

FOOD INSECURITY AND FOOD DESERTS

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Food Insecurity and Food Deserts are terms used in the news to describe society's status with food.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, issues with food insecurity have greatly increased.

What is Food Insecurity?

Food Insecurity is defined as people who do not know where their food is coming from. Two questions are asked when people are at risk for Food Insecurity.

1. Within the past 12 months, did you worry whether your food would run out before you got money to buy more?
2. Within the past 12 months, the food you bought didn't last, and you didn't have money to get more.

If a person answers "often true" or "sometimes true" to either or both statements, the person is at risk for food insecurity.

What is a Food Desert?

Food Deserts can occur in rural and urban areas. A food desert is recognized when a person lives more than 1 mile from a large grocery store in urban areas. In rural areas, a food desert is when a person lives 10 or more miles to the nearest grocery store. Healthy food with an emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables is difficult to find. Convenience stores often fill the void of grocery stores in food deserts. While convenience stores offer basic needs, they often lack fresh fruit and vegetables. The consequences of living in a food desert are the increased risk of obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes.



Rural Area
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Resources for Food Insecurity and Food Deserts

- USDA National Hunger Hotline- 1-866-3-HUNGER or 1-866-348-6479 (available in English and Spanish). This hotline can direct a person to information about Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (NSLP)
- USDA Food Desert Locator: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx#.UUDJLTeyL28>

Sources:

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2. “Food Research and Action Center Pennsylvania Toolkit.”, February 2017, <https://frac.org/aaptoolkit>
3. “Growing Food and Opportunities in South Carolina: Economic and Community Development through Healthy Food Access.”, January 2013, South Carolina Food Policy Council, http://www.scfoodaccess.com/uploads/2/3/0/2/23029886/growing_food_and_opportunities_in_sc_report.pdf

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If this document didn't answer your questions, please contact HGIC at hgic@clemson.edu or 1-888-656-9988.

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