, weakness, or pain going beyond the usual uneasy sensation⁴.

Who is affected?

According to the Alabama Department of Public Health, Alabama is the fifth most impoverished state in the nation. Approximately 17% of adults (1 out of 5) and 23% of children (1 out of 4) struggle with food insecurity⁵. Food insecurity is exceptionally high among low-income individuals, households with children, individuals living alone, non-Hispanic African Americans, and Hispanic families (two times higher risk than non-Hispanic Caucasian households). In comparison in 2018, the USDA estimated that 1 out of 9 Americans (37 million Americans) were food insecure. Out of that subpopulation, more than 11 million children fell into this category³.

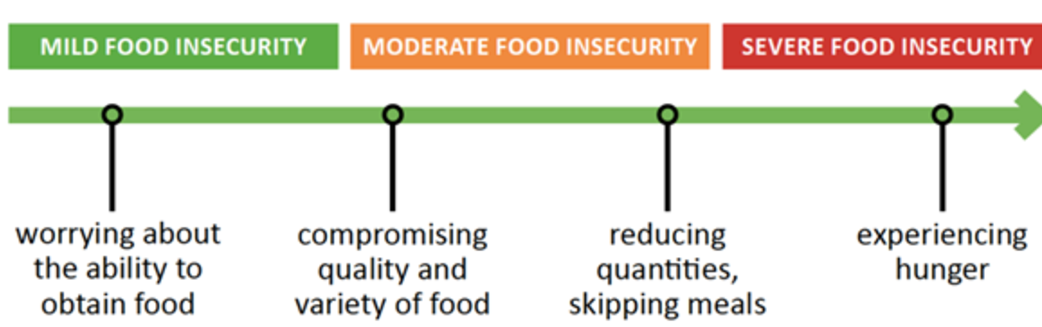
2019 Poverty Rate in the United States



Resources for Assistance

There are many resources available within the state of Alabama to help assist families in need. Some of the resources available include:

- End Child Hunger in Alabama (ECHA) County Food Guide Project: This resource helps every child in Alabama receive access to healthy food. <http://wp.auburn.edu/endchildhungeral/foodguides/>
- Alabama Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program: This is a supplemental program for pregnant women, breast feeding women, women who had a baby within the last six months, and children under the age of five; however, this resource does have an income requirement that as well as an increased risk of inadequate nutrition to be approved. <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/wic/index.html>
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): This program aids in ending hunger and improve nutrition by providing monthly benefits to qualifying low-income households to buy food needed for good health. <https://mydhr.alabama.gov/>
- Double Up Food Banks: This program allows you to earn up to \$20 per day by shopping locally at participating farmer's markets on any SNAP-eligible food with an EBT card <http://www.doubleupal.org/>
- Break for a Plate Alabama: This tool allows kids and teens within the state to eat free during the summer. Children are at an increased risk of food insecurity during the summer because, in some households, they may be only getting a single nutritious lunch while in school. <https://www.breakforaplate.com>
- Alabama Food Pantries: Finding local pantries, soup kitchens, and food pan are a great source to help curb food insecurity. To find assistance, you can call or text 211 or visit the website linked below. You can also call 888-421-1266 for assistance with other services, including food, housing, healthcare, and transportation. <https://www.foodpantries.org/st/alabama>



References:

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2. Food insecurity and Chronic Disease. Alabama Public Health, May 25 2021.
3. Coleman-Jensen Alisha, Rabbitt MP, Gregory CA: Key Statistics and Graphics [Internet]. U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service; 2019 [updated 2020 Sep 09]. Available from: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/key-statistics-graphics.aspx/>
4. Coleman-Jensen Alisha, Rabbitt MP, Gregory CA: Definitions of Food Security [Internet]. U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service; 2019 [updated 2020 Sep 09]. Available from: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security/>
5. Food Access Resources. Alabama Public Health, May 25 2021.

