



Searching for Healthy Food

The Food Landscape in California Cities and Counties

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STUDY FINDINGS

The California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA) analyzed retail food outlets in counties and cities with populations greater than 250,000 and in the state as a whole, and found far more opportunities to purchase the generally less healthy food available in fast-food restaurants and convenience stores than the generally healthier food available from supermarkets and produce vendors. In 2005 for California as a whole, there were 4.18 times as many fast-food restaurants and convenience stores as supermarkets and produce vendors. CCPHA identified a total of 26,627 retail food outlets in California in 2005: 14,823 fast-food restaurants, 6,659 convenience stores, 3,853 supermarkets, 847 produce stores and 445 farmers markets.

CCPHA developed a retail food environment index (RFEI) for the state and for counties and cities with populations greater than 250,000 by dividing the total number of fast-food and convenience stores by the total number of supermarkets and produce vendors (produce stores and farmers markets) in the area.

The RFEI varied substantially among counties and cities (see table below). Among counties, San Bernardino has the highest ratio at 5.72, meaning that there are nearly six times as many fast-food restaurants and convenience stores as supermarkets and produce vendors in the county. Santa Cruz County has the lowest ratio at 1.84, meaning that, on average, the nearest retail food outlet is still almost twice as likely to be a fast-food restaurant or convenience store as a supermarket or produce vendor. Other counties with more than five times the number of fast-food restaurants and convenience stores as supermarkets and produce vendors are Sacramento (5.66), Fresno (5.34), Orange (5.13), and Solano (5.08).

Among the 13 California cities with populations greater than 250,000, two (Bakersfield and Fresno) have at least six times, and two others (Long Beach and Riverside) have at least five times the number of fast-food restaurants and convenience stores as supermarkets and produce vendors.

COUNTY	RFEI
ALAMEDA	4.61
CONTRA COSTA	4.66
FRESNO	5.34
KERN	4.87
LOS ANGELES	4.60
MARIN	1.85
MONTEREY	2.14
ORANGE	5.13
PLACER	3.84
RIVERSIDE	4.63
SACRAMENTO	5.66
SAN BERNARDINO	5.72
SAN DIEGO	4.20
SAN FRANCISCO	3.85
SAN JOAQUIN	4.03
SAN LUIS OBISPO	2.01
SAN MATEO	2.79
SANTA BARBARA	3.00
SANTA CLARA	4.32
SANTA CRUZ	1.84
SOLANO	5.08
SONOMA	2.52
STANISLAUS	4.79
TULARE	4.42
VENTURA	3.86

CITY	RFEI
ANAHEIM	4.79
BAKERSFIELD	6.63
FRESNO	6.23
LONG BEACH	5.80
LOS ANGELES	4.24
OAKLAND	3.81
RIVERSIDE	5.58
SACRAMENTO	4.97
SAN DIEGO	4.58
SAN FRANCISCO	3.85
SAN JOSE	4.62
SANTA ANA	4.40
STOCKTON	4.73