

## Is Risk of Homelessness a Barrier to Healthy Eating?

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Homelessness has been associated with severe food insufficiency and poor health outcomes. This may be due to the unique social and environmental challenges to healthful food choices that housing instability presents in addition to economic hardship. This study uses data from the National Household Food Acquisition and Purchase Survey (FoodAPS) to examine whether housing instability is associated with various indicators of less healthful eating among low-income households. The sample for this study consists of 1,891 households with incomes no greater than 185% of the federal poverty line (FPL), and with household heads of ages 18-65. Findings indicated that controlling for socio-demographic covariates, housing instability – measured by recent eviction or difficulty paying shelter or utility bills – is associated with increased perception of cost barrier to healthy eating, and decreased amount of whole fruits and protein – especially seafood and plant-based protein – in their purchased or acquired foods. Findings from this study provide improved understanding of the mechanisms through which housing instability contributes to poor health outcomes.

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