



## Food Insecurity and Undernutrition

Let us begin with a few important concepts.

### Food insecurity

According to *L'Ordre professionnel des diététistes du Québec*, Food insecurity is the inability to acquire or consume an adequate diet when constant constraints on the choice of food affect the nutritional quality of an individual's diet.

### Undernutrition

According to *L'Ordre professionnel des diététistes du Québec*, Undernutrition is an insufficient intake of energy and nutrients to meet an individual's needs to maintain good health.

**Malnutrition** refers to deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients. Malnutrition occurs in people who are either undernourished or over nourished.

Food insecurity can lead to undernutrition as well as excessive weight and obesity.

We wish you a good companionship journey.

**Little Brothers**

### The concept of food security<sup>1</sup>

- When all people, at all times, have access to adequate quantities of safe and nutritious food
- When physical and economic access to safe and nutritious food at a reasonable cost is guaranteed;
- When access to simple, reliable and objective information enables people to make informed food choices;
- Food is obtained in ways that are socially acceptable and respectful of human dignity;
- Food production, distribution and consumption are based on social values that are fair and just



## Good practices

- Show empathy and respect when listening;
- Observe the person's environment discreetly to see if food is present;
- Approach the topic naturally, talk about what they had for supper, ask open-ended questions. For example, ask where they do their shopping, what is their favorite meal;
- Offer to help peel or cut vegetables, open cans and jars in advance;
- Offer to plan meals with the person;
- Prepare and/or have a meal together from time to time, if possible;
- Exchange positive memories related to recipes, seasons, and holidays;
- Verify if the person has dental care needs and notify your coordinator or professionals;
- Tell your companion about existing resources and offer your support to help them obtain necessary services, even temporarily.



## Attitudes to adopt



- Keep in mind that your presence and your trust are valuable aids for keeping the person informed about existing specialized resources.
- Share your observations before taking measures. You are not alone: your coordinator or specialized staff will inform you about resources available in your area so that you may provide appropriate information to your companion.
- At all times, respect the dignity of the elder as well as your own limits.



## Things to avoid

- Judging the person or the situation;
- Blaming or confronting the person;
- Imposing certain foods;
- Acting as a nutritionist.

## Additional resources

### Telephone

Food resources by region: 2-1-1  
Open 7 days a week, from 8am to 6pm

L'appui : 1- 855 852-7784  
or <https://www.lappui.org/en/>

### Online

Regroupement popotes roulantes,  
<https://popotes.org/> (in French only)

Banques alimentaires du Québec,  
<https://banquesalimentaires.org/>  
(in French only)

Quebec Collective Kitchens Association,  
<https://www.rccq.org/en>

Aide chez soi.com,  
<https://aidechezsoi.com/en>

1 CIUSSS de la Capitale-Nationale,  
*Qu'est-ce que la sécurité alimentaire*,  
<https://bit.ly/concept-securite-alimentaire>