

FOOD IS MEDICINE TOOLKIT

Children's Health Watch: Very Low Food Security (VLFS) Screening

The 1-item screener was developed to identify patients experiencing the most severe form of inadequate food access, or very low food insecurity, which is defined by reducing food intake and skipping meals due to costs.

1. In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

Response: Yes/No

If "Yes", then the patient is experiencing very low food insecurity.

Measurement and Scoring Considerations

- If the patient responds "Yes" then the patient is experiencing *very low food insecurity*. This is an urgent situation and this patient should be prioritized for a comprehensive FIM program and other wrap-around services.
- The benefit of this 1-item screener is that it can be used in combination with the 2-item Hunger Vital Sign to identify three different patient groups with different risk levels:
 - a. Food secure: responds "never" and "no" to all three questions and has no concerns with food access
 - b. Food-insecure with low food insecurity: responds "sometimes or often true" to at least one of the Hunger Vital Sign questions but "no" to the 1-item VLFS screener. This household struggles to access foods but does not have to reduce their food intake, although they likely are shifting to consuming cheaper, unhealthy foods due to costs.
 - c. Food-insecure with very low food insecurity: responds "sometimes or often true" and "yes" to all three questions and is reducing their food intake or skipping meals due to costs.