

Odds of having asthma 53 percent higher in food deserts

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Living in a food desert - an urban area where it is difficult to buy affordable or good-quality fresh food - means you're at increased risk to have asthma. Children who were studied who did not have access to fresh fruits and vegetables had higher rates of asthma than children who did have access.

A study being presented at the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) Annual Scientific Meeting examined the charts of 2,043 kids aged 6-18 years who were seen for well child visits. They determined that 57 percent of the children lived at least half a mile from a grocery store, and 10 percent lived at least one mile away.

"We found that 21 percent of the children who lived in a food desert had [asthma](#), compared to a 17 percent rate for the children who didn't live in a food desert," says allergist DeVon Preston, MD, ACAAI member and lead study author.

More research needs to be done on the connection between eating healthy foods and reducing the risk for asthma, but there is some evidence that people who eat diets richer in certain vitamins have a lower incidence of asthma.

"In this study, we have factored in the presence of allergic rhinitis (hay fever) and obesity as other conditions that can affect [asthma control](#)," said allergist Maripaz Morales, MD, ACAAI member and study co-author. "It's difficult to get any kid to eat the right amount of fresh fruits and vegetables, but kids who live in a food desert are at an even greater disadvantage."

Good nutrition is important for everyone, regardless of the specific link between asthma and diet. It's especially important for those with a chronic disease such as asthma. Your body may be more susceptible to illness and respiratory viruses that can trigger [asthma attacks](#) when you aren't getting the right nutrients.

More information: Abstract Title: The relationship between asthma and food deserts in the Hampton Roads area

Provided by American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

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