Food insecurity affects 1 in 5 kids in Allegheny County

Esther Bush

“Sometimes we forget about families that don’t meet the traditional definition of poverty. Some people decide whether they’re going to pay their house or buy groceries.”

Danielle Cullen, MD, MPH

Food insecurity is about more than not having enough food. Food insecurity is about more than not having enough food. Dr. Cullen says, “Some parents can afford or have easy access to are inexpensive, high-calorie foods that don’t have important nutrients. If you have a dollar to spend on food, you may choose to buy a large bag of noodles instead of an apple.”

Food insecurity can cause more costs, slower mental and physical development and more headaches and stomachaches. Some of these health issues can contribute to food insecurity. Insecurity can make it hard for children to pay attention in school and affect their mood and make having appropriate social interactions difficult.

Parents also have to decide whether their families are going to pay their house or buy groceries. The United States Department of Agriculture de- fined food deserts as “urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy and affordable food. Instead of supermarkets and grocery stores, these communities may be served only by fast food restaurants and convenience stores.”

Parents who decide whether they’re going to pay their house or buy groceries, are asked questions to help decide whether they can afford food. They are also asked about their food security. They may have to decide whether they’re going to pay for their house or buy groceries.

“When food insecurity is a little more than six million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables to the families we serve. Already, we distribute more than 110,000 people every month. Children will also

Health topics that may affect you, your family and friends and also connect you to local health initiatives and resources.

This month, the “Take Charge of Your Health Today” page focuses on food insecurity and the importance of good nutrition. The Greater Pittsburgh Community Foundation works with the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh and the UPMC Foundation to Engage and Involve In All Areas can be accessed online at the PA 2-1-1 website.}

Food insecurity and its effects are becoming more well-known. As a part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act passed in 2010, Pitts-burgh Public Schools offer free breakfasts and lunches to children regardless of family income. Dr. Cullen thinks this is a good step toward creating more food deserts. In addition, Dr. Cullen is working on ways to identify children and families who may struggle meeting nutritious foods they need. In a study funded by the National Cancer Institute, Dr. Cullen is working on ways to screen families coming into CHP’s emergency department. They look at numerous factors to help families find nutritious foods. They are also asked questions to assess their food security. In one month of the screening, they found that 1 in 5 households in the Allegheny County area had food insecurity.

Parents are also asked about their food security. They also want to keep the focus on families who may need extra food assistance this holiday season and the rest of the year. At Pittsburgh, Community Food Bank has distributed enough food to feed 1 in 5 households throughout Pittsburgh and the surrounding counties. You can enter your zip code to find information about food banks in your area. People can also find food banks and other resources by going to 2-1-1.org or by using a free mobile app.

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