

THE CONVENIENCE FOOD FACTOR

People Tend to Shop Most at the Food Stores Closest To Them

MG finds that the regular study and monitoring of food access by type of venue (mainstream and fringe) is extremely important because people tend to shop for food at the stores closest to them. Perhaps even more than housing, **food is the most basic and necessary consumer good**. Everyone consumes food multiple times each day as part of the daily necessity of eating to live. Because we find that there are positive public health benefits that correlate with the location patterns of mainstream grocery stores, increased mainstream grocery store options are generally beneficial to most types of communities. Conversely, **if you are surrounded by fringe food locations** (such as the Detroit examples to the right) **that specialize in a limited variety of high salt and fat food products, community health tends to suffer**.

Consumers tend to rely on the food stores to which they have the most access, even if for health or other reasons, they prefer or require other types of foods. We call this **The Convenience Food Factor** © – a new, emerging body of our work which links the influence of geographic access on food purchasing decisions. We find it can impact many different types of households, including higher income households with cars, although it likely has the greatest impact on poorer households without cars.

Place matters: where you live can impact your health.



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MARI GALLAGHER

RESEARCH & CONSULTING GROUP

1929 West Patterson
Garden Level Suite One
Chicago, IL 60613-3523

312-339-0640
mari@marigallagher.com
www.marigallagher.com

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