



Shopping for HEALTHY FOOD SAFELY

BY BRENDON SMITH

Having access to healthy food can be challenging for many of us at the best of times, but it can be even more challenging during a pandemic. People with compromised immune systems face greater risk in being around others, especially in enclosed spaces, and those with reduced mobility may experience additional challenges.

Fortunately, there are still some options available to provide you with healthy food.

Many grocery stores offered online shopping before the pandemic, and more scrambled to add this service as the pandemic continued through 2020. Because the person selecting

products ordered online has to be paid, it's common to see this expense recouped either by charging a flat fee for this service or charging higher prices for products than you would find on the shelves if you were shopping in the store. Be sure to pay attention to any fees and product prices if you shop for groceries online.

Having access to healthy food can be challenging for many of us at the best of times, but it can be even more challenging during a pandemic.

Delivery is a convenient option when available—you don't have to go farther than your front door to get your groceries. It also reduces your risk of exposure dramatically compared to shopping in the store. If you're able to visit a grocery store, picking up groceries curbside (in the grocery store parking lot without having to leave your car) may cost less than delivery while also keeping your exposure minimal. Stores often have more curbside pickup times available than delivery times, so this may allow you to get your food sooner than it might be delivered. If you consistently order from a store with a small delivery crew, they may also learn your preferences, such as where to leave your groceries, what substitutions

you prefer, and other ways to provide you with superior customer service.

Third-party companies may be able to deliver some products as well. Restaurants and some grocery stores offer prepared foods—like sandwiches and meals—through delivery companies, such as EatStreet, GrubHub, and ChowNow. Some enterprising smaller product vendors have also banded together so that you can order from them through one website. You can search for these companies online or use smartphone apps to order. During the pandemic, most of these services will require payment online rather than at the door to prevent the risk of exposure.



If you do go into a grocery store, they may have established times of the day (or days of the week) specially dedicated to seniors so that their risk of exposure is reduced. Check your grocer's website, Yelp! listing, or Facebook account or call them to find out. If you look online, check how recently information has been added; if the most recent news they share was added months ago, you may want to call them to ensure you aren't seeing outdated information.

The City of Madison offers links to multiple resources for those with limited incomes who want to eat healthy. For more information, go to cityofmadison.com/health-safety/coronavirus/community-resources/food. To identify nearby emergency food options, enter 211 into your phone or text your ZIP Code to 898-211. This will connect you to a Dane County specialist who can help you navigate a variety of social services.

Brendon Smith is communications director at Willy Street Co-op.



Willy Street Co-op

North: 2817 N. Sherman Ave.
Madison, WI 53704
(608) 471-4422

West: 6825 University Ave.
Middleton, WI 53562
(608) 284-7800

East: 1221 Williamson St.
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 251-6776
willystreet.coop