

Lack of stores linked to early deaths

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A Chicago study says city residents living near fast-food restaurants and few grocery stores are more likely to die prematurely.

The study commissioned by LaSalle Bank also said these residents face greater risks of dying from diabetes, cancer or heart disease, reports the Chicago Sun-Times.

The study said the residents of such "food deserts" also are more likely to be obese and suffer from hypertension.

The report said researcher Mari Gallagher found that the more "out of balance" a community is in terms of food choices, the higher the prevalence of chronic health issues and diet-related deaths. She said African-Americans are "most disadvantaged when it comes to balanced food choices."

"I think the good news of this study is that it brings a new call to action for what can be done in these communities," Gallagher said. "We know that across the country, the black population generally has higher diet-related deaths and health disparities."

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