



Worksheet: The Cost of a Nutritious Food Basket Ottawa, 2011

The Nutritious Food Basket

In May 2011, the cost of a nutritious food basket was priced for Ottawa according to the protocol and the Nutritious Food Basket Guidance Document (2010) in the Ontario Public Health Standards.

- The Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) is a survey tool that is a measure of the cost of basic healthy eating for males and females of different age groups.
- The NFB is calculated from the costing of foods that are reflective of Canadian eating patterns and buying habits. It also represents current nutrition recommendations from *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*.
- Food staples such as flour, spreads and oils are included as well as costs for spices, seasonings and beverages. The basket does not include other necessities such as cleaning supplies, toothpaste or shampoo.

The NFB is an underestimation of the needs of people who require a special medical diet. Their food costs and nutritional needs are higher.

The cost of feeding babies under one year of age is not included in the NFB and would be an additional food cost for households.

The costs for meals purchased away from home would also need to be added to the basic food basket cost for households.

How this information can be used

- To determine the basic cost for an individual or household to eat healthy
- To compare the basic cost of healthy eating with income and other basic living expenses
- For program planning, to support and promote access to nutritious, safe, and personally acceptable foods
- To inform policy decisions

The Nutritious Food Basket Cost for a Family of Four

The NFB uses a reference family of four:

- 31-50 year old man
- 31-50 year old woman
- 14-18 year old boy
- 4-8 year old girl

In Ottawa, the Nutritious Food Basket for this family would cost:

\$759/month

Note: The Nutritious Food Basket Guidance Document was significantly changed in 2009. Therefore, the costs from 2009- 2011 cannot be compared to those from previous years.

How to Find the Cost of a Nutritious Food Basket for Your Household or Group

1. List the ages and sex of all the people in your household or group.

Example 1: A reference family of four



Man, 35 years old
 Woman, 34 years old
 Boy, 14 years old
 Girl, 8 years old

2. Find the monthly Food Basket cost for each person in Table A. Add these costs.

For the reference family:

Man, 35 years old \$212
 Woman, 34 years old \$179
 Boy, 14 years old \$242
 Girl, 8 years old \$126

Total Monthly Food Basket Cost \$759

The total monthly food basket cost for this reference family is **\$759**.

Table A: Monthly Food Basket Costs

Sex Groups	Age	Cost/Month
Boy	2 - 3	\$101
	4 - 8	\$130
	9 - 13	\$173
	14 - 18	\$242
Girl	2 - 3	\$99
	4 - 8	\$126
	9 - 13	\$148
	14 - 18	\$176
Male	19 - 30	\$234
	31 - 50	\$212
	51 - 70	\$205
	71+	\$202
Female	19 - 30	\$181
	31 - 50	\$179
	51 - 70	\$159
	71+	\$157
During Pregnancy	18 and younger	\$196
	19-30	\$198
	31-50	\$193
During Breastfeeding	18 and younger	\$205
	19-30	\$210
	31-50	\$205

3. Adjust the food basket cost depending on the size of the household. Due to economies of scale, it costs less per person to feed a larger group and more per person to feed a smaller group. For households or groups larger or smaller than four people multiply the total food basket cost by the adjustment factor listed in Table B.

No adjustment is needed because there are four people in the reference family.

Table B: Adjustment Factors

Household Size (# People)	Adjustment Factor (multiply by):
1	1.20
2	1.10
3	1.05
4	No adjustment
5-6	0.95
7 or more	0.90

Example 2: A five person household



Add the total food cost per person according to Table A and multiply by the adjustment factor:

Man, 38 years old \$212
 Woman, 38 years old \$179
 Boy, 12 years old \$173
 Girl, 9 years old \$148
 Girl 6 years old \$126

Total Monthly Food Basket Cost \$838

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 \text{\$838} & \times & \text{0.95} \\
 \text{Monthly Food} & & \text{Adjustment} \\
 \text{Basket Cost} & & \text{Factor} \\
 & & = \text{\$796} \\
 & & \text{Total Monthly Food} \\
 & & \text{Basket Cost}
 \end{array}$$

The total monthly food basket cost for this five person household is **\$796**.

Note: All dollars rounded to nearest whole number.