

## People on low incomes are always eating takeaways

Having enough food to eat is probably the most basic human need, but it is not as simple as we think. It means having access to a healthy diet. Could this be why "people on low incomes are always eating takeaways." **We as humans are too quick to judge a situation. We are unable to see the truth about poverty.**

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"At least 4% of New Zealand households nationally, and up to one third of households in the lowest income areas, do not have access to the variety of foods they need for a healthy life"(1) **A healthy diet means getting the correct balance of foods. If we do not get the balance we need or enough food we become malnourished. In addition we may also suffer stress and social isolation.** These will have a major effect on our future.

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The main reason for not being able to have the right food to eat is due to lack of income. In the late **1980's unemployment rose dramatically and from 1991 onwards the government created changes to the incomes and costs for those on benefits. The government decided to bring in new restrictions for those on benefits, raised state house rents to market levels from 25% of income and enforced benefits cuts of up to 24%. As well as the above, the government also introduced new charges for government services that had previously been free. This could include public transport which many families on low income would use.** It seems the government wasn't looking at the closer picture. Many individuals could blame the government for their food problems as they are unable to earn a decent income in which to afford a healthy balanced diet.

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Being **deprived of a healthy balanced diet is a lifestyle choice for some but for others it is a choice forced upon them from not being able to constantly supply a healthy diet and have enough money to source food for tomorrow.**

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Many people on low incomes **stress about whether or not they will be able to supply a meal tomorrow and so they "manage their resources efficiently to get the most food energy at the lowest cost, but this does not provide a healthy diet."**(1) **Foods that are primarily fat satisfy and fill people up fast, and generally are cheaper.** Due to this families choose cheaper forms of takeaways which are mainly fat and carbohydrates which isn't the healthiest choice but it keeps them satisfied and in budget. It was noticed that **low income families and groups had the highest total number of occasions where ready-to-eat foods were used in a month. "The fish-n-chip stores had the highest number of occasions and work place cafes had the lowest number of occasions"** (3). This is because more fast food shops are located in poorer suburbs...

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It is easy for us to ask "why don't they just get a job" but the truth is it is not that simple. Most jobs today require **qualifications and experience which don't always match those of the unemployed. Generally the jobs available that don't need qualifications have a low income.** **Due to the lack of qualifications and lack of income available from jobs, the poor struggle to find jobs.**

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If people on low incomes have a job, it is normally **shift work where the timings aren't always suitable. "Shift work also encroached on food preparation time, meaning takeaway meals were the default choice for evening meals."** (5) **Some people resort to eating takeaways because it suits their timetable much better. In addition some families are inclined to takeaways because they are able to have family time and sit and eat together.**

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People on low incomes realise that it is more important to have enough food to eat rather than a healthy diet.