Food Insecurity Screening Algorithm for Pediatric Patients

Preface Questions with:

"I ask all of my patients about access to food. I want to make sure that you know the community resources that are available to you. Many of these resources are free of charge."

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POLICY RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Screening for Food Insecurity Using the Hunger Vital Sign*™

Screening Parents or Caregivers of Young Children (0-11 yrs)

"For each statement, please tell me whether the statement was Often True, Sometimes True, or Never True for your household in the past 12 months."

"Por cada una de las siguientes declaraciones, por favor indique si la declaracion se aplica a su familia frecuentemente, a veces o nunca durante los últimos 12 meses."
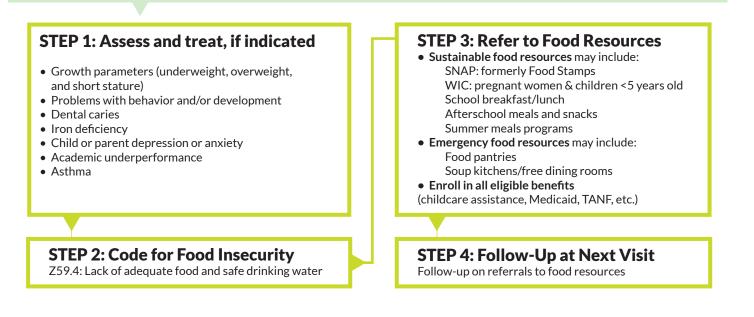
1. *"We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more."*
   "Estábamos preocupados de que los alimentos se acabaran antes de que tuviéramos suficiente dinero para comprar más."

2. *"The food we bought just did not last, and we did not have money to get more."*
   "Los alimentos que compramos no duraron mucho, y no teníamos suficiente dinero para comprar más."

Screening Adolescents (>11 yrs)* *(If possible, assess with confidential questions)*

"For each statement, please tell me whether the statement was Often True, Sometimes True, or Never True based on your experiences in the past 12 months."

"Por cada una de las siguientes declaraciones, por favor indique si la declaracion se aplica a su familia frecuentemente, a veces o nunca durante los últimos 12 meses."

1. *"I worried about not having enough to eat."*
   "Me preocupé sobre no tener suficiente que comer."

2. *"I tried not to eat a lot so that our food would last."*
   "Traté de no comer mucho para que nuestra comida dure."

If Often True or Sometimes True to EITHER STATEMENT

STEP 1: Assess and treat, if indicated

- Growth parameters (underweight, overweight, and short stature)
- Problems with behavior and/or development
- Dental caries
- Iron deficiency
- Child or parent depression or anxiety
- Academic underperformance
- Asthma

STEP 3: Refer to Food Resources

- **Sustainable food resources** may include:
  - SNAP: formerly Food Stamps
  - WIC: pregnant women & children <5 years old
  - School breakfast/lunch
  - Afterschool meals and snacks
  - Summer meals programs
- **Emergency food resources** may include:
  - Food pantries
  - Soup kitchens/free dining rooms
- **Enroll in all eligible benefits** (childcare assistance, Medicaid, TANF, etc.)

STEP 2: Code for Food Insecurity

Z59.4: Lack of adequate food and safe drinking water

STEP 4: Follow-Up at Next Visit

Follow-up on referrals to food resources

Food Resource Referrals

Refer to a social worker for ongoing support, call a food assistance number below during the visit, or develop an outreach partnership with a hunger relief organization to connect patients with eligible food resources. Providing patients with phone numbers or websites and not facilitating the community connections is much less successful.

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Refer to Federal Nutrition Programs – Call the **National Hunger Hotline at 1-866-348-6479**

Federal Nutrition Programs	Description	Local Contact Information
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)+	Money to purchase food. The average benefit is about $127 per month per person. www.fns.usda.gov/snap	
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program+	Money to purchase pre-specified foods for pregnant/post-partum women, infants, and children under the age of 5. Nutrition education and breastfeeding support also provided. www.fns.usda.gov/wic	
School Meals Programs for Children	Free or reduced price healthy meals for income-eligible students of all ages. www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/school-meals-contacts	
Summer Meals Programs for Children	Free healthy meals for students ages 18 and under over the summer months. www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp	

+Eligibility calculators are available online

If ineligible for Federal Nutrition Programs and/or emergency food is needed – Call **211**

Local Food Resources	Local Contact Information
Food Bank www.feedingamerica.org	
Farmers Markets	

For information regarding formation of outreach partnerships with hunger organizations, please visit:
http://nopren.org/resource/clinic-to-community-treatment-models/
For the American Academy of Pediatrics' toolkit on identifying and addressing childhood food insecurity, please visit:
http://www.frac.org/aaptoolkit