

# What is the cost of a healthy food basket in the Republic of Ireland in 2016?

## Low-income households:

Eat less well



Higher level of diet-related disease



## Research to find out the cost of a food basket that is:

Realistic and acceptable

Nutritionally adequate

| Household type   | Total basket cost <sup>1</sup>  | % of take home income                      |   |
|--|---------------------------------|--|---|
| <p><b>Two-parent Two-child</b><br/>Pre-school and primary school</p> | <p><b>€133</b><br/>Per week</p> | <p>30%<br/>Dependent on State Benefits</p> | <p>23%<br/>One adult employed (earning the National Minimum Wage)</p> |
| <p><b>Two-parent Two-child</b><br/>Primary and secondary school</p>  | <p><b>€160</b><br/>Per week</p> | <p>36%<br/>Dependent on State Benefits</p> | <p>28%<br/>One adult employed (earning the National Minimum Wage)</p> |
| <p><b>One-parent Two-child</b><br/>Pre-school and primary school</p> | <p><b>€101</b><br/>Per week</p> | <p>31%<br/>Dependent on State Benefits</p> | <p>16%<br/>Adult employed (earning the National Minimum Wage)</p>     |
| <p><b>Single adult</b></p>   | <p><b>€55</b><br/>Per week</p>  | <p>29%<br/>Dependent on State Benefits</p> | <p>17%<br/>Adult employed (earning the National Minimum Wage)</p>     |
| <p><b>Female pensioner living alone</b></p>                          | <p><b>€64</b><br/>Per week</p>  | <p>26%<br/>Dependent on State Pension</p>  |   |
| <p><b>Pensioner couple</b></p>                                       | <p><b>€86</b><br/>Per week</p>  | <p>21%<br/>Dependent on State Pension</p>  |   |

<sup>1</sup>Costs were determined for both rural and urban households. The costs presented here are the costs for the household that needed to spend the most. Full details are available at [www.safefood.eu](http://www.safefood.eu)

# Cost of healthy food basket



## Objectives

To estimate the cost of a minimum essential food basket and to present the cost as a proportion of take-home income for six household types in the Republic of Ireland.

## Methodology

The 2014 basket costs were updated for 2016 by applying the Republic of Ireland Consumer Price Index (CPI). Focus groups for each household type determine the contents of the food basket. The food basket is part of a minimum essential standard of living and identifies a food basket that everyone should be able to afford.

## Results

| Household type  | Total basket cost |       | Income scenarios                               | Proportion of take home income |       |
|---|-------------------|-------|--|--------------------------------|-------|
|   | Urban             | Rural |  | Urban                          | Rural |
| <b>Two-parent, Two-child</b><br>(Pre-school and primary school) | €121              | €133  | Social welfare                                 | 28%                            | 30%   |
|   |                   |       | Minimum wage                                   | 21%                            | 23%   |
| <b>Two-parent, Two-child</b><br>(Primary and secondary school)  | €146              | €160  | Social welfare                                 | 34%                            | 36%   |
|   |                   |       | Minimum wage                                   | 25%                            | 28%   |
| <b>One-parent, Two-child</b><br>(Pre-school and primary school) | €93               | €101  | Social welfare                                 | 29%                            | 31%   |
|   |                   |       | Minimum wage                                   | 15%                            | 16%   |
| <b>Single adult</b>   | €55               | €51   | Social welfare                                 | 29%                            | 27%   |
|   |                   |       | Minimum wage                                   | 17%                            | 15%   |
| <b>Female pensioner living alone</b>                            | €61               | €64   | Contributory pension                           | 23%                            | 25%   |
|   |                   |       | Non-contributory pension                       | 24%                            | 26%   |
| <b>Pensioner Couple</b>   | €80               | €86   | Contributory pension, qualified adult payment  | 20%                            | 21%   |
|   |                   |       | Non-contributory pension, contributory pension | 17%                            | 18%   |
|   |                   |       | Both non-contributory pension                  | 17%                            | 19%   |

## Key conclusions

- Low income households need to spend between 15% and 36% of their take-home income to buy a healthy minimum essential food basket.
- The cost of the food basket depends on household composition. Food costs rise as children grow older, food is a significant cost for households with an adolescent. The cost of feeding a teenager was almost double the cost of feeding a pre-school child.
- The cost of the food basket fell slightly between 2014 and 2016.
- This research highlights the challenges when trying to balance buying a healthy food basket with other weekly household expenses.
- Meat, fruit and vegetables take up the largest share of the food basket.
- Spending on restaurants, cafes, fast food, takeaways and visitors are an important part of the food basket highlighting the social and cultural aspects of food. It ensures that households can participate in activities that are considered to be part of everyday life.
- Households receiving state benefits spend a larger percentage of take home income on the food basket compared to households with an employed adult.



To download a copy of the full report and infographic visit [www.safefood.eu](http://www.safefood.eu)