

## Let's Be Real: The Cost of a Healthy Diet

How hard is it to eat healthy? For some, it is nearly impossible. Access – whether financial or physical – to healthy foods is an immense hurdle for low-income families.

Food stamp recipients in Pennsylvania receive an average 89 cent per person per meal. A budget that tight requires the purchase of low-cost foods. Those foods tend to be low in nutrients and high in calories.

Limited resource populations tend to dwell in urban centers and rural areas. In our cities, large-scale supermarkets have abandoned many lower-income communities for more affluent areas, leaving residents to depend on corner stores, convenience stores and fast food restaurants for their meals. In rural areas, where the grocery store may be 30 miles away, convenience stores and fast food restaurants may be the nearest source of food.

Below are tables comparing similar foods to each other in price and location. In each table, the foods are arranged from lowest nutrient density to highest nutrient density.

### Breakfast Cereal

	Grocery Store	Convenience Store	% Difference
Fruity Dyno-Bytes/ Fruity Pebbles	\$1.64/lb	\$5.23/lb	319%
Raisin Bran	\$2.38/lb	\$5.99/lb	252%
Fiber One	\$3.51/lb	N/A	
<b>% Difference from Highest to Lowest Nutrient Density</b>	214%	114%	

### Soda vs. Juice

	Grocery Store	Convenience Store	% Difference
Soda	34.7¢/pint	70¢/pint	202%
Twister (10% juice)	55.6¢/pint	\$1.06/pint	191%
100% Juice (brand)	78.2¢/pint	\$1.49/pint	191%
<b>% Difference from Highest to Lowest Nutrient Density</b>	225%	213%	

### Cheese

	Grocery Store	Convenience Store
Velveeta	\$2.83/lb	N/A
Generic	\$4.18/lb	N/A
Name Brand	\$4.58-4.96/lb	N/A
<b>% Difference from Highest to Lowest Nutrient Density</b>	162 – 175%	N/A

Let's be real. Whether in a grocery store or a convenience store, foods with more nutrients are consistently higher in price. If a family must depend on convenience stores for food staples, cost is further compounded. Low income families struggle to put food on the table; putting healthy food on the table is immensely more difficult. As stated by the editors of *Lancet* in the January 2004 issue: "As long as a meal of grilled chicken, broccoli and fresh fruit costs more than a burger and fries—then the battle against obesity is lost."