



Plan4Health

Vista Neighborhood



A Neighborhood Level Food Assessment

Recommendations and Data

Researched and produced by the Idaho Plan4Health Coalition

2015-2016

This project is a result of a collaboration between The Idaho chapter of the American Planning Association, The Idaho Public Health Association, The City of Boise, and numerous other sponsors.

Report by Agnew::Beck Consulting, LLC
2015/2016



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Recommendations and interventions

RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS

The short list and table below identified recommended interventions for the Vista Neighborhood, based on the assessment. Interventions were identified and categorized using a variety qualitative of factors: (1) neighborhood support for and/or documented need within the neighborhood, (2) degree of impact on the neighborhood and its residents, and, (3) likelihood of being implemented. The top 7 interventions listed below were elevated due to the high likelihood of having positive impacts on a large number of Vista residents, and on food-related issues of highest importance to the neighborhood. The subsequent table sorts a longer list of interventions by “achievability,” e.g., low-hanging fruit (relatively easy to implement) to higher reaches (relatively more difficult to implement).

TOP 8 RECOMMENDED INTERVENTIONS

Implementation Rank: Complex

1. **Consider reform to Idaho’s state sales tax to eliminate or decrease the taxes on all groceries, excluding candy and sugary drinks.** Idaho’s current tax law currently includes all groceries as part of the base sales tax. Idaho does offer the option to file for a grocery credit refund, which averages about \$100 per person. However, only about 66,000 income-qualifying residents who weren’t required to file a tax return filed for a grocery credit refund in 2014. Also, if Idaho residents received federal food stamps, were in jail, or were in the U.S. illegally for part of the year, their refund is prorated to exclude the months those conditions applied. Reform should consider (1) lowering the cost of healthful groceries by decreasing or eliminating the sales tax on grocery items, excluding candy and sugary drinks; (2) increasing the amount of the grocery credit refund; (3) removing the adjustment for those receiving food stamps, incarcerated and/or residing in the U.S. illegally.
<https://tax.idaho.gov/i-1043.cfm>
<https://tax.idaho.gov/n-feed.cfm?idd=534>

Implementation Rank: Moderate

2. **Implement a “healthy corner store” program in Vista.** These programs, which work with existing retailers, aim to increase and incentivize marketing and sales of more healthful snacks, particularly to young children, and often in coordination with local schools. Pilot programs have been successful in places such as Philadelphia, Chattanooga and Cincinnati.
<http://www.healthycornerstores.org/>
<http://www.plan4health.us/healthy-corner-stores/>
3. **Pilot program serving whole food, majority plant-based school lunch at Whitney and Hawthorn Elementary once a week.** Evaluate program after 3 months to determine success and effectiveness of changing children and families’ approach to healthful eating, as well as impacts on school nutrition services budget and systems. Identify adjustments that would help the program succeed and operate more sustainably in the long-term, at more school sites.

4. **Develop additional pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure that allows and encourages active transportation**, particularly to food distribution locations (e.g., grocery stores, corner stores, products stands, etc.), many of which lie outside the Vista neighborhood. The recent Urban Land Institute (ULI) Vista Healthy Corridor study found that significant active transportation safety improvements were needed in Vista.
5. **Focus on ensuring that neighborhood-based employers are aware and taking advantage of and workplace employee wellness programs** that can reduce employer healthcare and absenteeism related costs while improving the health and quality of life of employees. Such programs include Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's "IPAN" (Idaho Physical Activity and Nutrition) Program and Let's Move Boise!, as well as corporate health services provided by health systems (St. Luke's and St. Alphonsus) and health insurance providers.
[http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/IdahoPhysicalActivityandNutrition\(IPAN\)](http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/IdahoPhysicalActivityandNutrition(IPAN))
www.letsmoveboise.com

Implementation Rank: Simple

6. **Offer additional and more targeted cooking, shopping, and budgeting classes and incentivize participation** through a variety of community service programs. Pilot a program to link enrollment and completion of these courses with SNAP benefits, to double funding. Advertise in particular for family-focused classes at times convenient for working families.
7. **Work with food pantries to expand store hours so that patrons can shop more consistently and conveniently.** The Vista neighborhood food survey, conducted as part of this project, identified this as a particular barrier to some families who need it most.
8. **Continue to track neighborhood health data over time with an annual community survey.** Add questions on healthy foods and nutrition to regular City of Boise or Health Assessment survey. Consider research partnerships with universities to collect neighborhood-level data for Vista on an ongoing basis.
9. **Grow school garden and community garden programs throughout the neighborhood.** Additional community gardens can increase access to affordable healthy food for residents, while providing educational and cultural learning experiences.
10. **Continue to promote and fund programs aimed at providing food insecure students access to healthy foods, including the Idaho Food Bank's Backpack program.** The Backpack program addresses food insecurity through direct assistance and serves over 1,800 students each week. Additional funding and support could increase the number of area students who benefit from these programs.

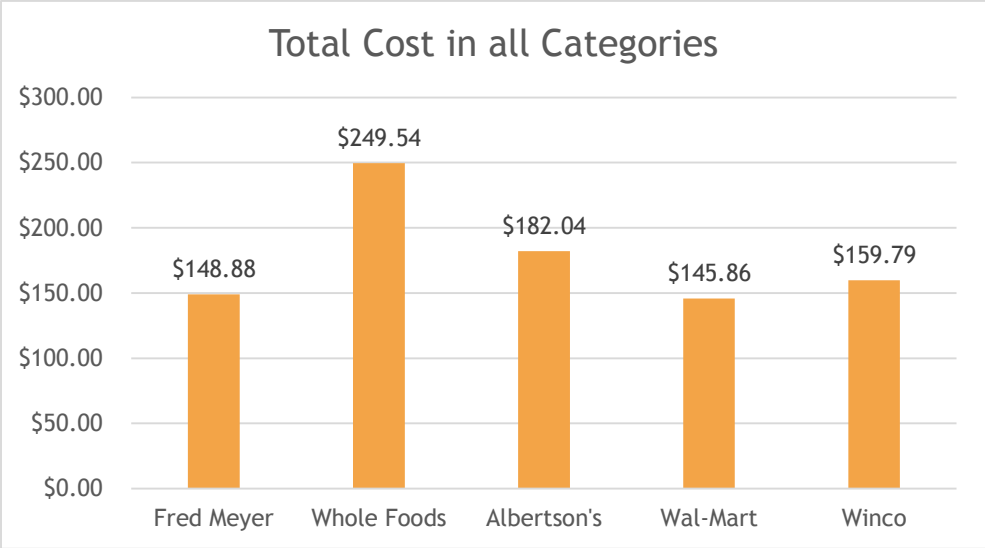
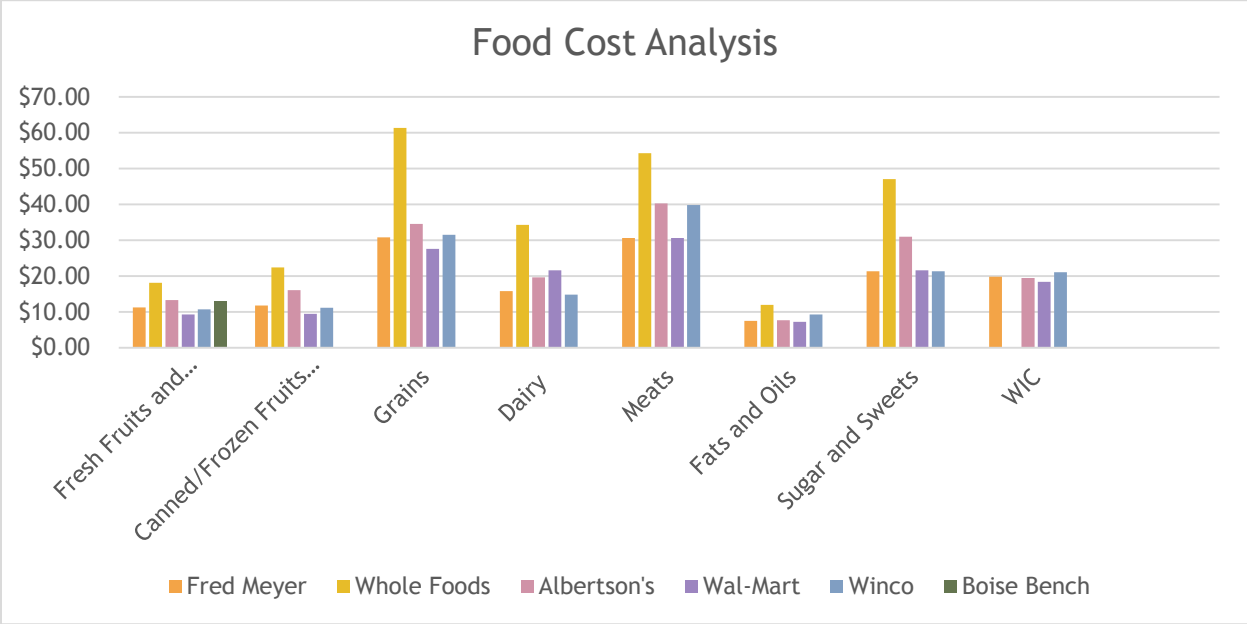
Suggested Interventions – DRAFT

Simple	Moderate	Complex
Host a community food festival aimed at providing cultural and educational food experiences to the community in a fun and family-friendly setting.	Create a neighborhood food council.	Change educational requirements and curriculum of health education in schools. To Emphasize healthy eating, food preparation, and have significantly more hours required.
Work with food pantries to increase hours of operation to meet the needs of more food insecure individuals	Pilot test a once a week whole foods plant based school lunch at Whitney and Hawthorn Elementary	Change the Statewide tax on food to incentivize buying fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains.
Utilize and expand the mobile market program. Explore the possibility of a more permanent midweek market. Continue to double snap benefits.	Partner with private businesses to offer incentives for healthy food consumption and lifestyle choices. (employer sponsored programs)	Create a food learning center that incorporate education, agricultural production and community
Offer incentives for nutrition classes.	Require menu labeling and nutritional information at all restaurants and food trucks	Create a food assistance delivery program for individuals who are unable to regularly travel for food and are experiencing food insecurity. (seniors, people with disabilities, etc.)
Put up posters in grocery stores that highlight cheap and affordable meals.	Promote “healthy dine out menu challenge” or “Taste of Vista” dine out night program or similar events to promote local restaurants and healthy eating.	Restrict marketing of nutrient poor foods to community members at schools, neighborhood stores, and larger food distribution locations
Offer information and materials about local healthy eating programs and food assistance at clinics and primary health facilities	Utilize store placement and marketing to promote the sale and consumption of healthy food options (requires partnership with local food providers)	Seasonal offsets to keep produce prices low year round.
Work with refugee resettlement agencies to offer culturally appropriate healthy eating classes, have translated information about diet and nutrition and shopping	Promote employer wellness programs to employers in Vista.	Seek grants that allow individuals using SNAP to receive a matching amount via a wide variety of programs promoting healthy eating and wellness.
Build a brand of healthy eating communications that are sent with kids	Continue to track neighborhood health data overtime with an annual community survey. City could add questions on healthy foods and nutrition in the regular city. Possibly partner with researchers at Boise State.	
Continue and expand the food backpacks and similar programs whose families are experiencing food insecurity.		

Grocery Store and Food Cost Analysis

With the Help of local Boise State Students, the Idaho Plan4Health Coalition was able to conduct an in depth analysis of grocery stores within and near by the neighborhood. This analysis looks at the availability and price of 99 regularly available goods and produce selections to help gain an understanding of where food is cheapest and what foods might be absent from the area. Below are the results of the food cost and availability analysis.

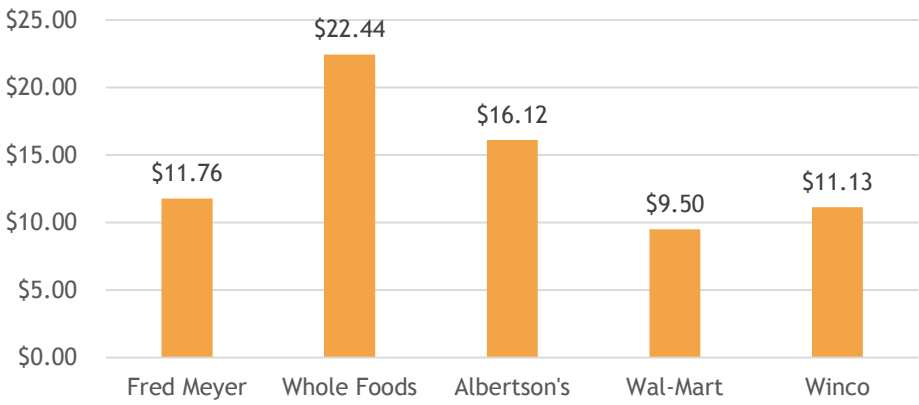
Overall Results and store comparisons:



Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

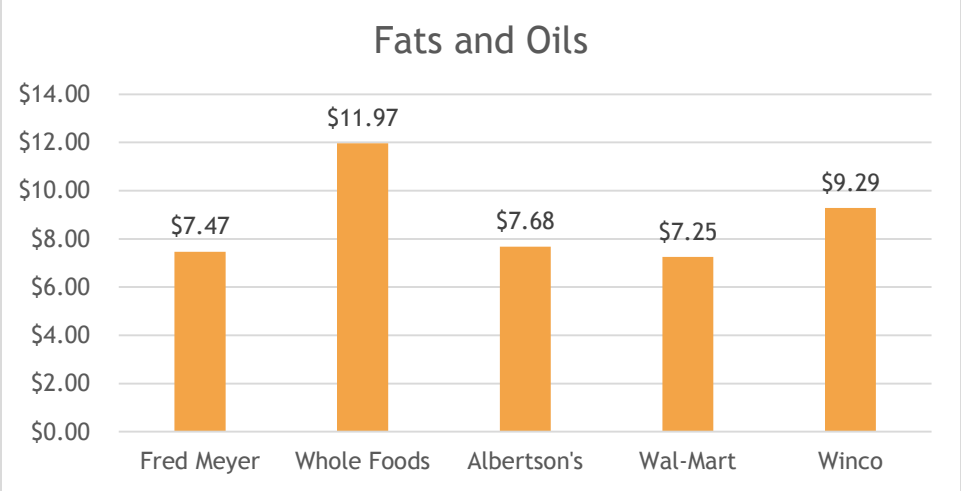
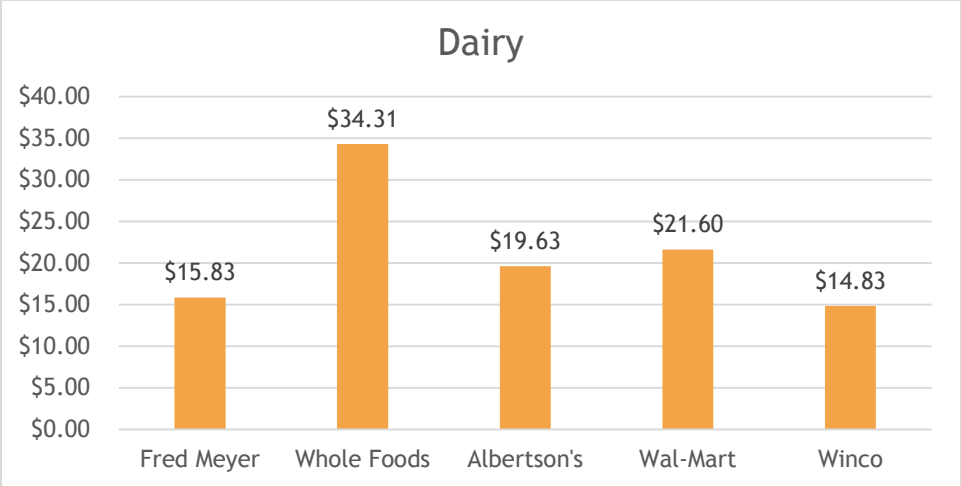


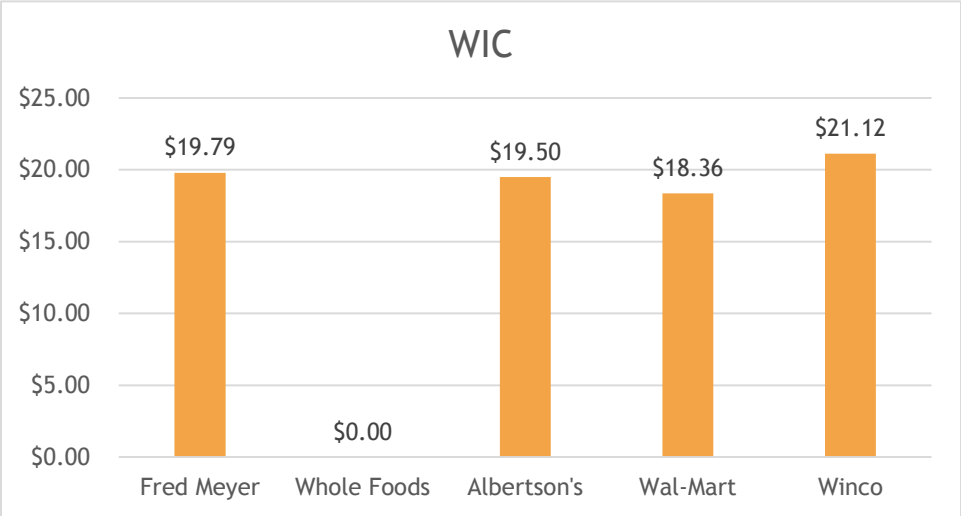
Canned/Frozen Fruits and Vegetables



Grains



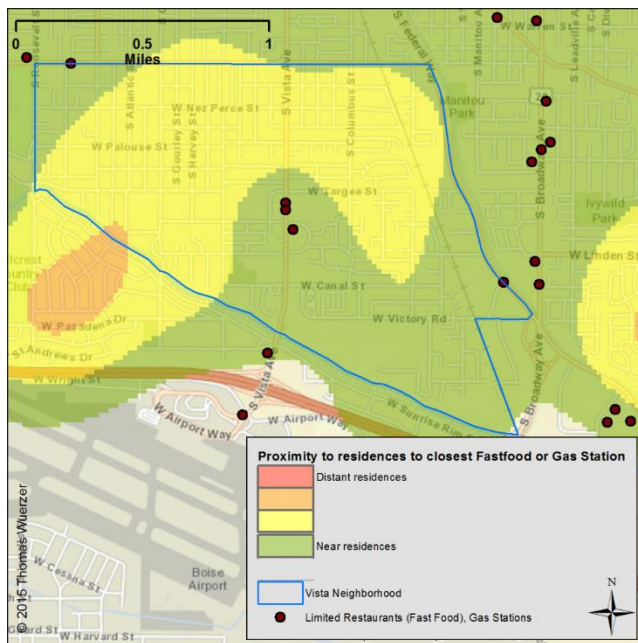




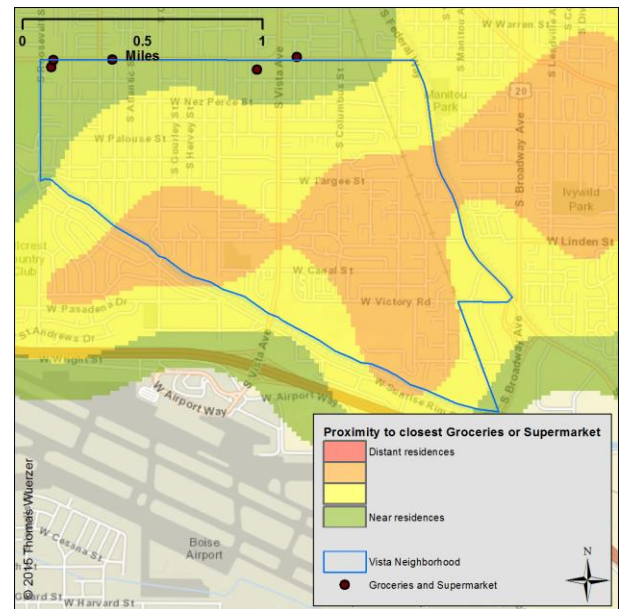
Proximity to Nearest Grocery Store

Boise State University researchers, Thomas Wuerzer, Vanessa Fry and Carl Anderson have recently examined food security in Ada County.¹ They created maps that analyzed the household average distances to food establishments like restaurants, groceries and convenient stores. They found the average distance to a grocery store in Ada County was 1.2 miles and the average distance to a supermarket was 3.7 miles. Only 15 percent of Ada County residences were within in ½ mile of a grocery store. The researchers conducted a more specific analysis of the Vista Neighborhood. The adjacent map shows how access to grocery stores and supermarkets is limited to the northern border of the neighborhood along the Overland corridor. Fast food and gas stations are more abundant, but still limited to the main corridors. These location patterns might indicate food establishments will continue to be located along the corridors

Vista Neighborhood – Proximity to Fast Food and Convenience Stores (courtesy of Thomas Wuerzer)



Vista Neighborhood Grocery and Supermarket Access (courtesy of Thomas Wuerzer)



¹ <https://thebluereview.org/food-access-and-food-deserts-in-ada-county-idaho/>

Mobile Market Assessment



In the summer of 2015, the Boise Farmers’ Market, in collaboration with the City of Boise Parks and Recreation Department, operated an 11-week pilot mobile market. The Mobile Market sold on a weekly basis



fresh fruit and vegetables from local farms at six locations around the City where the availability and means of accessing healthful food are lower than in other parts of the City. The Oak Park Village Apartments (2888 Cherry Lane) in the Vista Neighborhood was one of the stops. The Mobile Market accepted Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Customers paying with SNAP received a \$1-for-\$1 match for use at the Mobile Market. The matching grant was made possible by the City of Boise.

As the following comparison shows, at the Oak Park Village Apartment site, more SNAP dollars were spent than at any other location and was second only to the Northwest Pointe Apartments for the percentage of SNAP to the overall total sales.

Sales Data from the Mobile Market

Site	Total Customers	Overall Total (all payment types)	SNAP	
			Total	% of Overall Total
Oak Park Village Apartments	164	\$1,133.25	\$314.39	28%
Latah Village	79	\$620.90	\$64.75	10%
Northwest Pointe Apartments	41	\$290.51	\$140.25	48%
Redwood Park	224	\$1,447.25	\$237.50	16%
Veterans Memorial Park	182	\$1,293.90	\$284.90	22%
Winstead Park	241	\$1,710.00	\$180.00	11%

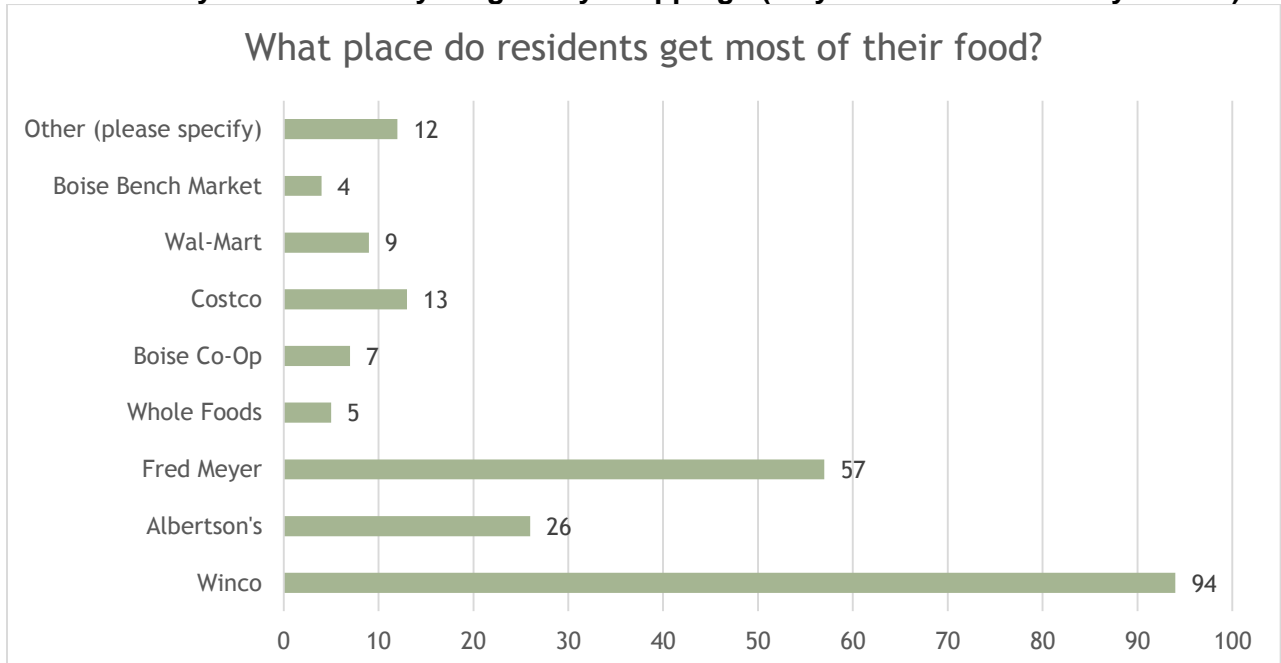
Survey Results

Total number of responses from the in-person and online survey: 353

1. What type of places do you purchase or get food? (check all that apply)



2. Where do you do most of your grocery shopping? (only shows online survey results)

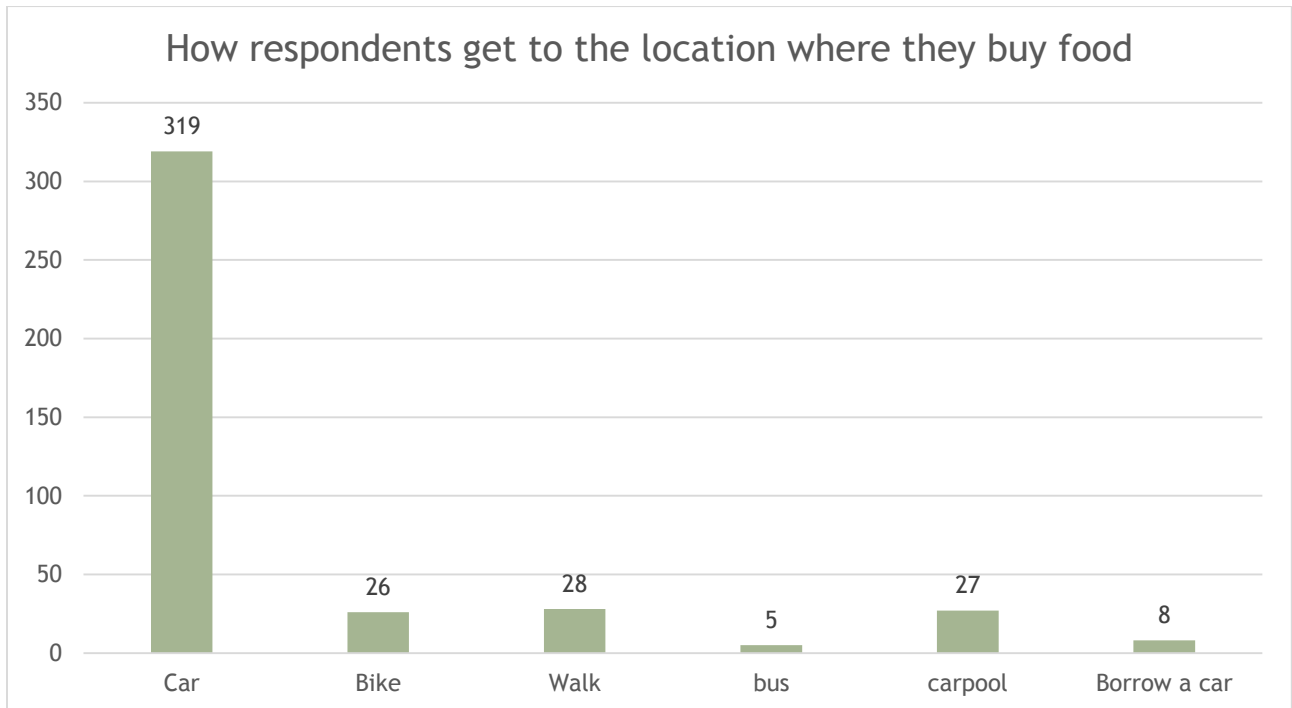


3. What are the main reasons you do most of your shopping at that location?

(Online survey only.)



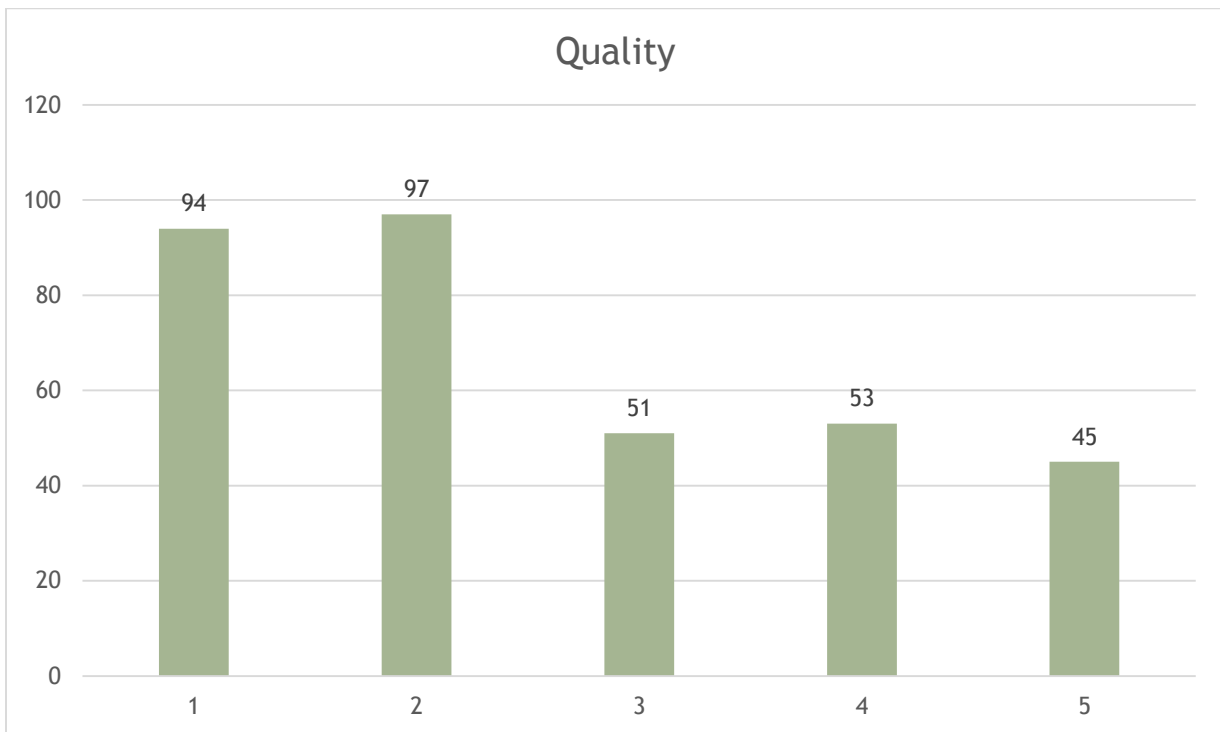
4. How do you get to the location in which you do most of your shopping?



5. Do the stores you shop at have the types of foods you want (ethnic, organic, etc)?

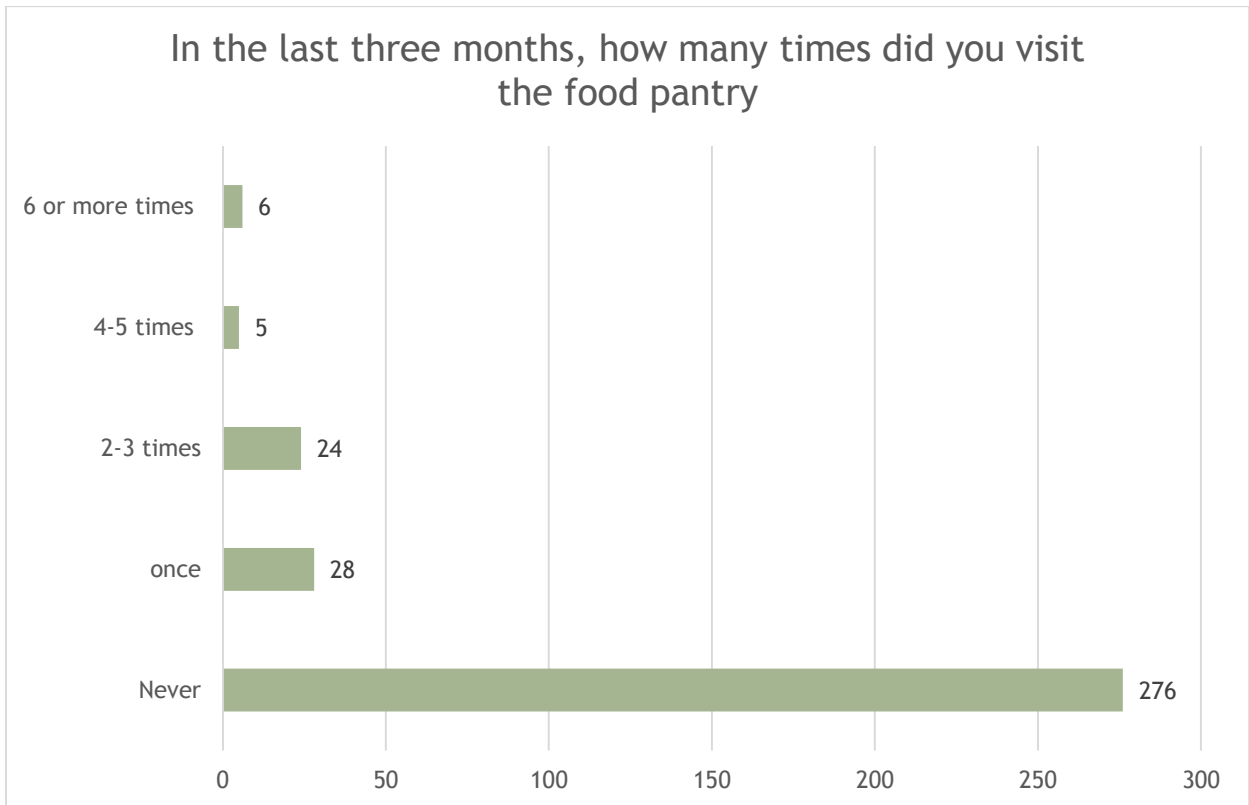


6. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 = strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree, how important do the following issues affect your ability to eat healthy food?

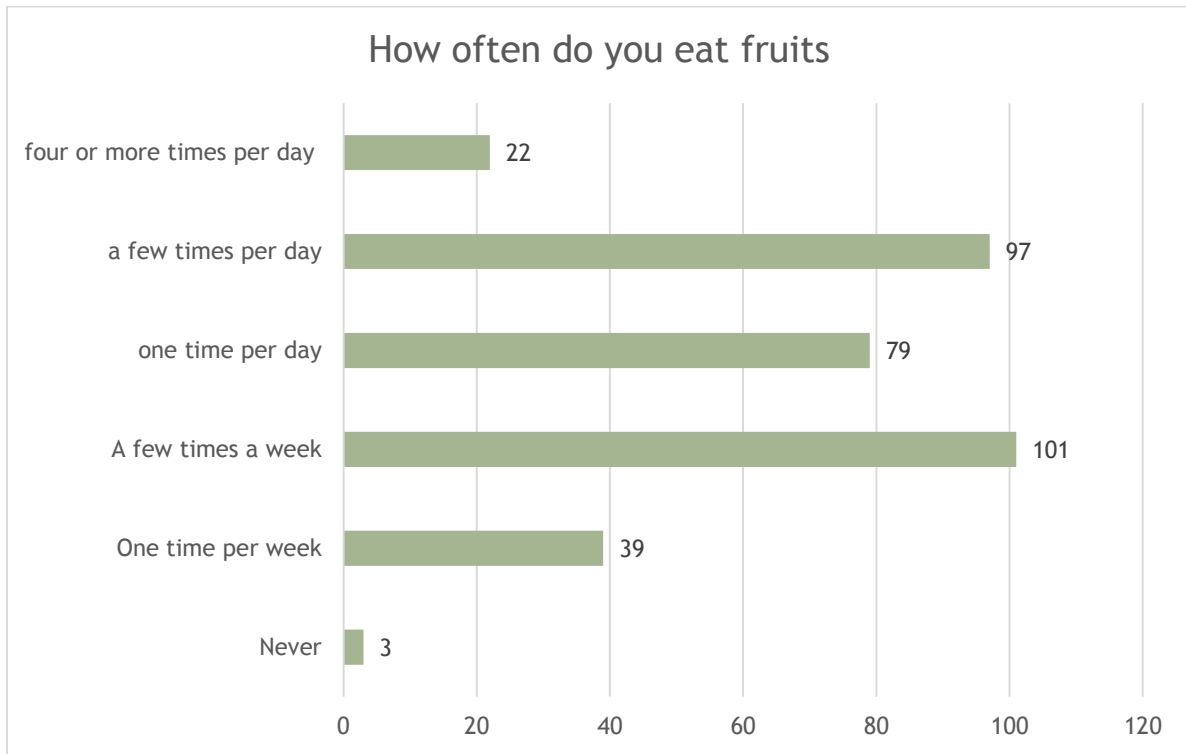




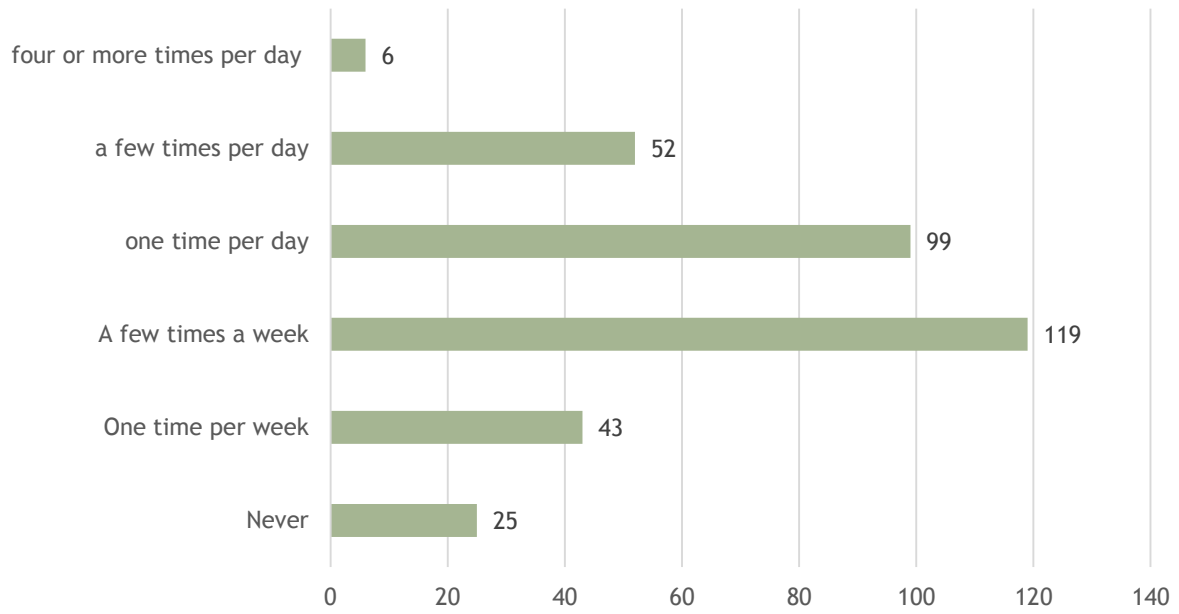
7. Within the past three months, how often have you experienced the following?



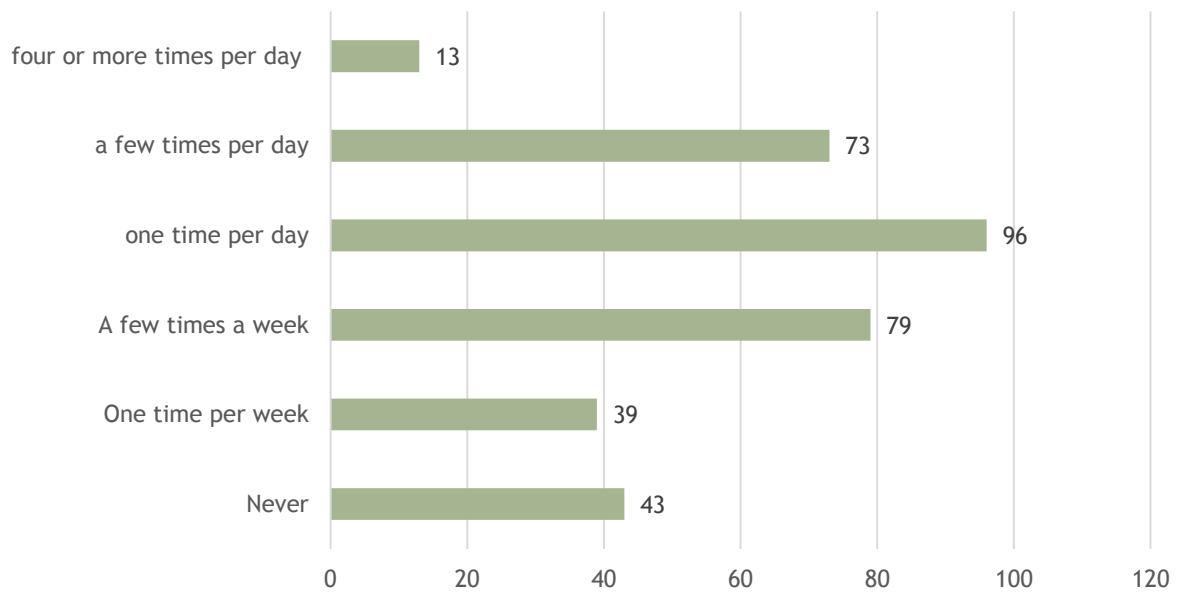
8. How often do you eat the following types of foods (on average)?

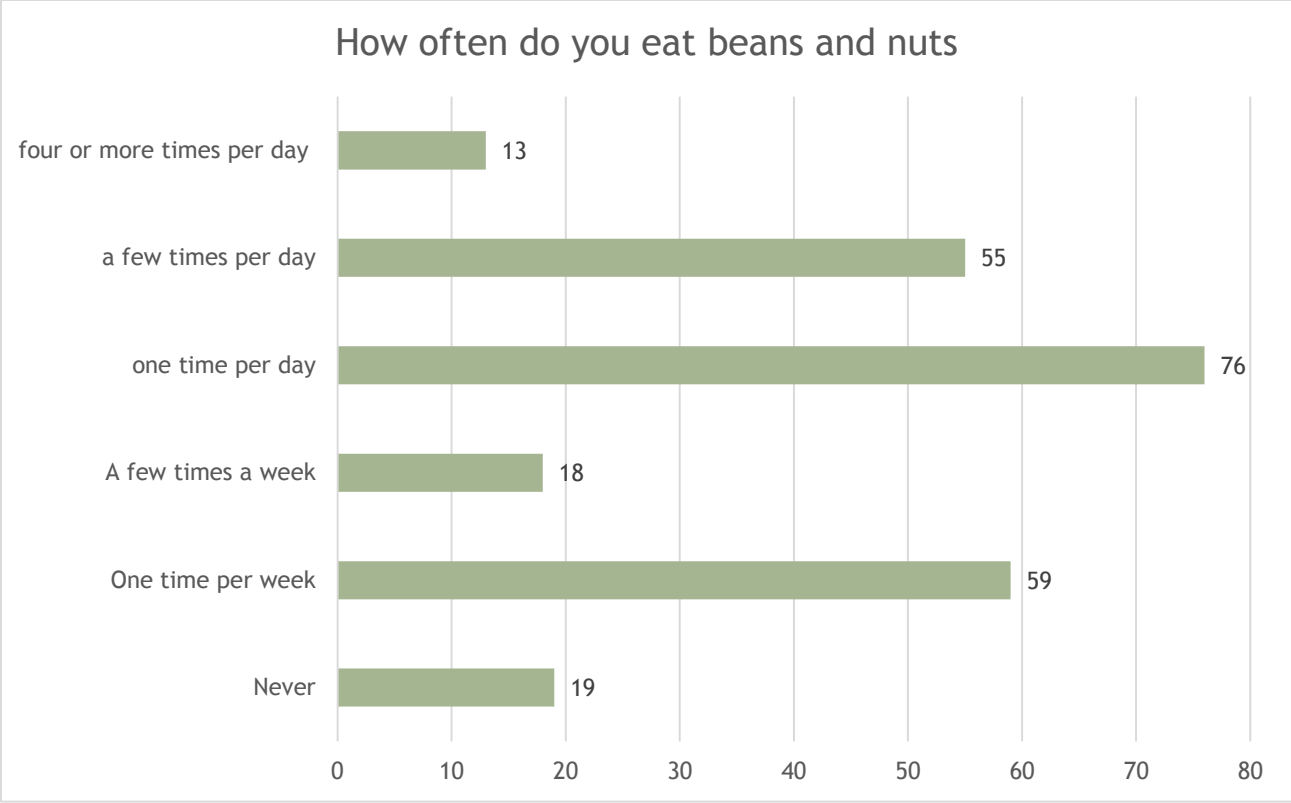


How often do you eat lean meats

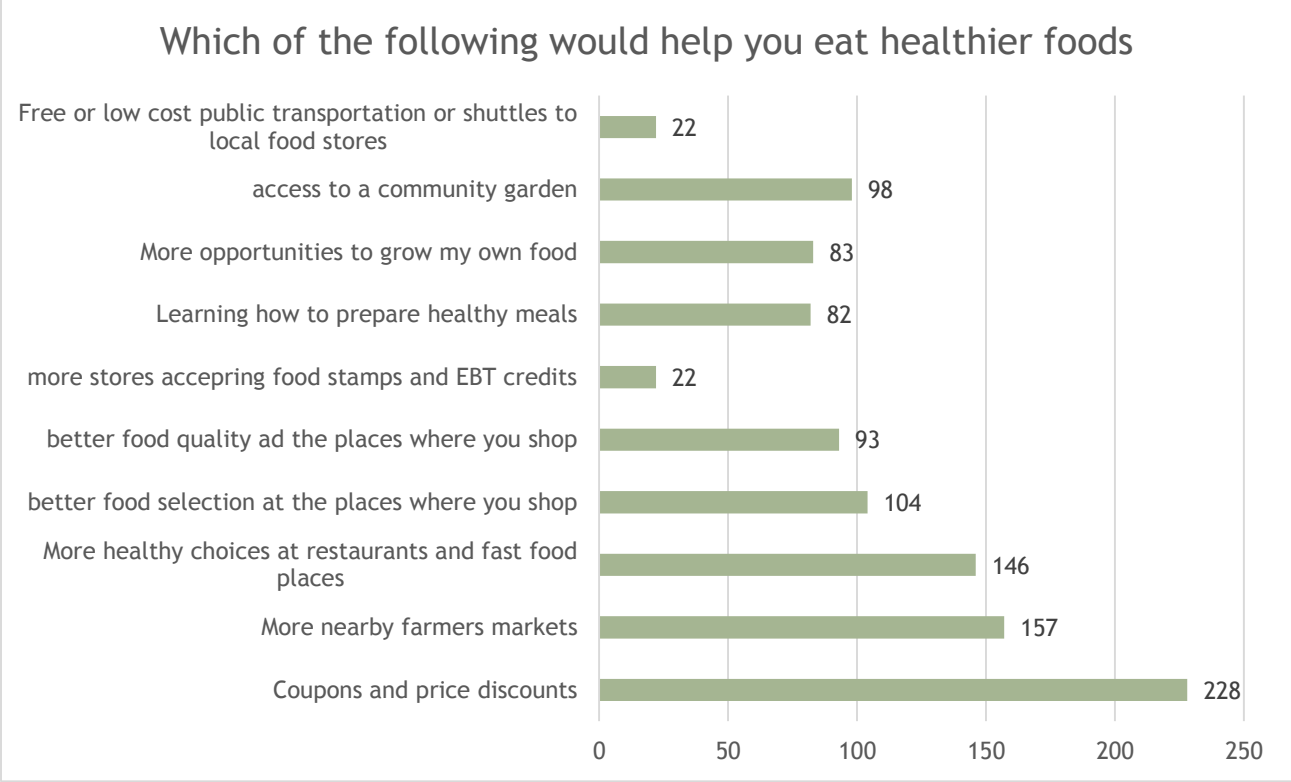


How often do you eat low-fat dairy

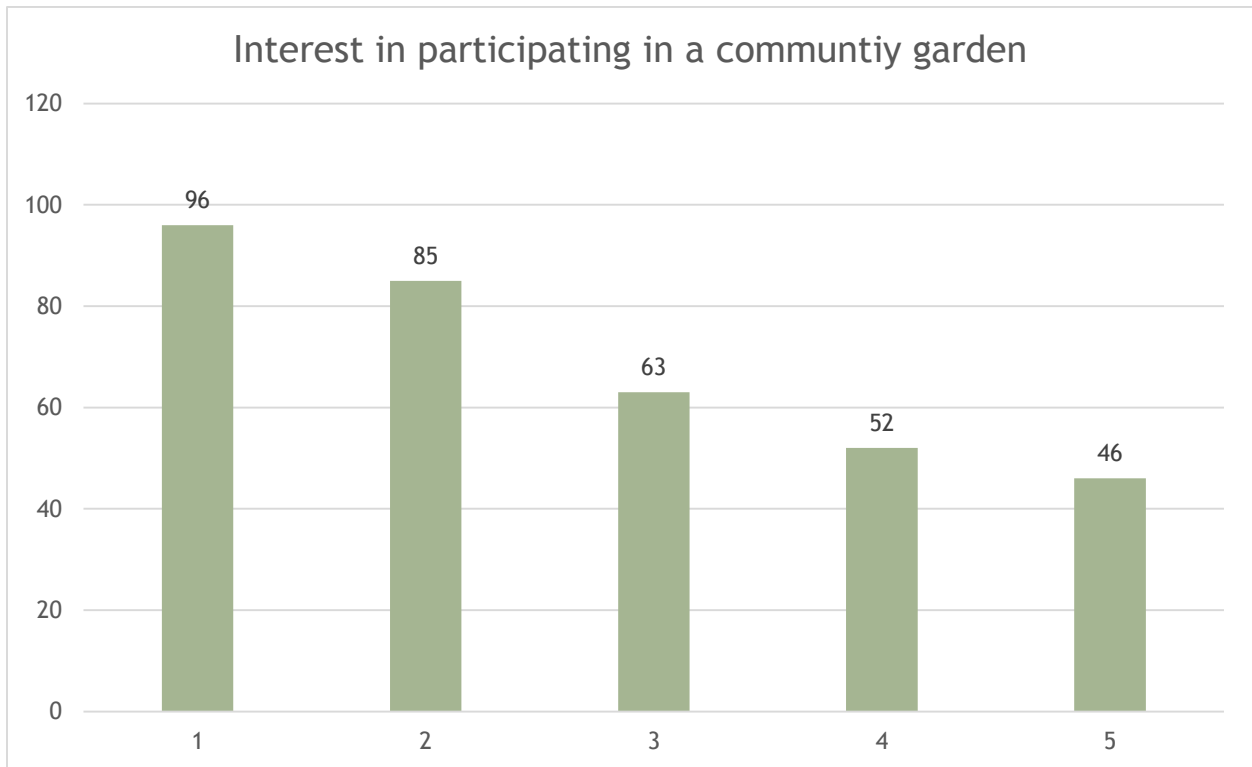
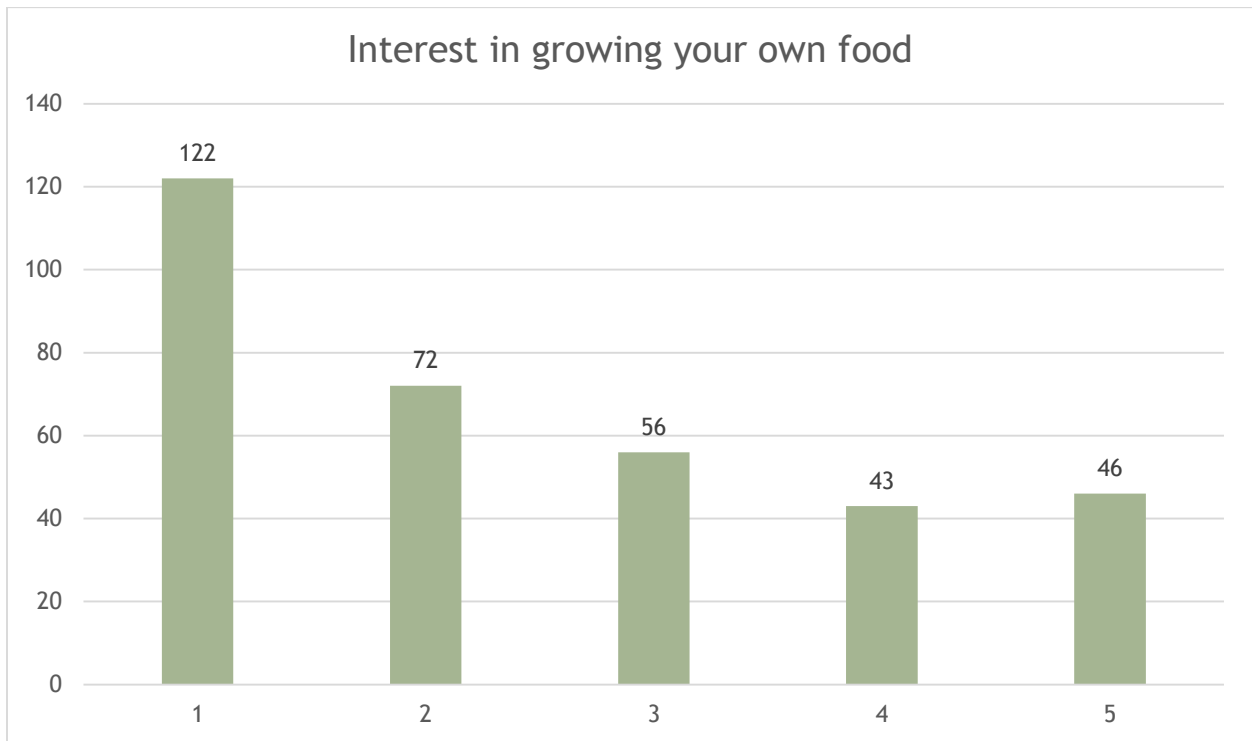




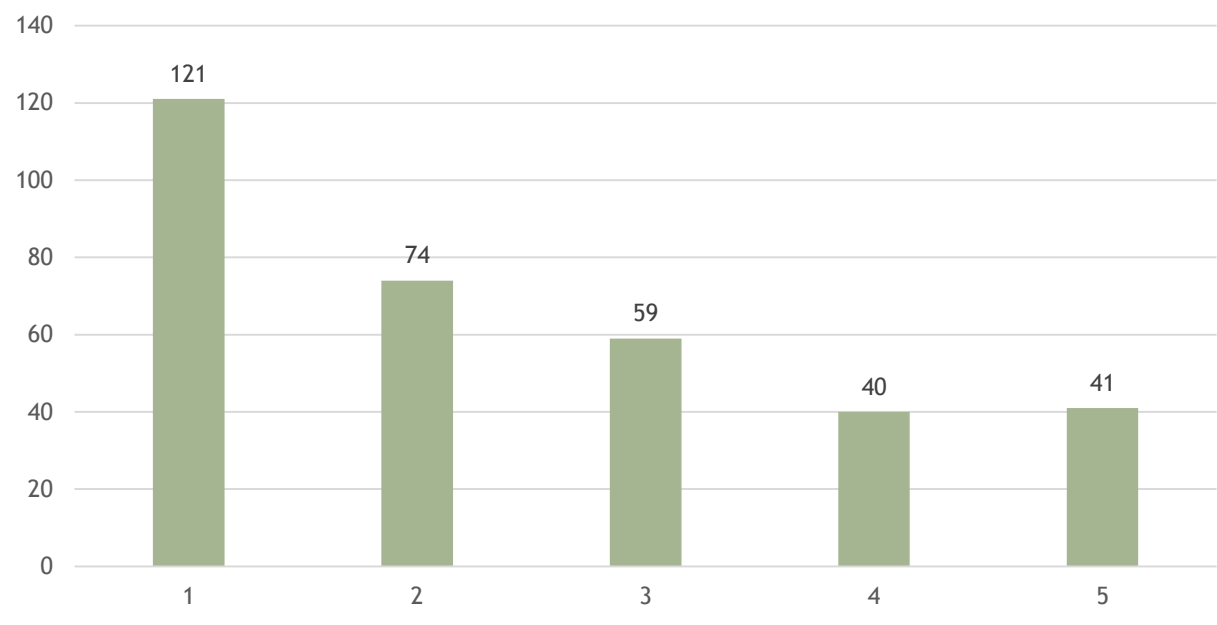
9. Which of the following would help you eat healthier foods (check all that apply)?



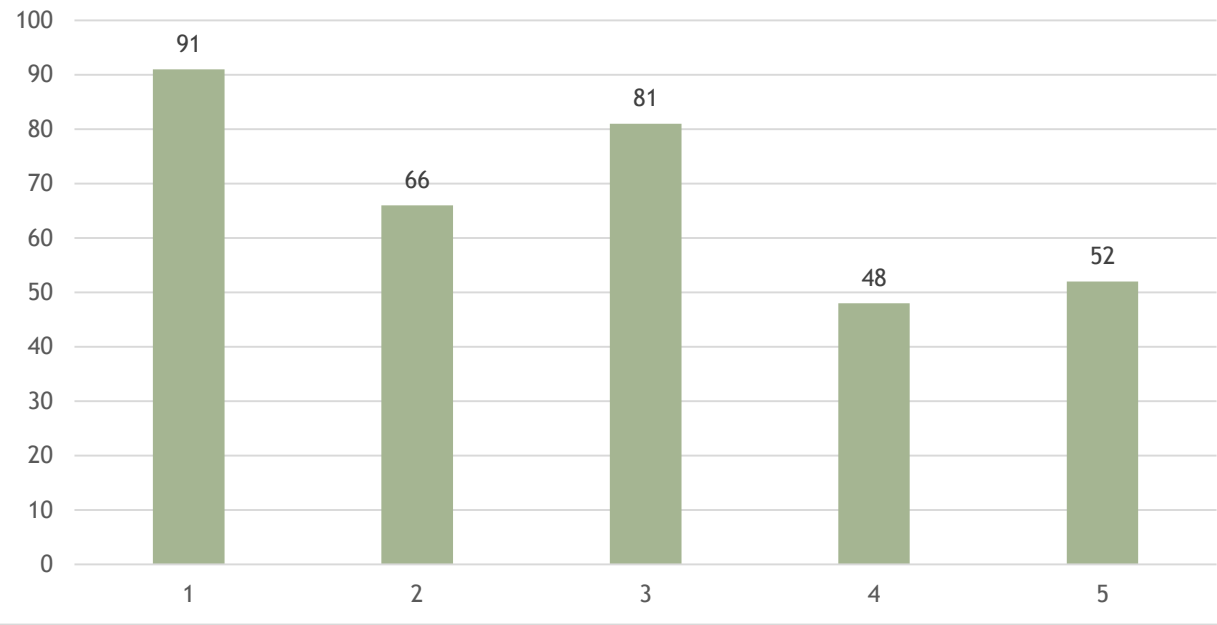
10. How interested are you in learning about the following topics?



Interest in learning how to cook healthier foods



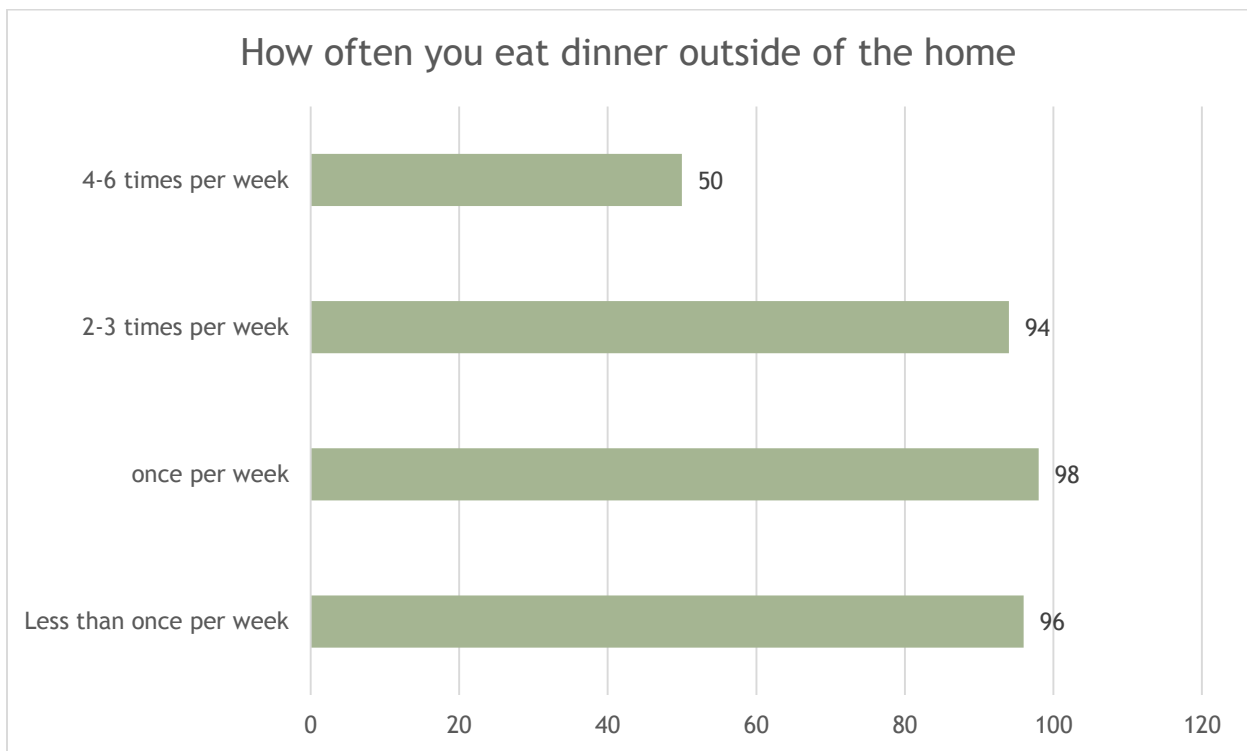
Interest in selecting healthier foods at the store



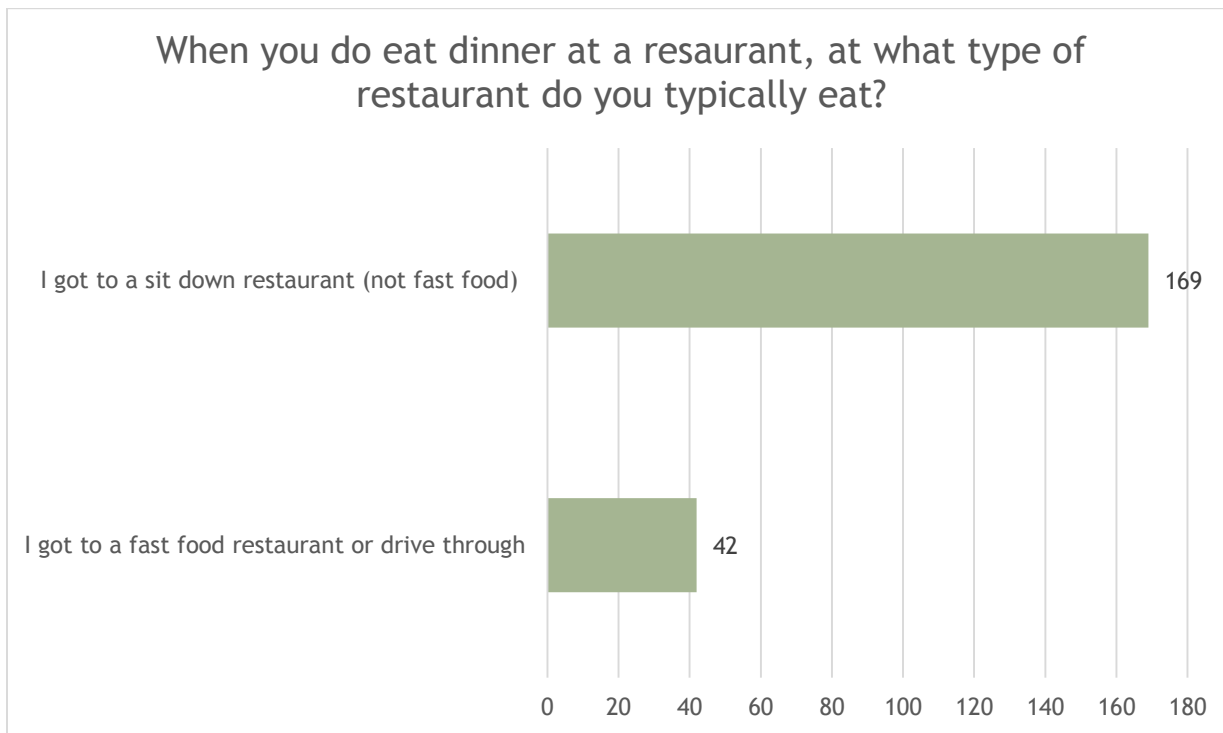
11. Would you be interested in attending a free nutrition and cooking education class in your community?



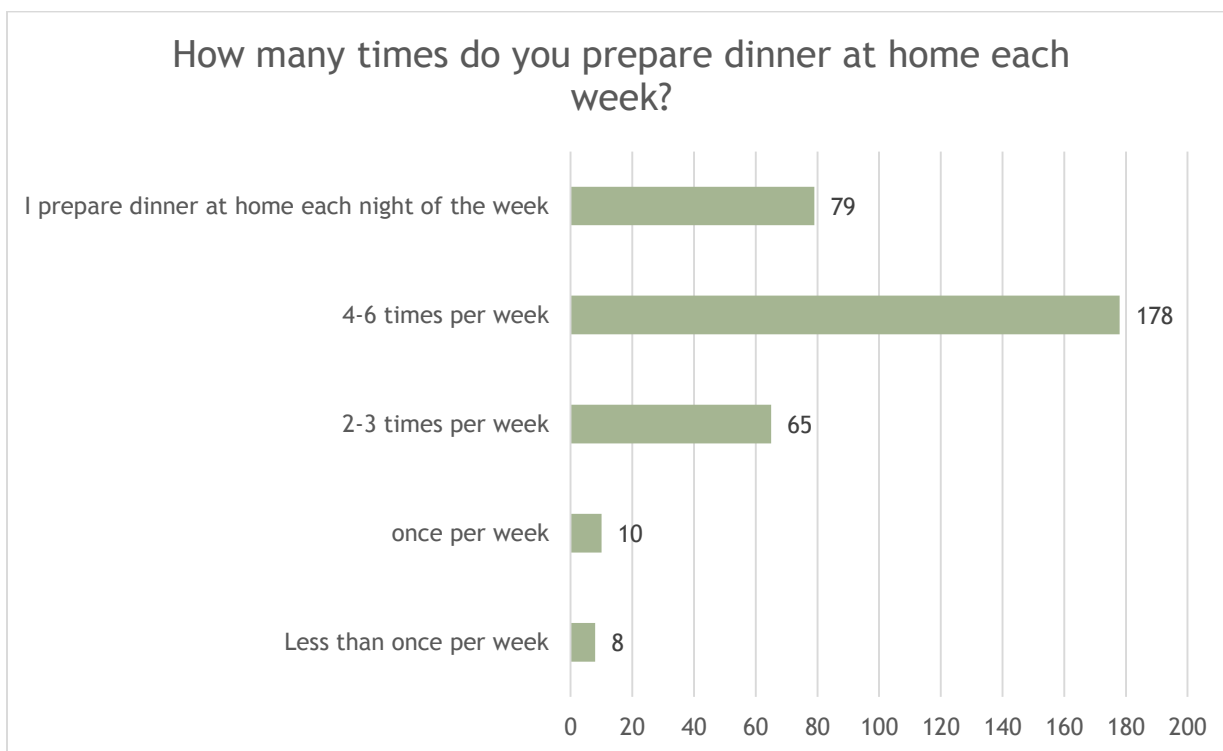
12. On average, how many meals do you eat out of the house on a typical week?



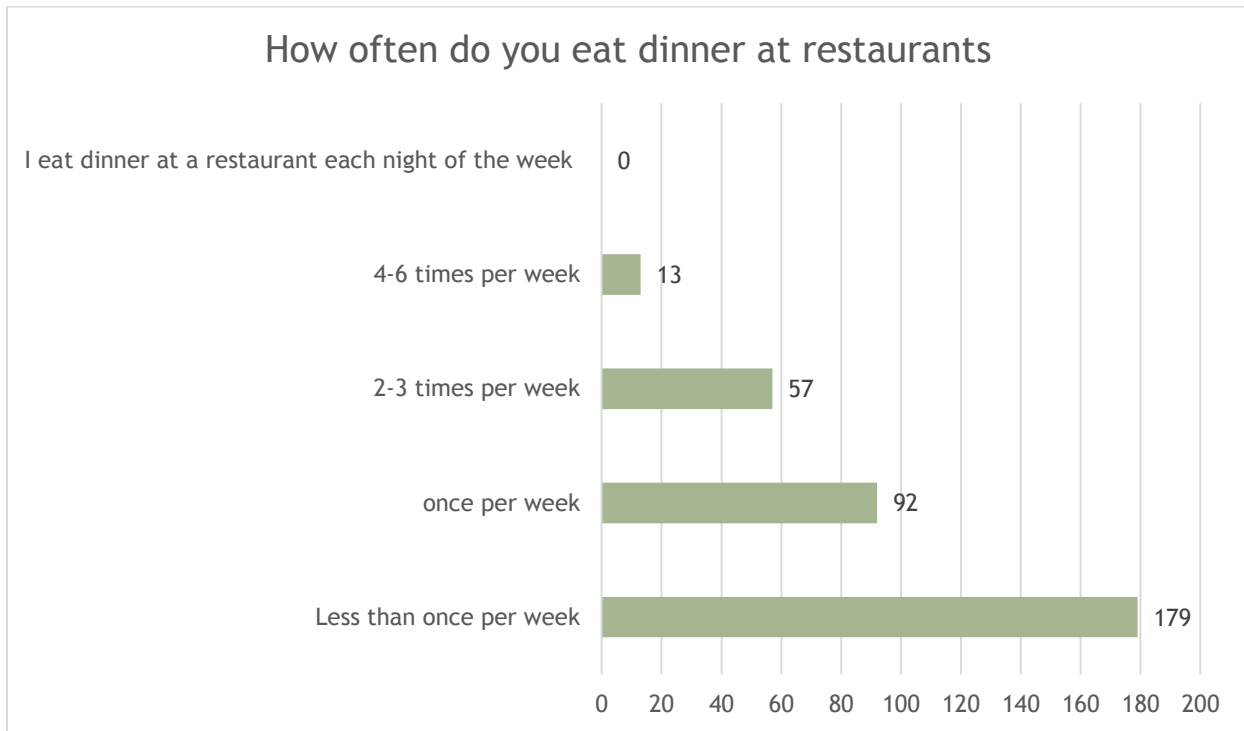
13. When you eat a meal outside of the home, where are you most likely to get your food?
(Online only)



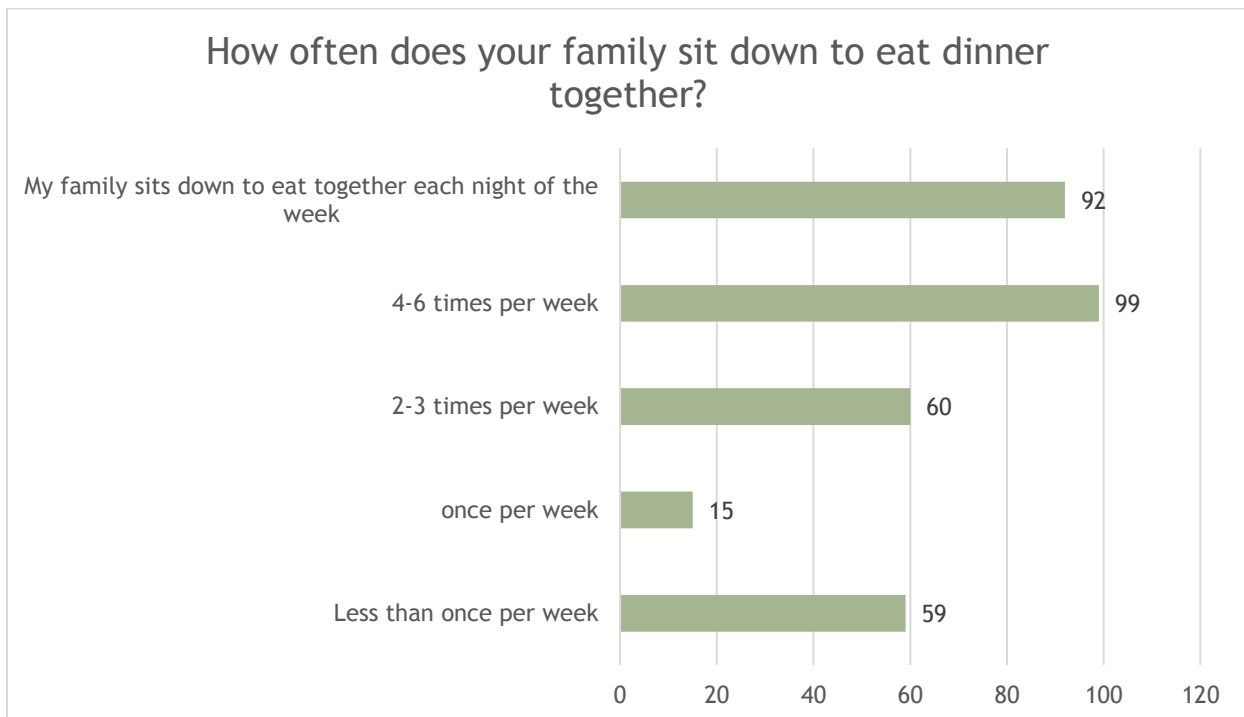
14. How often do you prepare dinner at home (on average)?



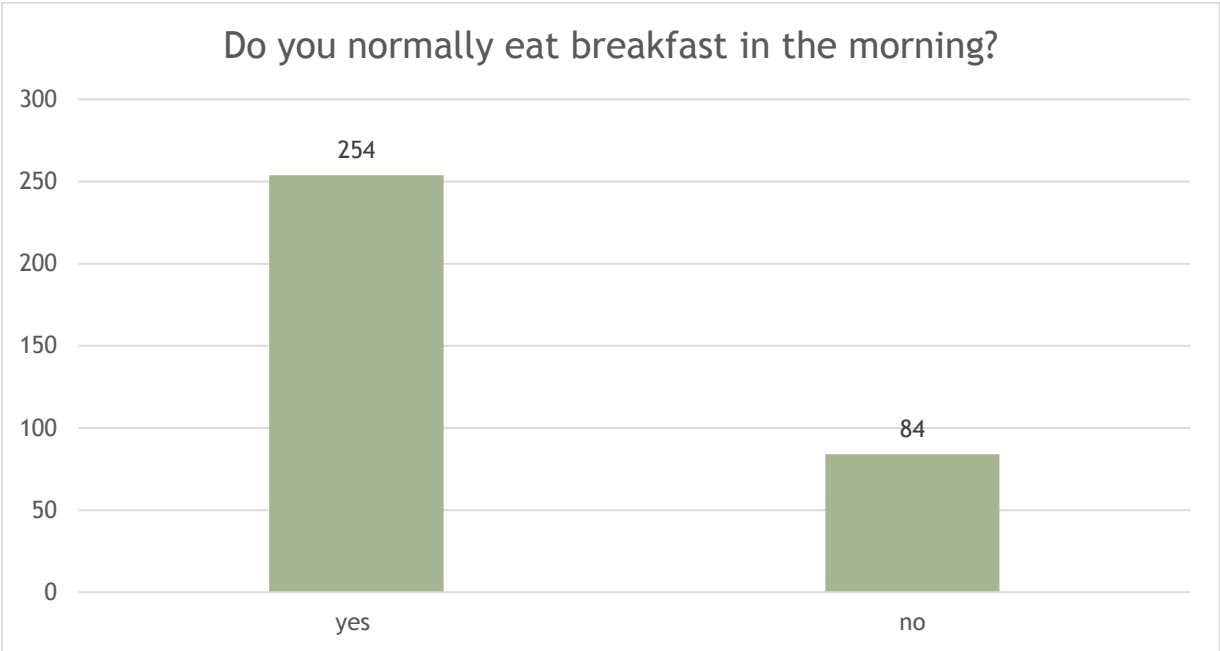
15. How often do you eat dinner at a restaurant (on average)?



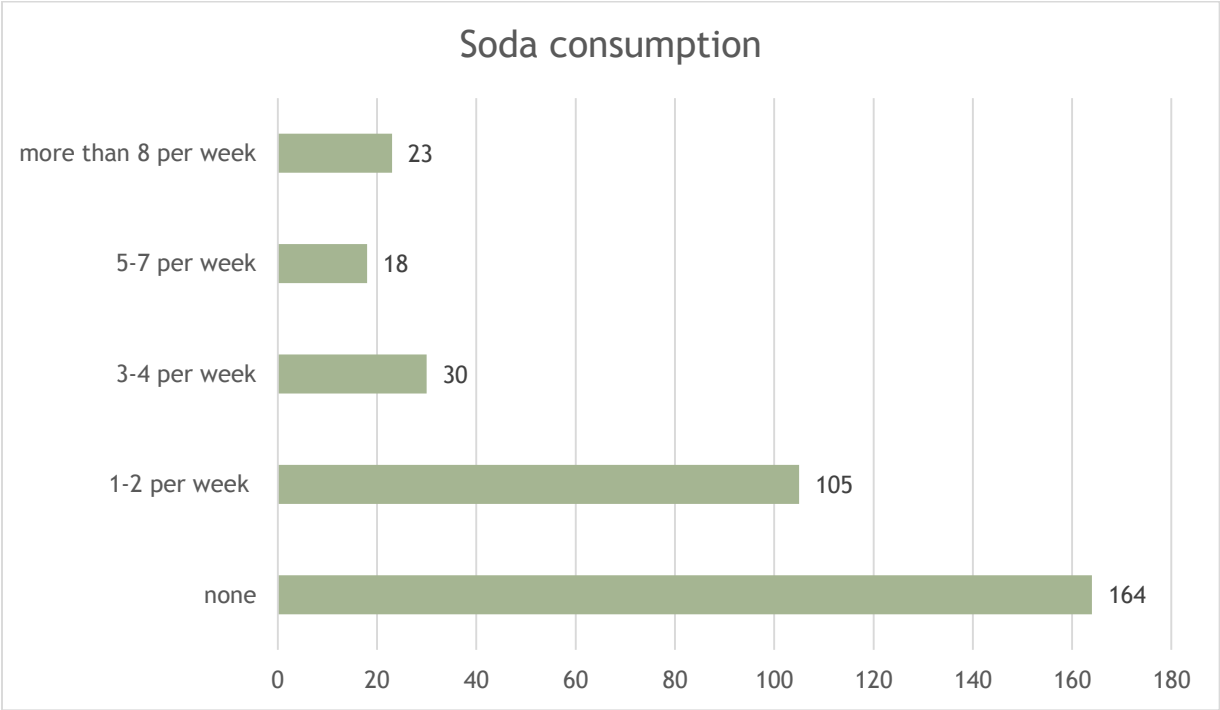
16. How often does your family sit down to eat together (on average)?



17. Do you normally eat breakfast in the morning?



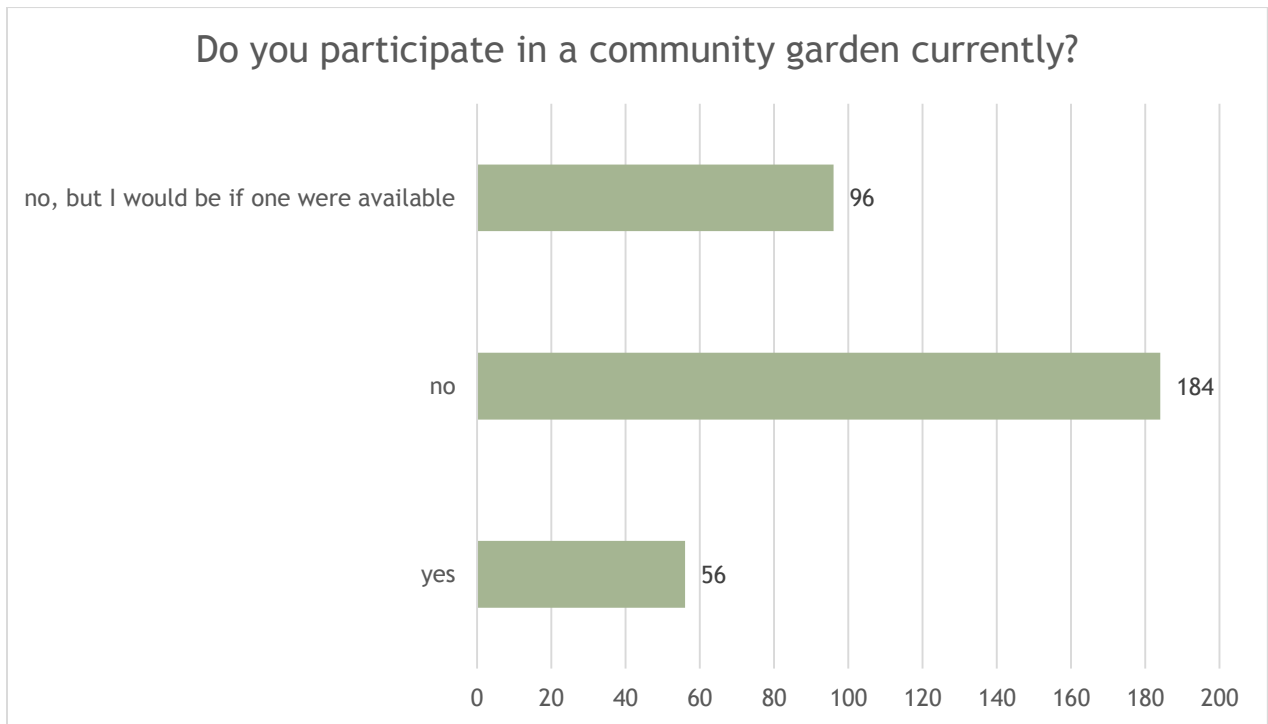
18. How many sodas or other sweet beverages do you drink each week (on average)?



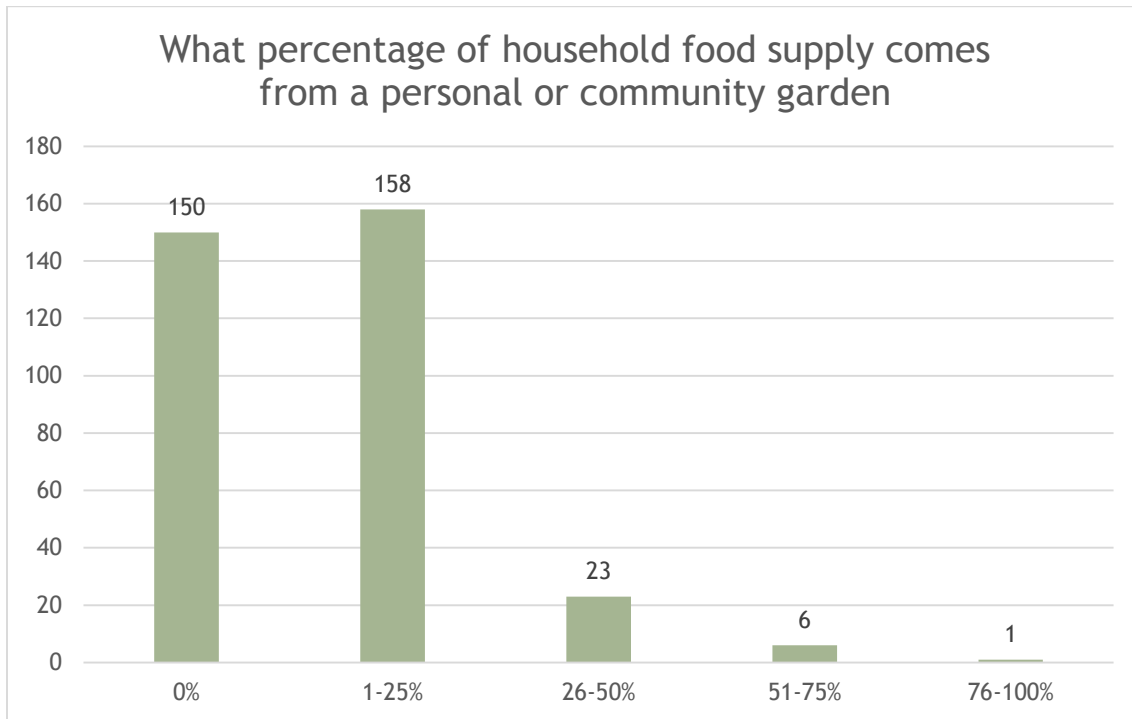
19. Do you grow food in a personal garden?



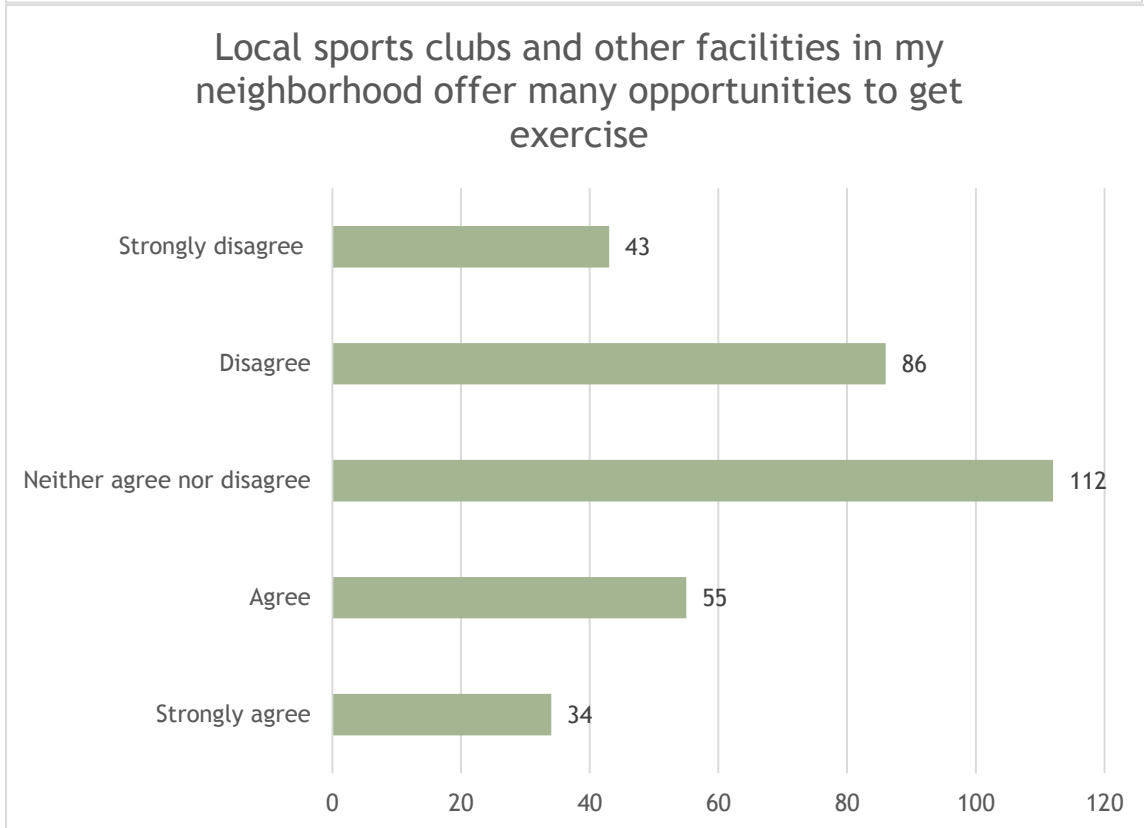
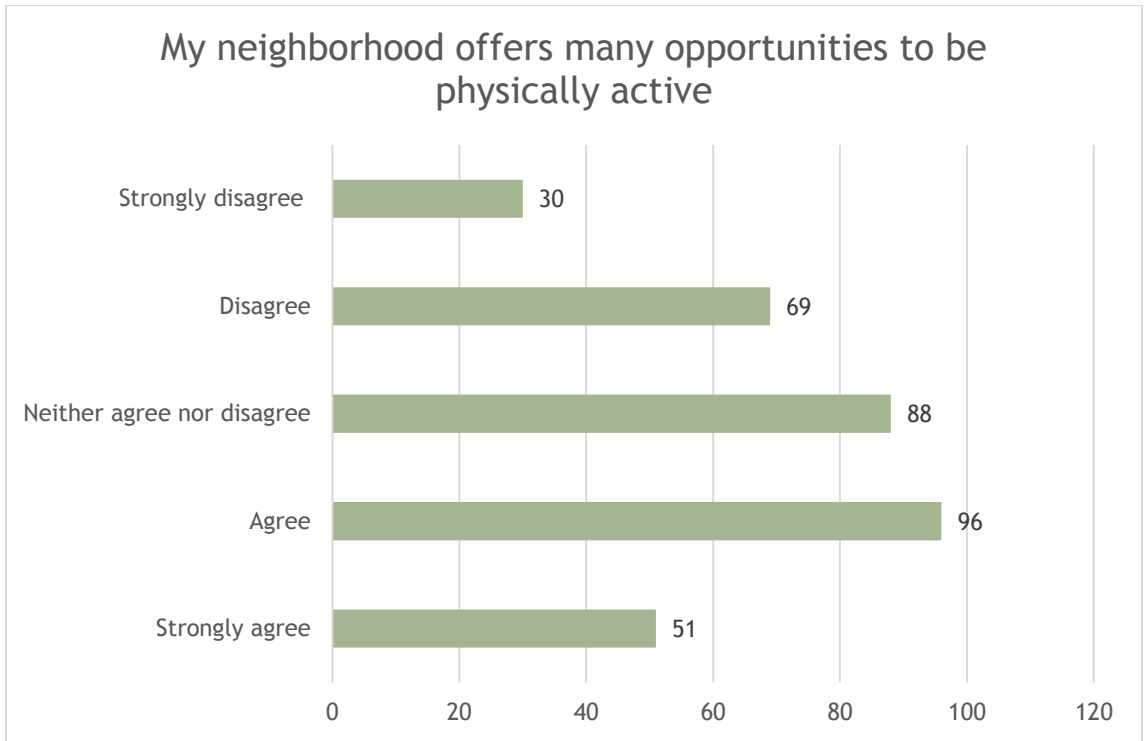
20. Would you be interested in participating in a community garden if one were available nearby?

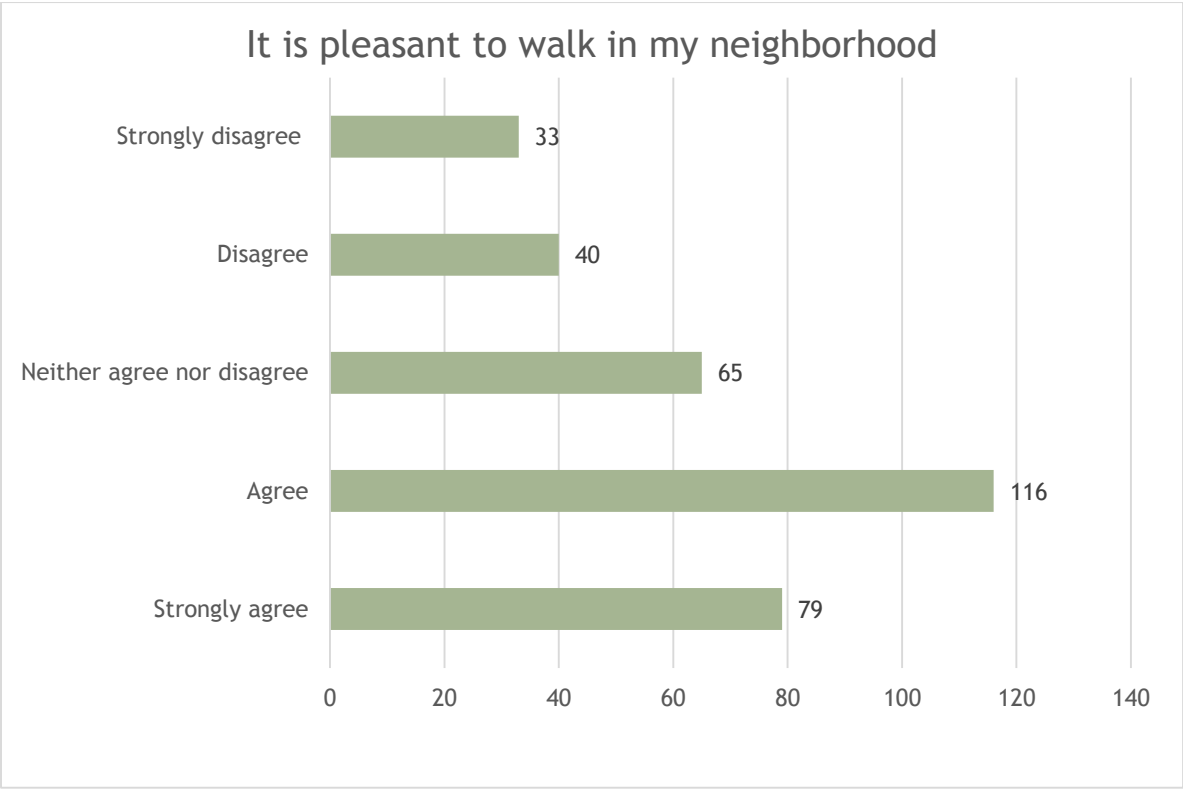


21. Over the last three months, what percentage of your household's food supply came from either your garden or a community garden?

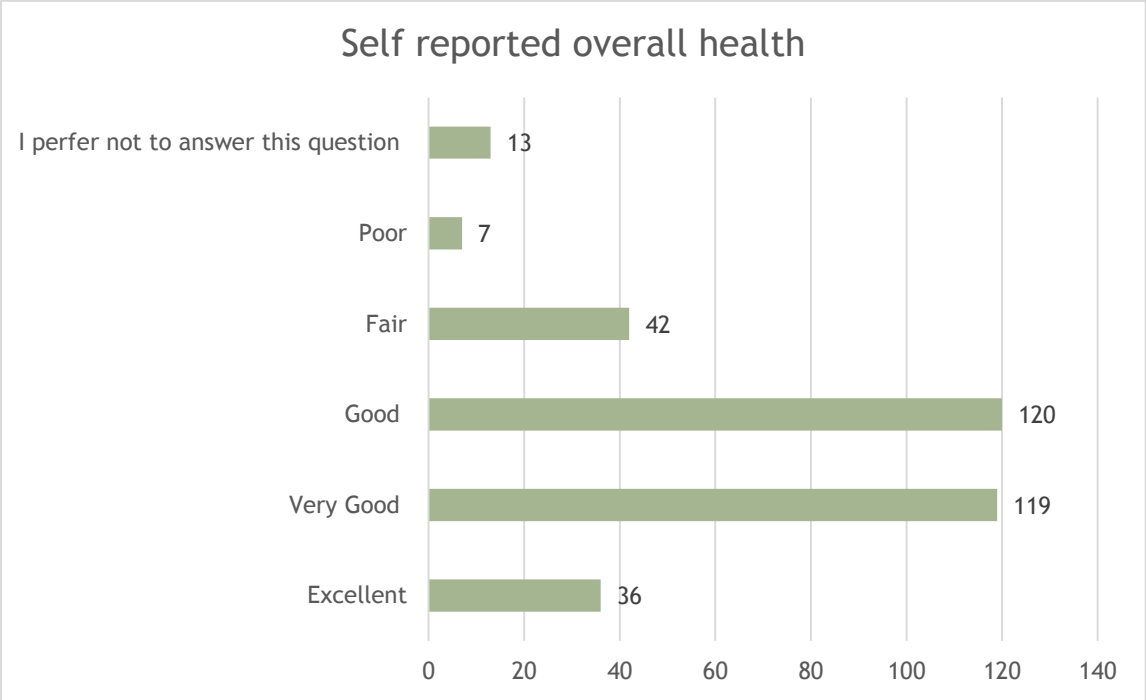


22. On a scale of 1-5 (1 = strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree) how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

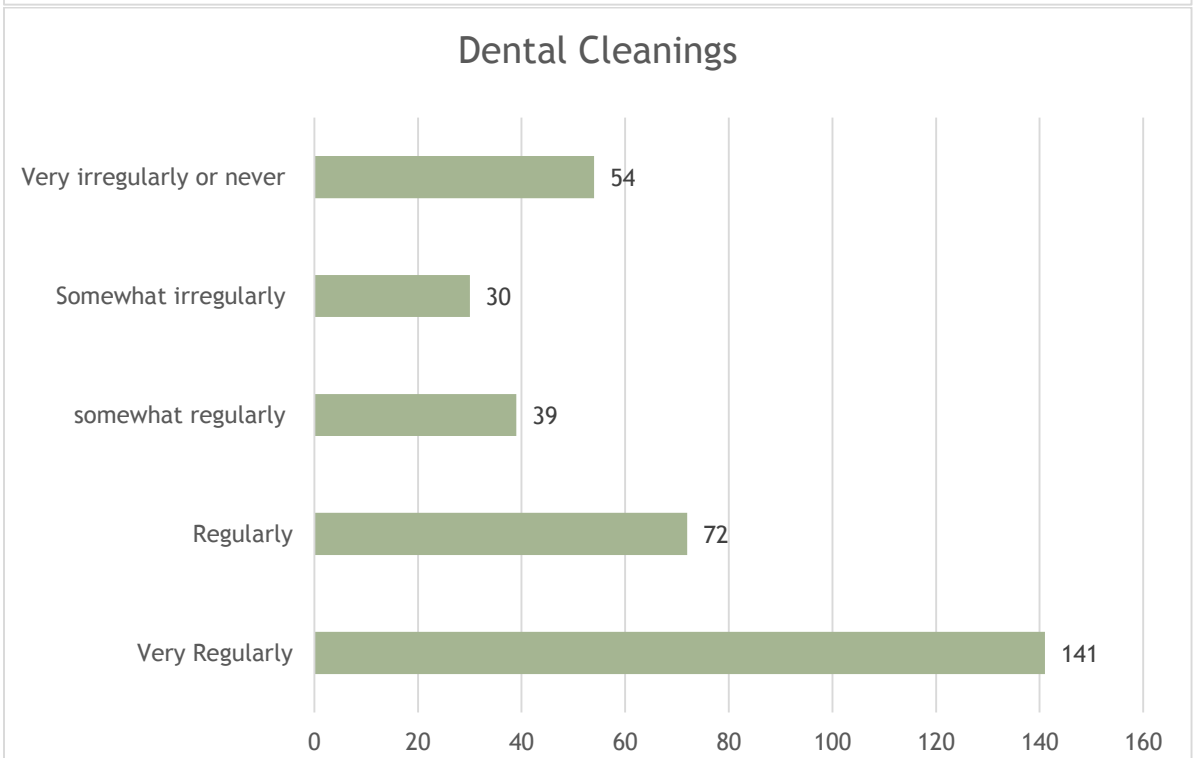
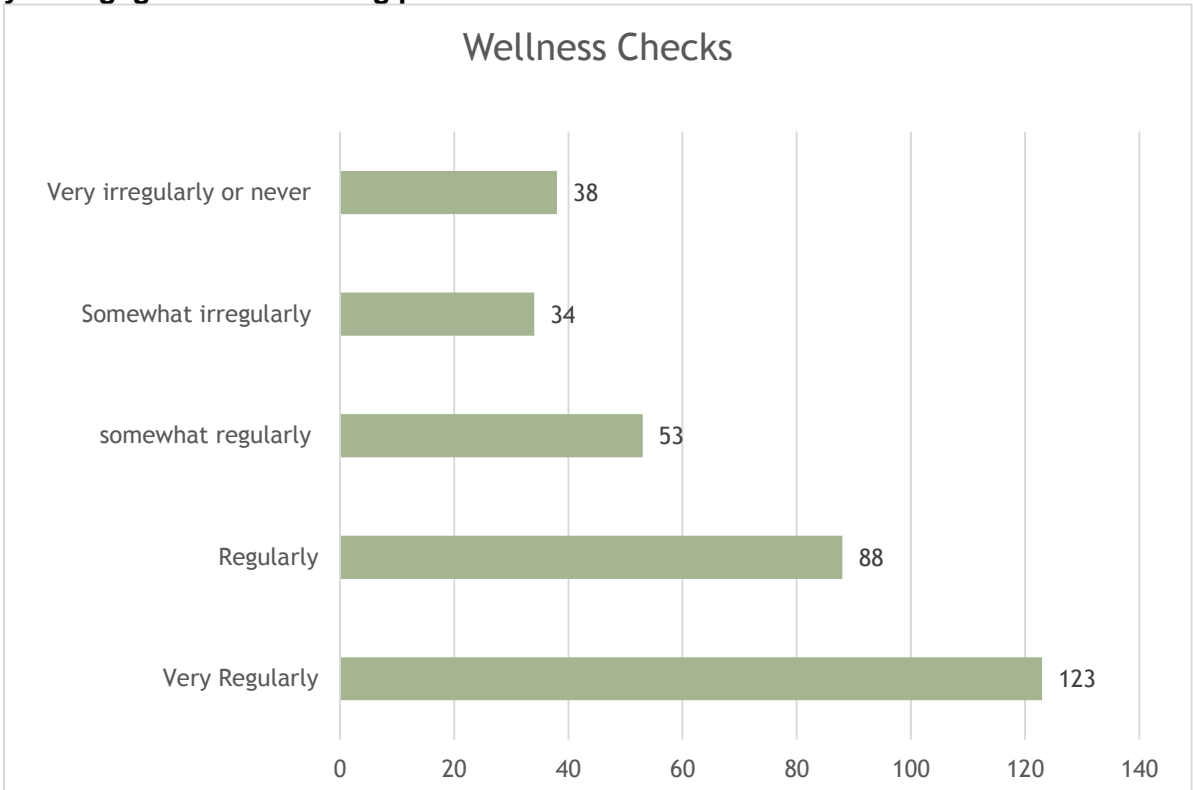


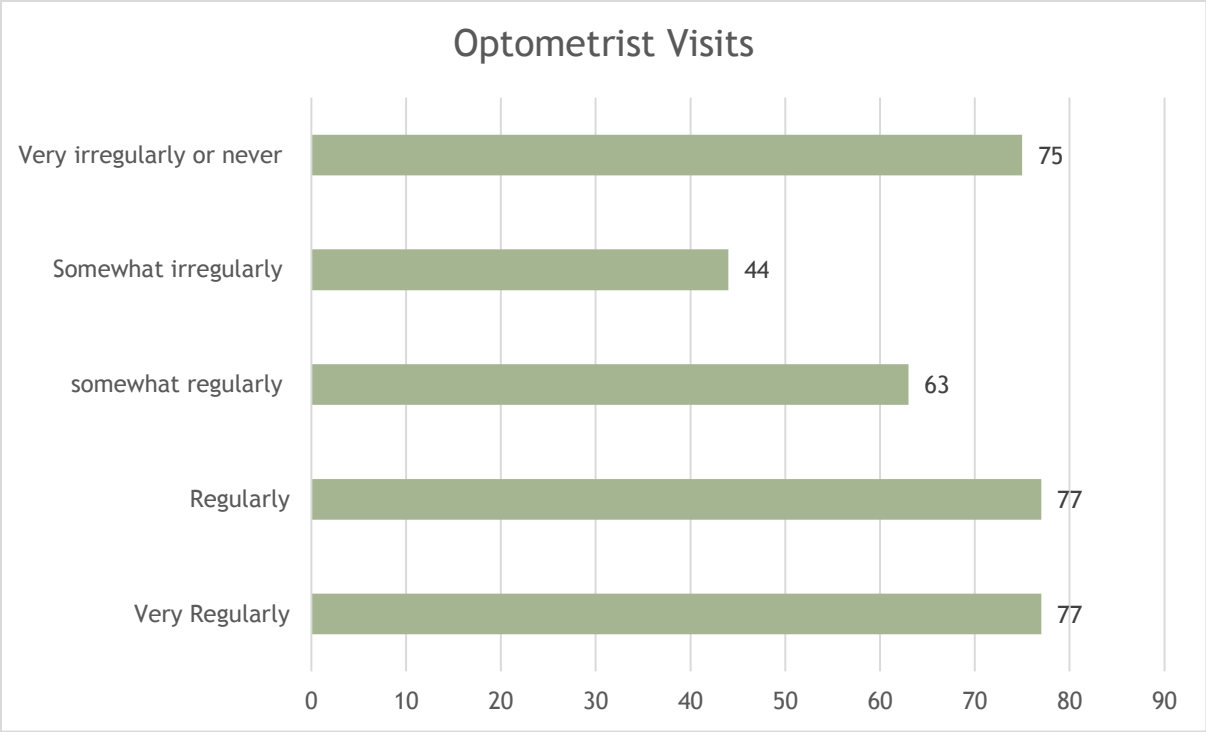
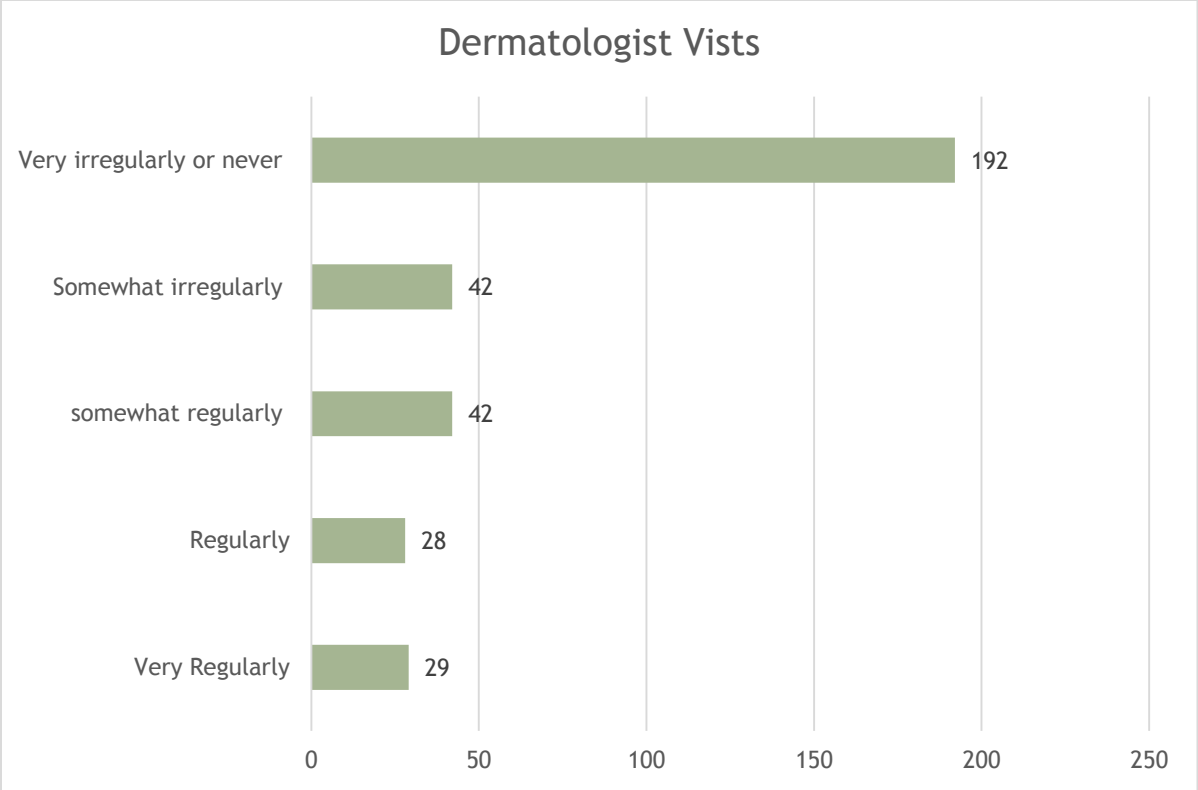


23. How would you describe your overall health?

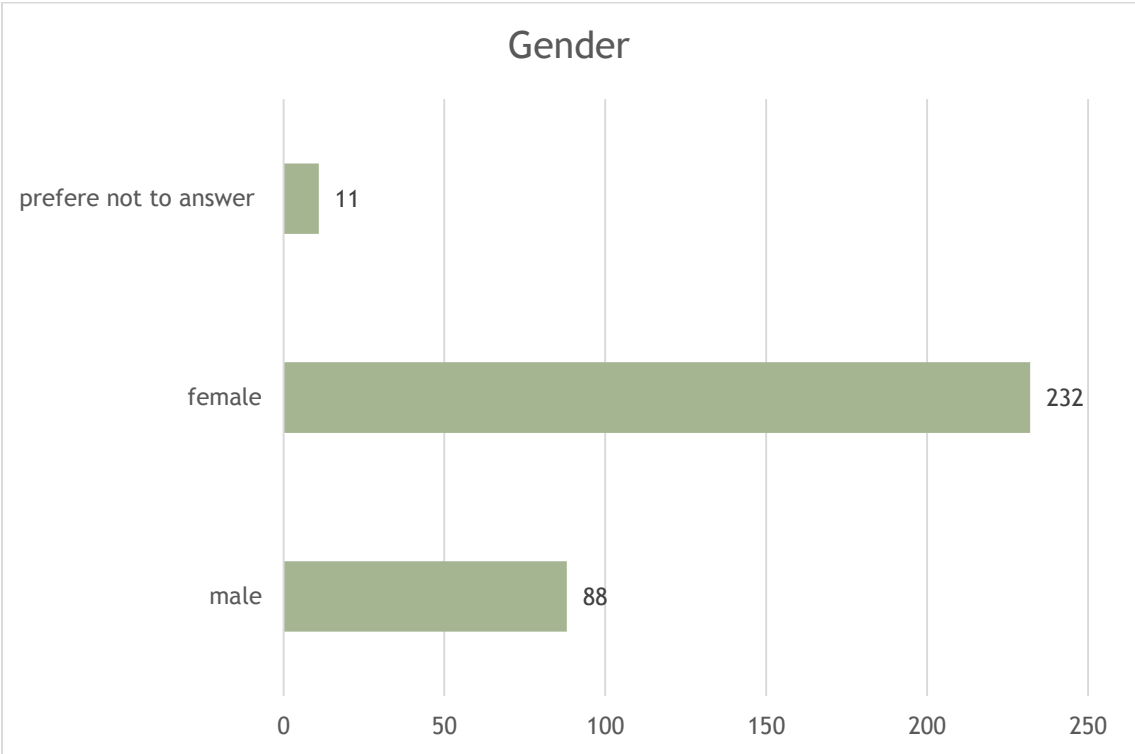


24. On a scale of 1-5, 1 = very regularly and 5 = very irregularly or never, how often do you engage in the following preventative healthcare measures?

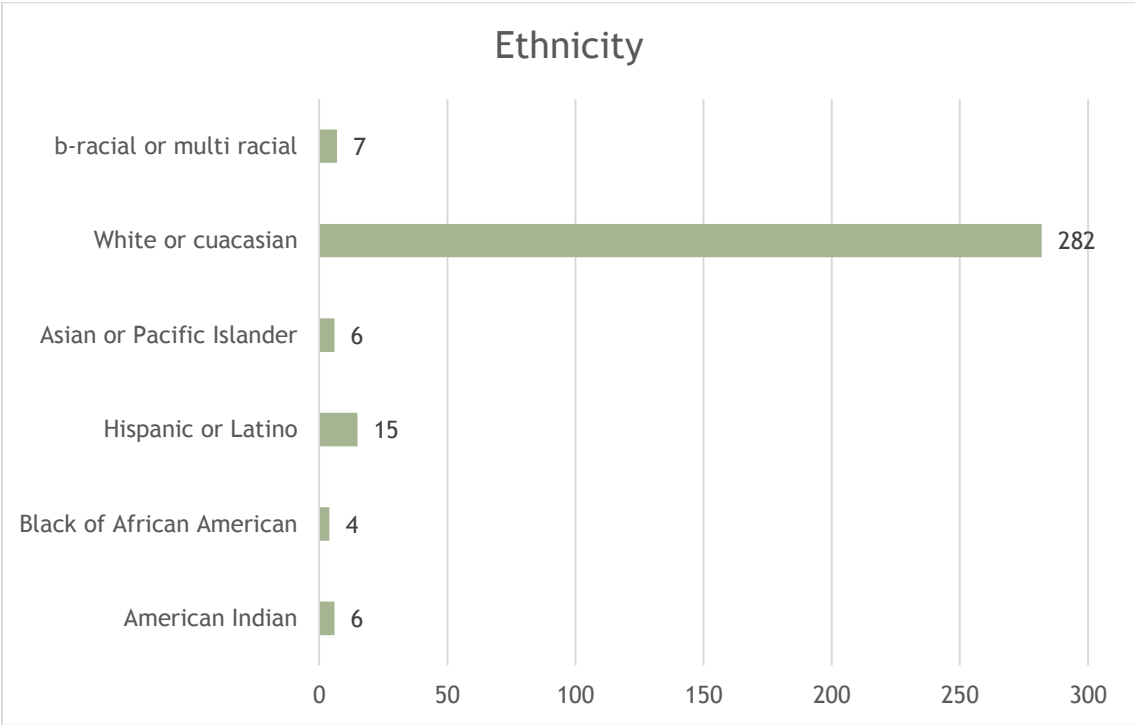




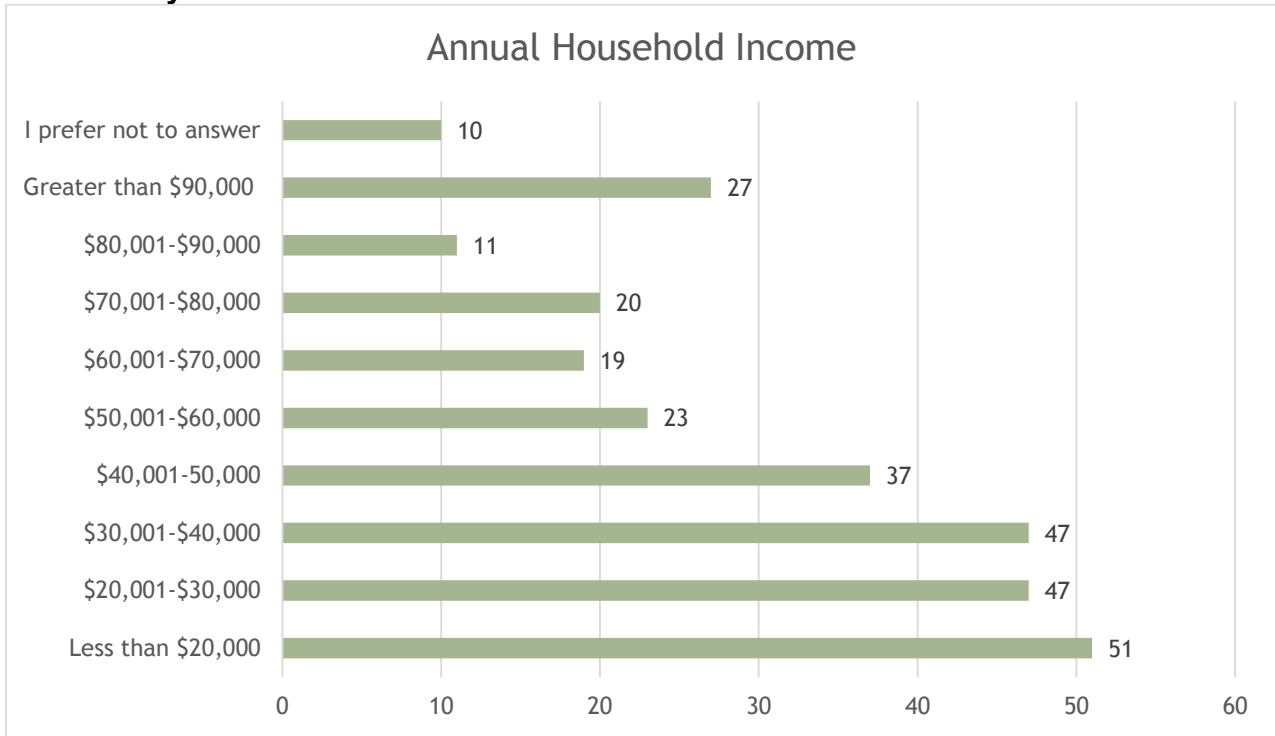
25. What is your gender?



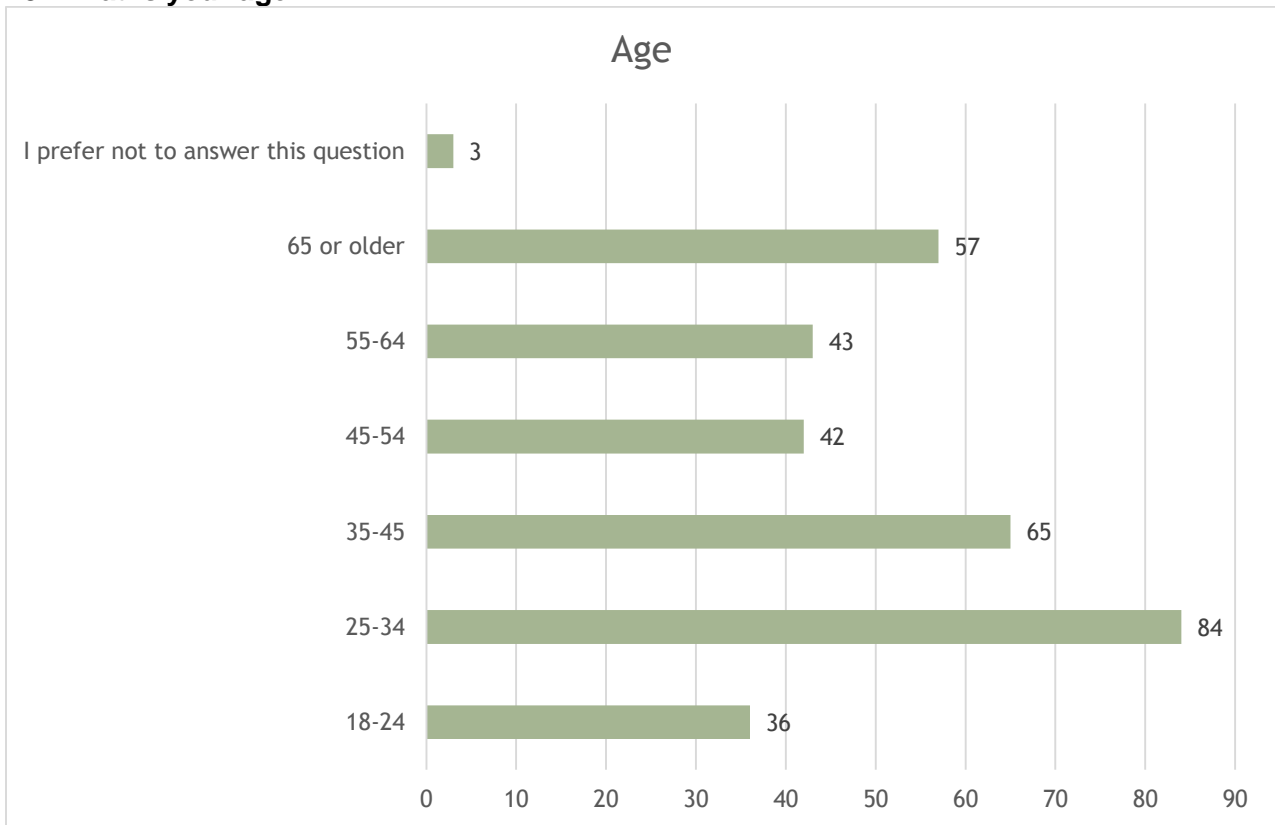
26. What is your ethnicity?



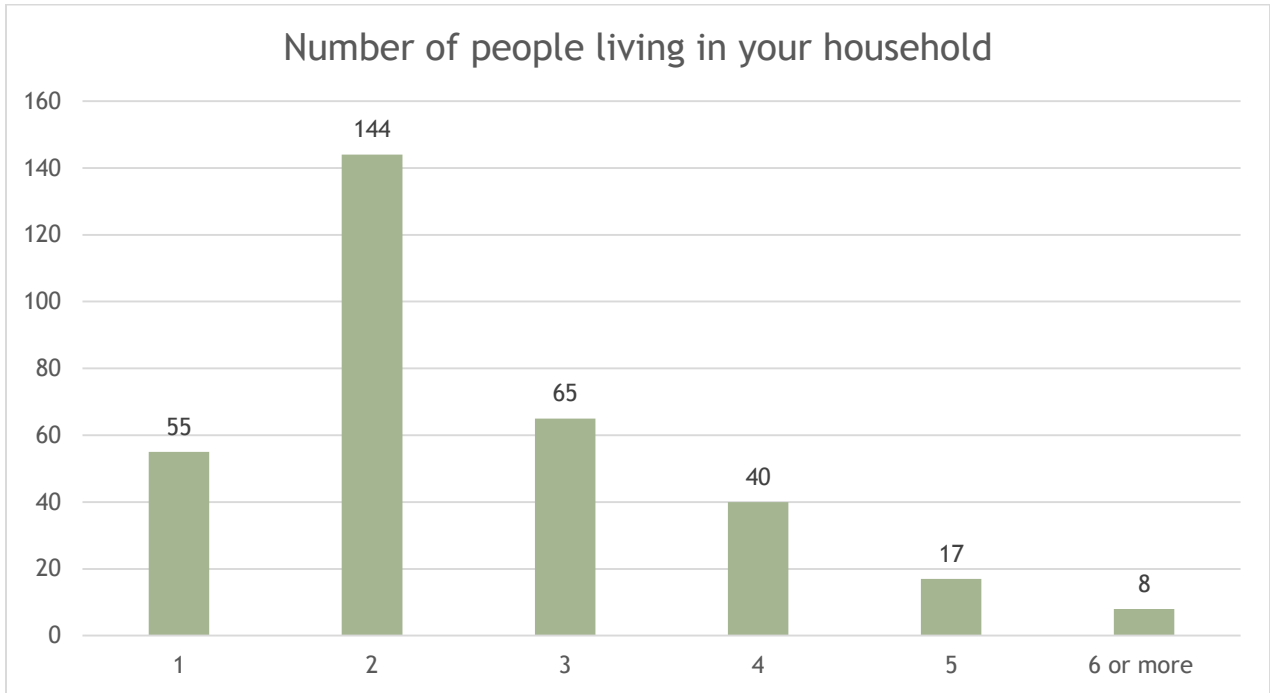
27. What is your household's annual income?



28. What is your age?



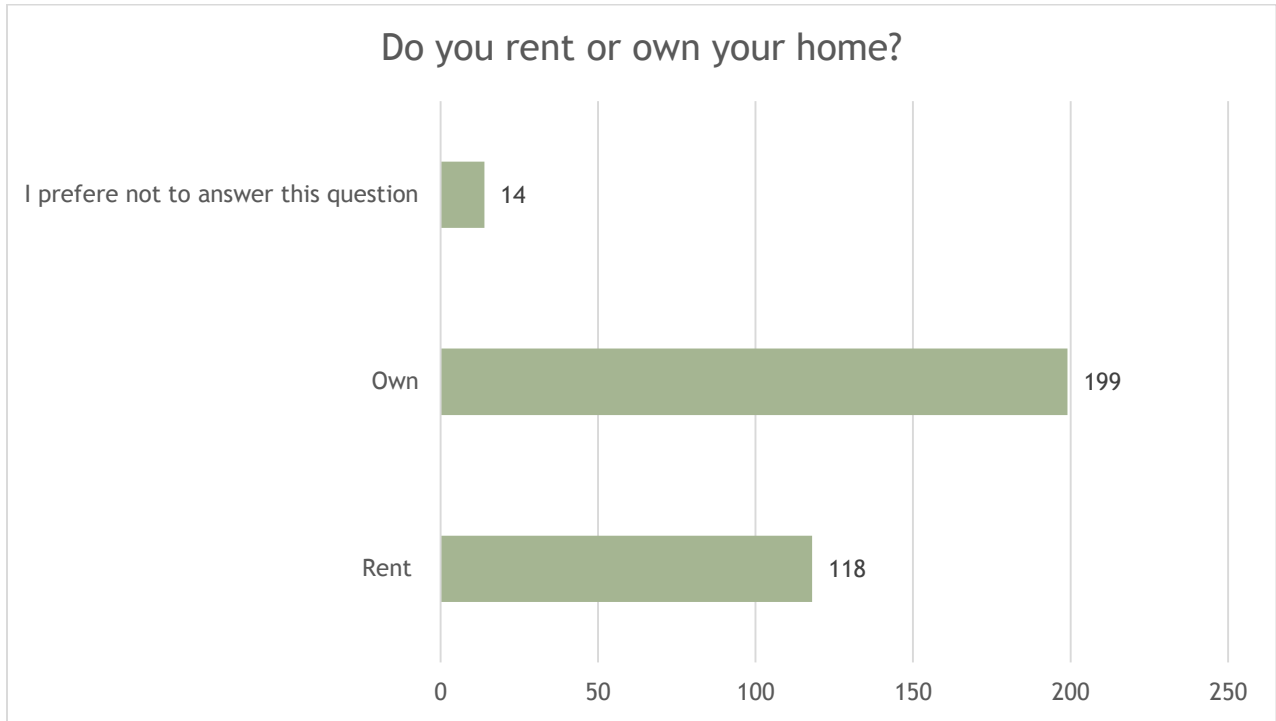
29. How many people are in your household?



30. How long have you lived in the Vista neighborhood?



31. Do you rent or own your home?



32. How many people under the age of 18 are in your household?

