

Food Accessibility: A Key to Nutrition Security

Food Insecurity

Limited or uncertain access to sufficient and affordable nutritious foods.



In 2020, almost 15% of all US households were considered food insecure.



20% of Black households were considered food insecure in 2021.

Healthier Food Accessibility is a Social Determinant of Health:

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) are *non-medical factors that influence health impact & functioning.*

SDOH are the conditions or experiences in which people are born, grow, work, live & age that can vary greatly person to person and impact a person's well-being.



Access to grocery stores that carry healthier food options (such as fresh fruit, vegetables, low-fat fish and poultry) are not located equitably across residential and regional areas in the United States. These areas, with little or no healthier options are known as **food desert**.



Urban, suburban, and rural areas can be overwhelmed with stores that sell unhealthy and inexpensive foods, including soda, snacks, and other high sugar foods. This is known as a **food swamp**.

Food Desert Vs. Food Swamp



NO or FEW grocery stores/places that carry food items AT ALL.



This means there may only be 1 grocery store, 1 pharmacy, 1 liquor store and 1 sandwich shop in a neighborhood.



MANY places to buy food items that are low-cost and low-nutrition but FEW or NO places to buy healthier food options.



This means there may only be 1 grocery store with healthier options BUT 3 burger shops, 4 pizza shops and 4 wing shops in a neighborhood.

Why Addressing Food Swamps and Food Deserts is Important

Based on the most recent **Thresholds** Member Survey, **15% of individuals reported that they either "ran out of money" or "could not afford to eat balanced meals with nutrients from fruit, vegetables, dairy or meat."**

Improving Nutrition: Not Just Food, but Healthful Food



Nutrition-related illnesses disproportionately affect food-insecure people. When people do not have enough food to eat or have to choose inexpensive foods with low-nutritional value, it can negatively impact their health. A nutritious diet complements medication and helps them manage disease.

Removing Barriers: Helping People Navigate Food Programs



Knowing what programs are available is an important first step to connecting with benefits. Some people face additional barriers to enrollment. Community-based services like **Thresholds** working in partnership with government agencies can help people complete the application process at neighborhood locations that are easier to access with limited mobility and that feel less stigmatized.

Increasing Food Access: Connecting Communities with Food Retail and Nutrition Programs



Engage in local health programs like: **Urban Growers Collective**, **Fresh Moves Mobile Market**, federal food and nutritional supplemental programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (**SNAP**) and the Special Supplemental Nutritional Program for Women, Infants, and Children (**WIC**). Food pantries also have access to a diverse selection of healthy foods in moving towards a more stable, food-secure future.

