

# FOOD INSECURITY

Among Older Adults and People with Physical Disabilities Using LTSS

## INTRODUCTION

Food insecurity is estimated to affect more than 114 million U.S. households in 2023, according to the USDA. About one in every 10 people aged 65 and older faced food insecurity. And food insecurity especially impacted households that include a person with a disability.

Food insecurity and malnutrition have particularly determinantal effects on older adults by exacerbating preexisting conditions, increasing risk of falls, leading to a greater likelihood of hospitalizations.

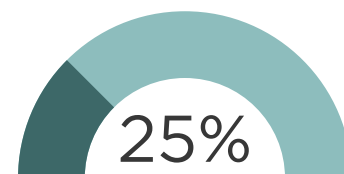
NCI-AD's analysis described in this handout refers to data from the 2023-24 Adult Consumer Survey (ACS). Analysis criteria include:

- Those living in a home or community-based setting
- Comparison groups are based on response to question "Do you ever have to skip a meal due to financial worries?"
  - Yes, often or sometimes (N= 2,091)
  - No (N= 13,634)
- Findings between groups are significant at .05



More than **1 in 10** respondents to the NCI-AD ACS sometimes or often had to skip meals due to financial worries. **Those under 60 were more likely than those 60 and older to skip meals** (17% v 11 %).

25% of older adults who skipped meals received home delivered meals.



Those who had to skip meals had **less access to healthy foods (53% vs 92%)**. Additionally, people who had to skip meals were more likely to have:

**Diabetes**

**43% vs 39%**

**History of Frequent Falls**

**42% vs 26%**

**Mental Health Diagnosis**

**49% vs 34%**

Those who reported having to skip a meal were more likely than those who did not to:

- Live alone
- Have moved in the past 6 months
- Live in ZIP codes with an **average annual income under \$30,000**.

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## HOME

**Those who reported having to skip meals were less happy with where they live.**

People in their own or a family home were more likely than those living in a group setting to report they had to skip meals.

Those who had to skip meals were ...

**Less likely to like where they live (84% vs 93%)**



**More likely to want to live somewhere else (47% vs 32%)**

**More likely to want to live in another neighborhood (31% vs 26%)**



**Less likely to report wanting to live independently (10% vs 12%)**

## RELATIONSHIPS & COMMUNITY

Those who reported having to skip meals reported **lower rates of close relationships** and **less access to their communities**.

People who had to skip meals were also **less likely to report ...**

- Having family or friends they do not live with who are involved in their life **(89% vs 94%)**
- Being able to see or talk to friends and family they do not live with when they want **(92% vs 96%)**
- Having transportation to get places they wanted to go **(59% vs 77%)**
- Participating in groups with others as much as they wanted (in-person or virtually) **(51% vs 66%)**
- Getting to do things in the community as much as they want **(47% vs 67%)**
- That they like how they spend their day **(48% vs 65%)**

People who reported that they had to skip meals were less likely to feel in control of their life (59% v 76%) and almost **twice as likely** as those who did not have to skip a meal **to report they often lonely** (36% v 17%)

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## HEALTH

Those who reported having to skip meals reported lower health care utilization. ***They were less likely to ...***

- Be able to see a PCP when needed (75% vs 86%)
- Have had an annual physical exam in the past year (80% vs 86%)
- Have had a vision screening in the past year (56% vs 61%)
- Have had a dental visit in the past year (41% vs 46%)

**People who skipped a meal were more likely to report being in poor health.**

**31%**  
**vs 17%**

**People who had to skip meals were more likely to use emergency services.**



***They were more likely to ...***

- Have had an emergency room visit in the past year (54% vs 44%)
- More went to the ER because they could not see a PCP when needed (16% vs 9%)
- Have been admitted to a hospital or rehab facility for an overnight stay in the past year (31% vs 29%)

## SERVICES & SUPPORTS

**Those who reported having to skip meals reported lower access to needed supports.**

Fewer reported having a case manager (88% v 91%). Additionally, those who had to skip meals were ...

***More likely*** to report their case manager changed too often (31% vs 28%)



***Less likely*** to report they could contact their case manager when needed (89% vs 94%)



***Less likely*** to report their case manager talked to them about services to help meet their needs and goals (51% vs 56%)

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## SERVICES & SUPPORTS

People who skipped meals were **more likely** to **need some or a lot of support** with everyday activities, but *less likely* to report they always have the support they need for everyday activities (66% vs 84%) or self-care (71% v 86%).

The top service needs among people who had to skip meals were ...



**32%**

Homemaker/  
chore services



**30%**

Transportation



**29%**

Personal care  
assistance



**24%**

Home-delivered  
meals



**20%**

Housing assistance

**54%**

*of those who had to skip meals reported the services and supports they receive meet all of their needs and goals. That's compared to **76%** of those who did not have to skip meals.*

**92%** of people who did not have to skip meals feel that supports and services help them live a better life, but ...

**79%**

*of those who had to skip meals reported they feel supports and services help them live a better life.*