

Internet grocery service seems feasible in urban food deserts

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An Internet grocery service seems to be a feasible approach for increasing food access in an urban food desert, according to a pilot study published online May 8 in *Preventing Chronic Disease*.

(HealthDay)—An Internet grocery service (IGS) seems to be a feasible approach for increasing food access in an urban food desert, according to a pilot study published online May 8 in *Preventing Chronic Disease*.

Bradley M. Appelhans, Ph.D., from Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, and colleagues assessed the feasibility and acceptability of a commercial IGS among 34 caregivers (77 percent female; 38 percent black/African-American and 32 percent Hispanic/Latino; mean age, 36.9 years; mean [body mass index](#), 32.1 kg/m²) of children aged 2 to 14 years who lived in a documented Chicago food desert from 2011 to 2012. Participants were given an \$80 voucher for groceries and delivery

fees for a commercial IGS.

The researchers found that participants purchased an average of 23.5 items, costing \$69.36. Meat, fish, [poultry](#), and egg- and dairy-based dishes accounted for the largest share (36 percent) of pre-tax food expenditures. Other frequently purchased items included fruits, vegetables, and caloric nondairy beverages (e.g., carbonated soft drinks, juice). Sweets, desserts, and candy were purchased infrequently. Most participants (54.5 percent) reported an intention to use an IGS one to six times per year. More than half of participants endorsed IGS prices equal to or lower than supermarkets (79.4 percent), and foods delivered within one day of ordering (55.9 percent) as factors which would strongly influence future IGS use.

"IGS programs could play an important role in improving urban food access if they are designed to overcome the barriers to use identified in this study and if they incorporate strategies to discourage purchase of caloric beverages," the authors write.

More information: [Full Text](#)

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