



# Food Insecurity: What the Nurse Needs to Know Related to Caring for Patients and Food Insecurity

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Upon completion of the educational activity, participants will be able to:

1. Identify what food insecurity is and how it impacts national and global healthcare
2. Describe how food insecurity impacts a patient's health
3. Explain the nurses' role related to patient care and food insecurity

# POLL

Did you learn about food insecurity as it relates to patients when you were in nursing school or transitioning into practice?

- Yes
- No
- Not really-just overarching concepts, but not food insecurity specifically

# What is Food Insecurity?

Individuals who lack regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life



Unavailability of food



Lack of resources to obtain food

# Background and Significance of the Problem

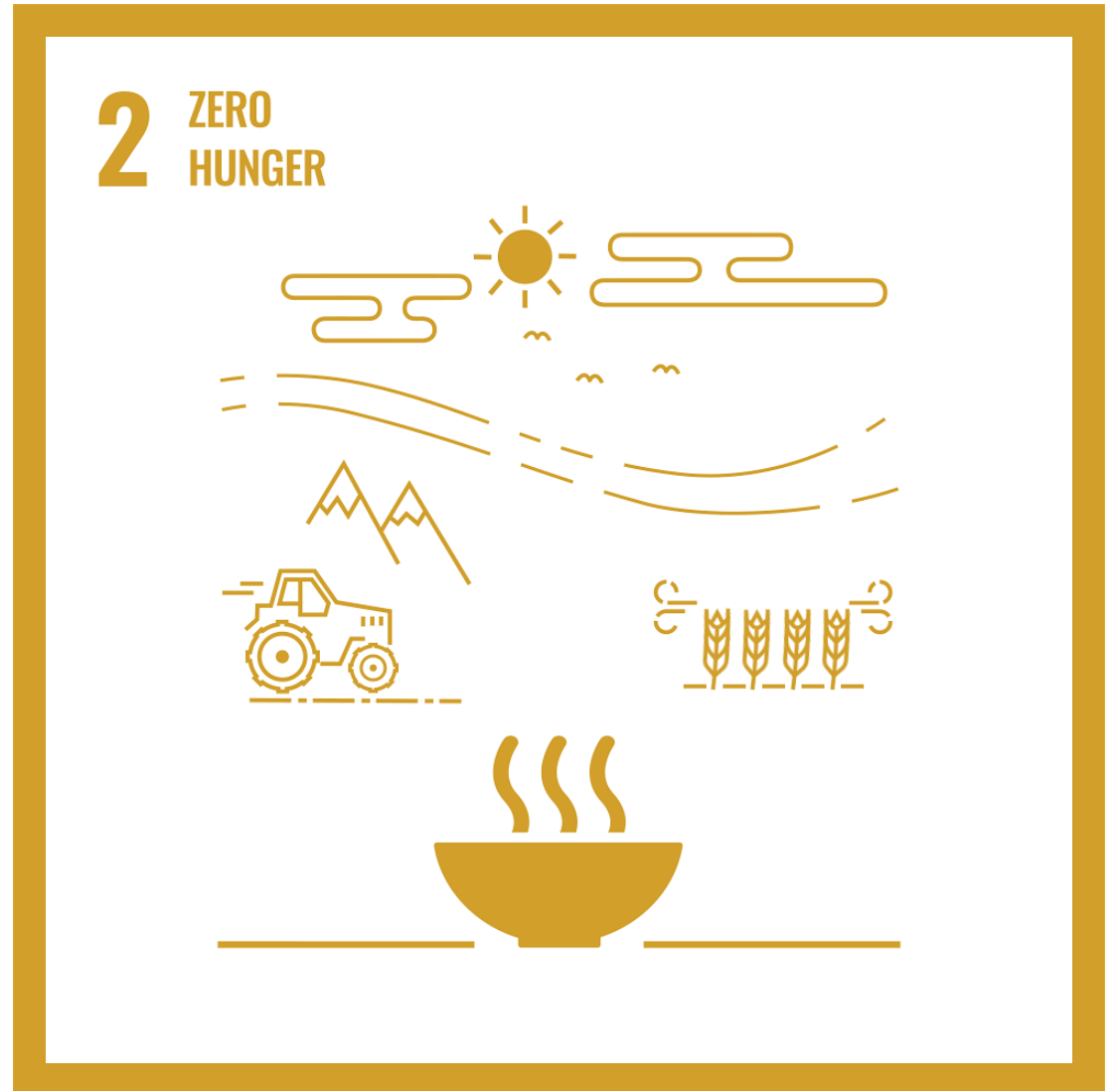
- Food insecurity has been identified as potentially the most impactful social determinants of health (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019).
- The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 2 is to End hunger, Achieve food security, and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
- Currently in the biggest global food crisis since World War II (United Nations, 2022).

# Social Determinants of Health



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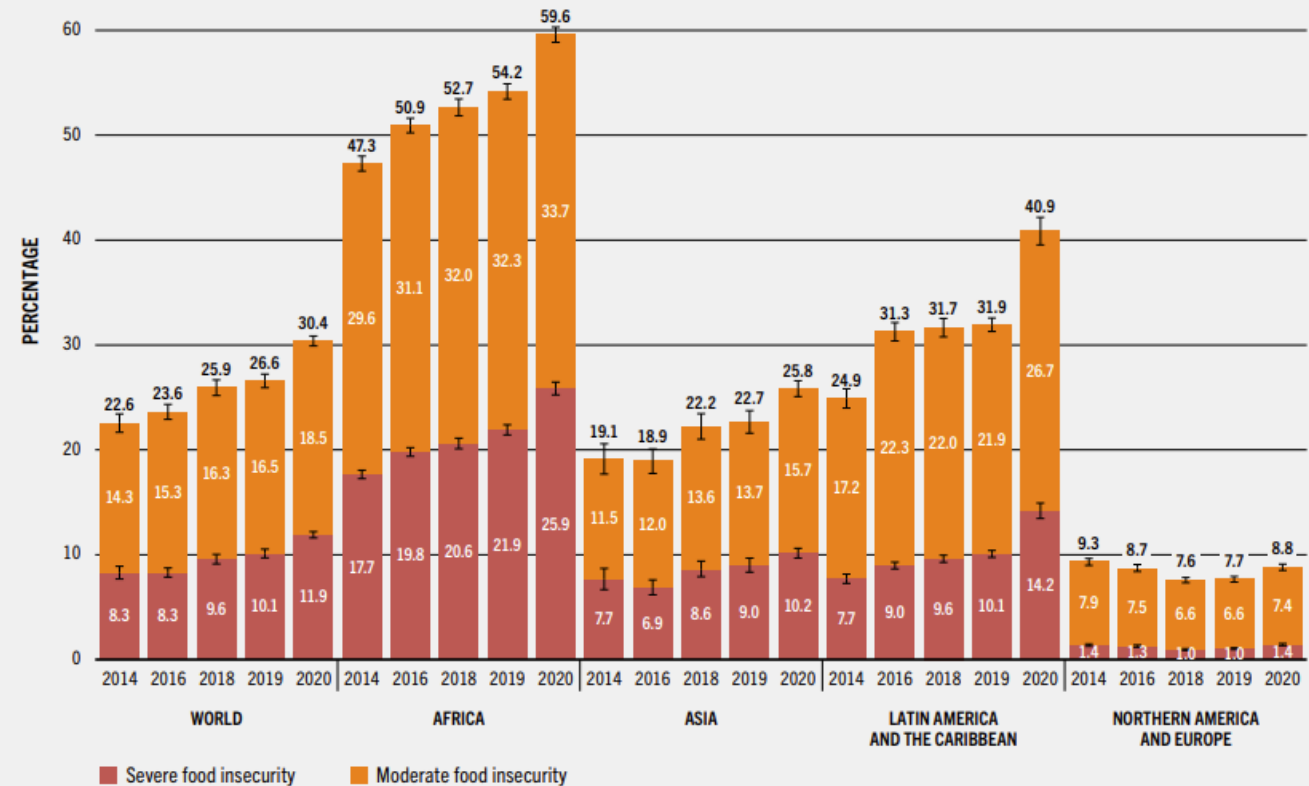
 Healthy People 2030



# Global Stats

- Between 702 an 828 million people in the world faced hunger in 2021
- Approx. 149 million children under age five suffer from growth stunting

**FIGURE 4** MODERATE OR SEVERE FOOD INSECURITY HAS BEEN CLIMBING SLOWLY FOR SIX YEARS AND NOW AFFECTS MORE THAN 30 PERCENT OF THE WORLD POPULATION



NOTE: Differences in totals are due to rounding of figures to the nearest decimal point.  
SOURCE: FAO.



# Stats

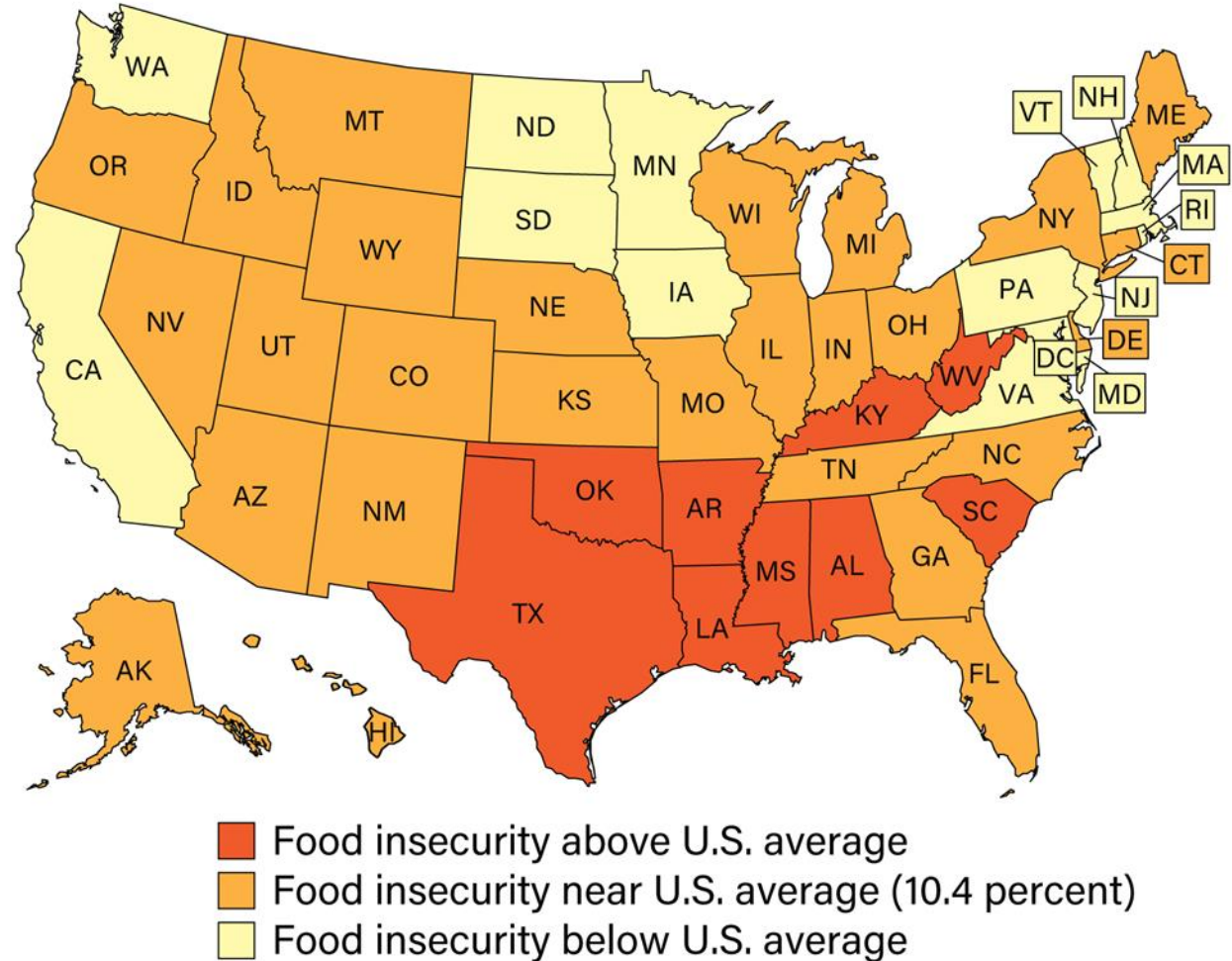
## North America:

- 114 million people moderate or severe food insecurity in 2020

## United States:

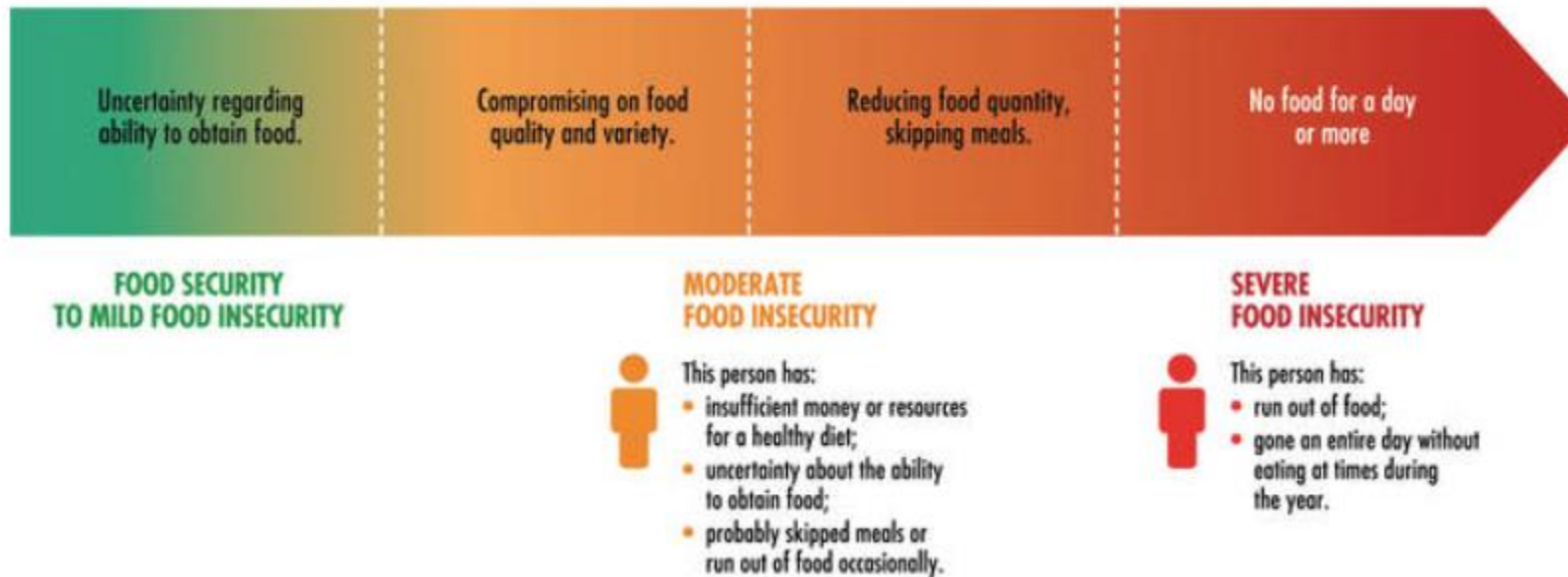
- 33.8 million people lived in food-insecure households

### Prevalence of food insecurity, average 2019-21



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2019, 2020, and 2021 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

## FOOD INSECURITY BASED ON THE FIES: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

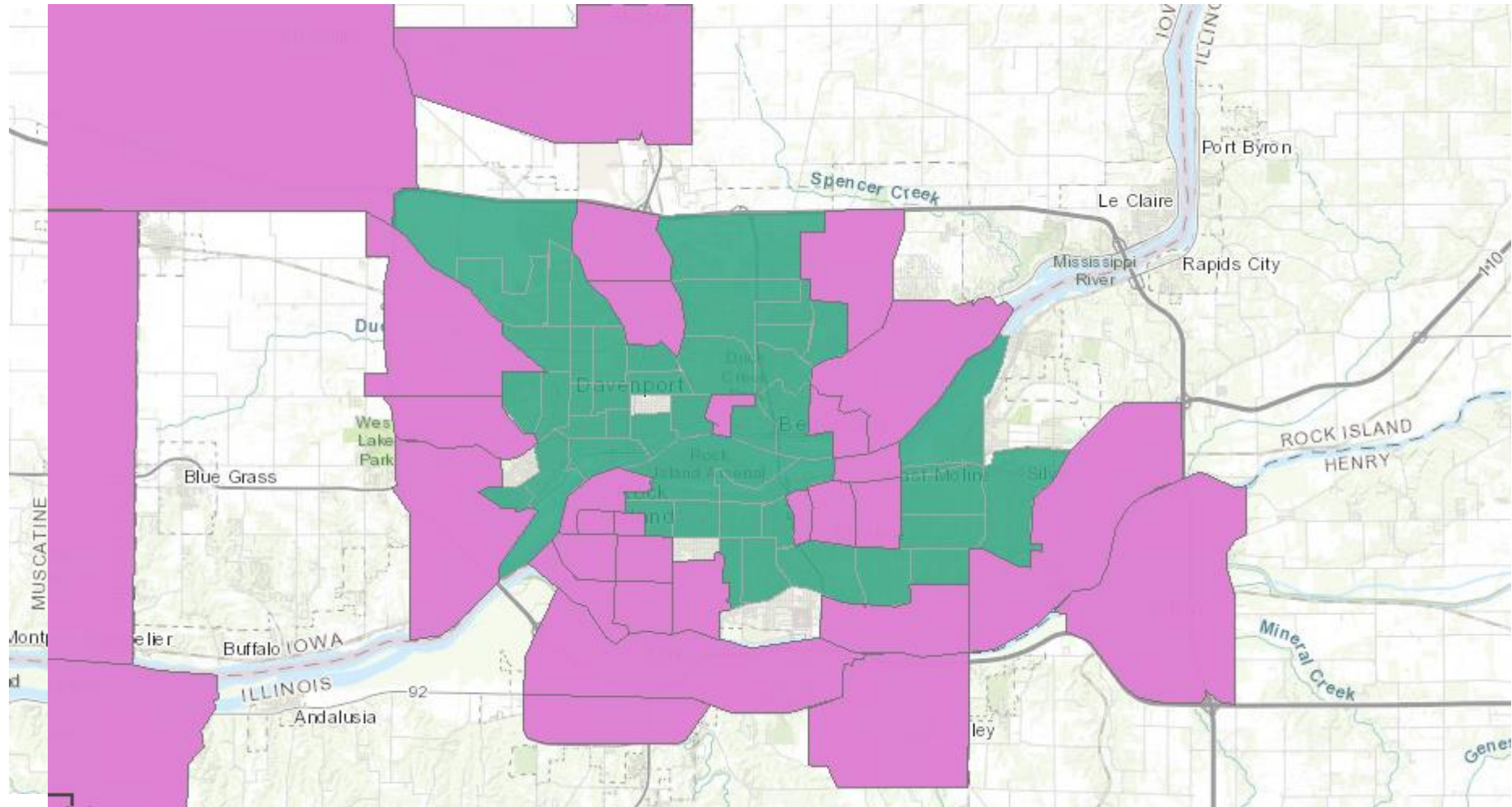


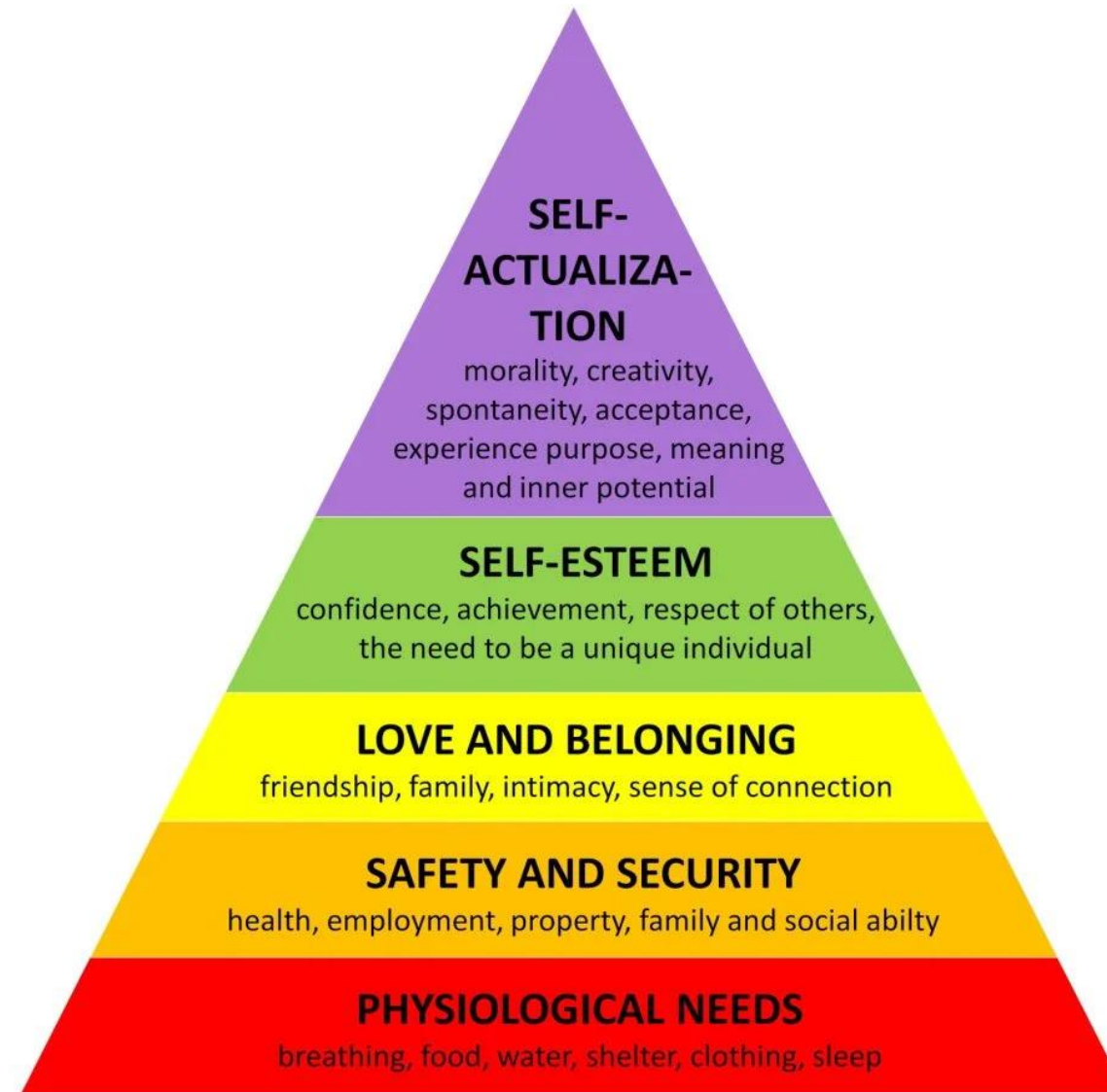
# Strong predictor of many chronic conditions:



- Cardiovascular disease
- HTN
- Hepatitis
- Diabetes

# Food Deserts



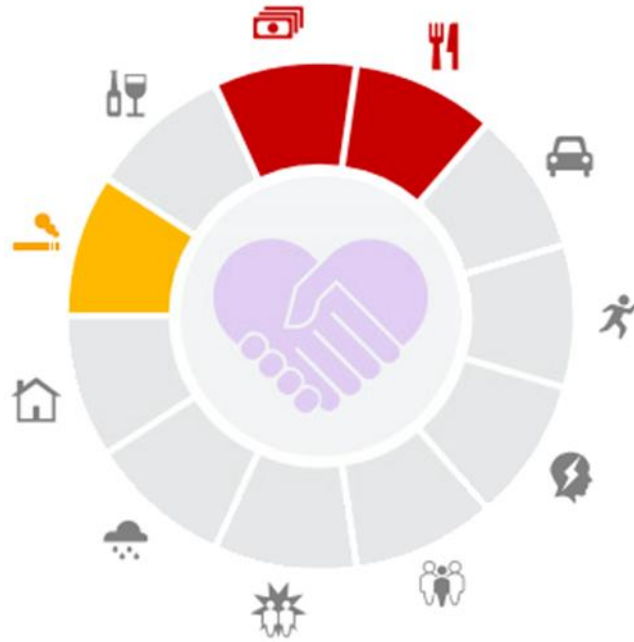


# Nurse Role

- Screening tools
- Appropriate communication to providers
- Referrals for follow-up



## ♥ Social Determinants of Health



### Financial Resource Strain

How hard is it for you to pay for the very basics like food, housing, medical care, and heating?

☒ Very hard

☐ Hard

☐ Somewhat hard

☐ Not very hard

☐ Not hard at all

☐ Patient refused

[Create Note](#)

### Food Insecurity

Within the past 12 months, you worried that your food would run out before you got the money to buy more.

☒ Never true

☐ Sometimes true

☐ Often true

☐ Patient refused

Within the past 12 months, the food you bought just didn't last and you didn't have money to get more.

☐ Never true

☐ Sometimes true

☐ Often true

☐ Patient refused

[Create Note](#)

**During the last 12 months, was there a time when, because of lack of money or other resources:**

1. You were worried you would not have enough food to eat?
2. You were unable to eat healthy and nutritious food?
3. You ate only a few kinds of foods?
4. You had to skip a meal?
5. You ate less than you thought you should?
6. Your household ran out of food?
7. You were hungry but did not eat?
8. You went without eating for a whole day?

# Nurse Role

- Screening tools
- Appropriate communication to providers
- Referrals for follow-up



- ☐ **ASSIST** patient in applying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (i.e. SNAP, formerly Food Stamps, WIC) and other assistance programs
- ☐ **REFER** to federal nutrition assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (i.e. SNAP, formerly Food Stamps, WIC) and other assistance programs
- ☐ **REFER** to a Social Worker
- ☐ **REFER** to a Registered Dietitian or nutritionist
- ☐ **REFER** to a community-based organization (i.e. Multiservice Center)
- ☐ **REFER** to an emergency food resource, such as a food bank or food pantry
- ☐ **PROVIDE** a brochure on available food and nutrition resources
- ☐ **PROVIDE** a food box or food bag
- ☐ **DISCUSS** with caregiver or family member of patient
- ☐ **SCHEDULE** follow-up visit or phone call

# Barriers

- Lack of resources
- No formal screening built into EMR
- Lack of confidence in asking financial questions

# Post-Content Quiz

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2021-2023

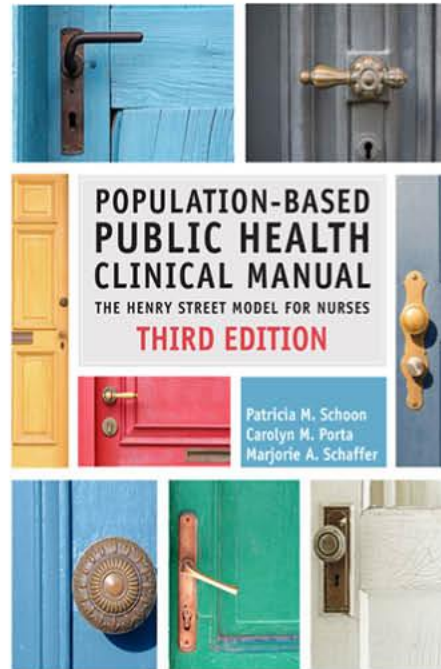
organizational  
call to action

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