

# El Dorado County

## Sustainable Diets

### Local solutions for a healthier community

Every day provides a new opportunity to make healthful dietary choices.

A diet rich in fresh **vegetables** and **fruits** can help our environment and the health of our community. Producing food locally reduces the distance food has to travel from producer to consumer, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants associated with our food system. A well-rounded diet can help prevent obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, some cancers and hunger - real community health issues in El Dorado County.



### In El Dorado County:

- 43% of adults are overweight or obese (1).
- Almost 9% of adults are considered to have heart disease (2).
- 19% of children are considered to be food insecure -lacking reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food (3).
- 45% of food insecure children are likely ineligible for assistance (4).



### Take Action:

- Shop locally and with the seasons at farmers markets.
- Eat more vegetables and fruit, and try plant-based protein sources.
- Take cooking classes and learn how to cook healthy meals.
- Check your pantry and refrigerator before shopping, make a shopping list and buy only what you need.
- Compost at home and enrich your garden while reducing food waste sent to landfills.
- Join local groups and efforts that promote fresh, locally grown vegetables and fruits in schools and other public spaces.
- Donate extra food to food banks.

### *What is a sustainable diet?*

Sustainable diets are defined as diets with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations. Sustainable diets are protective and respectful of biodiversity and ecosystems, culturally acceptable, accessible, economically fair and affordable; nutritionally adequate, safe and healthy; while optimizing natural and human resources. (5)

# Benefits of Sustainable Diets are Widespread



The food system contributes about 30 percent of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, with the largest proportion coming from animal-based food (6). A diet rich in vegetables and fruits requires much less water and energy to produce and creates less carbon dioxide in the process (5).

Studies suggest that participants in community gardens and nearby residents of neighborhoods with community gardens see them as enhancing neighborhood safety and beauty (7).



Each dollar we spend at local independent businesses, returns almost 50 times more money to our local economy than one spent at an online mega-retailer (8).

The U.S. spends \$3 trillion on health care every year - much of it expended on diseases associated with poor diets (6). Eating vegetables and fruits lowers the risk of developing many chronic diseases and can also help with weight management (9).



Up to forty percent of food in the United States is never eaten, amounting to \$165 billion a year in waste (10). Food and organic waste are valuable recyclable resources that can be turned into fertile organic soil additives through composting (10).

## Resources

- Data about the health of El Dorado County communities can be found at [www.welldorado.org](http://www.welldorado.org).
- Information on local Farmers Markets can be found at <http://www.eldoradofarmersmarket.com/>.
- Information on El Dorado County Food Bank can be found at <http://foodbankedc.org/>.
- Information and resources on air quality can be found at <https://www.edcgov.us/Government/AirQualityManagement>.
- Information and resources on Environmental Health programs can be found at <https://www.edcgov.us/Government/EMD/EnvironmentalHealth>.
- Information and resources on home composting can be found at: [https://www.edcgov.us/Government/emd/solidwaste/pages/home\\_composting.aspx](https://www.edcgov.us/Government/emd/solidwaste/pages/home_composting.aspx)
- Information and resources on mandatory commercial organics recycling can be found at: [https://www.edcgov.us/Government/emd/solidwaste/pages/mandatory\\_commercial\\_organics\\_recycling.aspx](https://www.edcgov.us/Government/emd/solidwaste/pages/mandatory_commercial_organics_recycling.aspx)

### References

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