

Methodology:

Results are based on an online survey conducted from April 24 to April 26, 2026, among 801 adults in British Columbia. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region in British Columbia. The margin of error—which measures sample variability—is +/- 3.5 percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty.

Over the past couple of months, have you or someone in your household done any of the following?

Switched packaged food brands to lower priced (generic) alternatives – 37%
Changed your diet to avoid products that have become more expensive – 35%
Cut back on lunches for yourself – 22%
Cut back on medications – 12%
Cut back on lunches for children – 4%
None of these – 40%

Food Security Challenges Affecting Most British Columbians

Almost a third of the province's residents are "more stressed" about having enough money to make it to the end of the month.

Vancouver, BC [May 21, 2026] – Significant proportions of British Columbians are changing their shopping and dietary habits on account of rising food prices, a new Research Co. poll conducted in partnership with [United Way BC](#) has found.

In the online survey of a representative provincial sample, more than a third of British Columbians say they have switched packaged food brands to lower priced (generic) alternatives (37%) or changed their diet to avoid products that have become more expensive (35%).

More than one-in-five of the province's residents (21%) have cut back on lunches for themselves, while fewer have cut back on medications (12%) or cut back on lunches for children (4%).

"Just over two-in-five British Columbians aged 18-to-34 (41%) acknowledge modifying their diet because specific products have become unaffordable," says Mario Canseco, President of Research Co. "The proportion is also noteworthy among British Columbians aged 35-to-54 (36%) and aged 55 and over (28%)."

On a separate question, just under one-in-four British Columbians (23%) say themselves or other household members had to reduce the size of their meals over the past couple of months because of affordability.

While fewer of the province's residents experienced other issues over the past couple of months, the proportions are noteworthy.

Just under one-in-five British Columbians (18%) report themselves or other household members being unable to afford to eat nutritious meals, and around one-in-seven had to skip meals altogether because of affordability (15%), say that the food that they purchased did not last and they were unable to purchase more (also 15%), or had to access food or meals, at no cost, from a community organization (such as a food bank) (13%).

In addition, three-in-ten British Columbians (30%) say they personally ate less than they felt they should because there wasn't enough money to buy food, while just under one-in-five (18%) say they personally were hungry but didn't eat because they couldn't afford enough food.



More than one-in-five British Columbians who have a senior family member, coworker or friend in the province recall the senior expressing concern about paying for non-essential but important expenses like holiday gifts for others, coffee, or social activities (26%) or the senior expressing concern about paying for everyday living expenses like rent/mortgage, gas for their car, or utilities (also 26%).

Fewer of these respondents recall the senior communicating that they were feeling lonely or isolated (24%), the senior having to reduce the size of their meals, or skip meals, because of affordability (15%) or the senior not being able to afford to eat nutritious meals (12%).

Almost a third of British Columbians (31%) are more stressed now than two years ago about having enough money to make it to the end of the month.

The levels of increased stress are similar among the province's residents on three other issues: paying their rent or mortgage (29%), feeding themselves and their families (27%) and having enough time to take care of themselves and their families (also 27%).

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About Research Co.

Simply put, we are curious about what people think and the decisions they will make. Some call it public opinion, others call it polling or public affairs. We never compromise facts for profit. Our agenda is the truth.

We have a global network of partners in the qualitative, data collection and data visualization specialities.

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Media contact:

Mario Canseco, President, Research Co.
[c] 778.929.0490
[e] mario.canseco@researchco.ca

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mario.canseco@researchco.ca



mario_canseco



778.929.0490



Mario Canseco



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mario.canseco
@researchco.ca



mario_canseco



778.929.0490



Mario Canseco