

Health Case Scenario: Allison

Allison, a University student, has a packed schedule with school and work, but also finds time for extracurricular activities. She works at a community food pantry every weekend where she helps package food baskets for those in need. Allison is interested in becoming an ultrasound technician and shadows staff at the local hospital for three hours each week. She loves her volunteer position and knows that she needs to focus on academics to pursue a career in the health care field; as a result, she tries to attend all classes and complete her homework. Allison spends her spare time socializing with friends.

Allison's home life is chaotic. Her aunt and two cousins experienced financial hardship. Six months ago, they moved into Allison's family's apartment. Because of this, Allison and her sister share a bedroom with their younger cousins. Without a quiet space to do homework, studying has become challenging and Allison's grades are beginning to slip. The school library is open only during school hours and the city library closes in the evenings. Allison's schedule only allows access to a computer during her lunch period. Although she is an appropriate weight for her height, Allison has always been concerned about her figure and is constantly dieting. For this reason, she doesn't mind skipping meals and tries to finish her homework during her lunch period. Allison's mother cooks meals for the entire family every evening. To stretch the family's food budget, ingredients for dinner are limited and tend to be high in fat, sodium, and sugar, and low in protein, fruits, and vegetables. Between school and extracurricular activities, Allison typically doesn't arrive home in time to eat with her family. There is an abundance of fast food restaurants near school and in her neighbourhood, though, so grabbing dinner on the go is easy. If she is still hungry before bed, her mother always saves a plate of food for her.

Allison's mom wishes she were home more often. Not only does she miss her during family dinners, but she worries about Allison coming home so late. Cutbacks in the city budget have led to fewer operating buses, especially at night. Allison waits at the bus stop across town for undetermined amounts of time. She then walks six blocks home, mostly in the dark, as there are few functioning streetlights in her neighbourhood. There have been purse snatchings and a spike in gang activity, so when Alison walks home alone, it makes her mom nervous. City budget cutbacks have also led to a reduction in the police force and neighbourhood patrols if Allison encounters problems.