

Newtown/ North Sarasota Area Food Environment Survey Results

Studies have shown that many low-income communities lack grocery stores or other retailers selling affordable, nutritious food. Residents of these communities often lack transportation necessary to do their grocery shopping and must rely on smaller, local convenience stores. Typically these stores are more expensive than supermarkets and carry less nutritious food. Lack of access to stores which provide healthy food choices can contribute to high rates of health problems including hypertension, diabetes, obesity, and heart disease. Better access to nutritious food can result in healthier eating and lower rates of obesity and diabetes.

The North Sarasota Area Food Environment Survey was conducted in the summer of 2011 and examined the availability and prices of different food products in 18 food retailers in the two census tracts which comprise Newtown/North Sarasota (food retailers included pharmacies, grocery, convenience, and dollar/discount stores). The survey also looked at the accessibility and appearance of the stores.

Availability

- 50% of stores (9 out of 18) sold some type of fresh fruit and/or vegetable
- 39% of stores (7 out of 18) stocked canned fruit with no added sugar
- 17% (3 out of 18) sold frozen vegetables
- 22% (4 out of 18) sold 100% whole wheat bread
- 22% (4 out of 18) sold baby cereal
- 94% (17 out of 18) sold whole milk
- 22% (4 out of 18) sold low fat or 1% milk
- 72% (13 out of 18) sold eggs
- 22% (4 out of 18) sold fresh meat or fish
- 94% (17 out of 18) sold prepackaged or high convenience foods
- 83% (15 out of 18) sold low-fat snacks

Price Range for Key Items

- Apples: 0.69-0.99 cents each
- Publix price: \$2.99 for a 3 lb. bag
- Milk: \$3.69 to \$4.99 a gallon
- Publix price: \$3.65 a gallon
- Eggs: \$1.19 to \$2.50 a dozen
- Publix price: \$1.25 a dozen

Accessibility and Environment

- Accepted EBT: 13 out of 18 (72%)
- Accepted WIC: 1 out of 18 (5%)
- Handicap accessible: 13 out of 18 (72%)
- 0 signs promoting healthy lifestyles or behaviors
- Tobacco products and ads on store front: 12 out of 18 (67%)
- Alcohol products and ads on store front: 16 out of 18 (89%)
- Managers and store owners were welcoming to the survey conductors and to the idea of selling healthier food options.
- Managers and store owners had a good rapport with customers.