



# Epi Data Brief

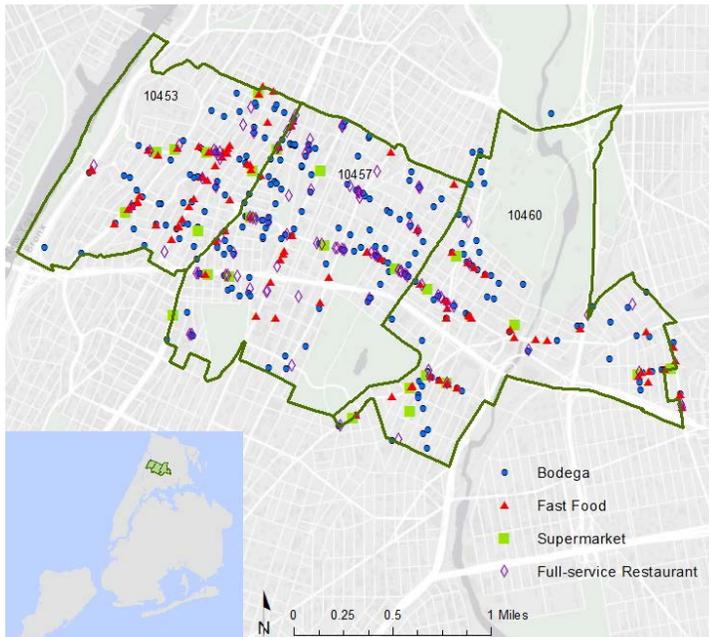
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

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## Describing the Food Environment in the South Bronx Neighborhood of Crotona-Tremont

- The goal of this study was to characterize the Crotona-Tremont neighborhood food environment, based on type of food establishments and the availability and promotion of selected foods and beverages in bodegas and supermarkets. Crotona-Tremont is part of the South Bronx, where about one-third of adults are obese.
- In 2012, data collectors canvassed the Crotona-Tremont neighborhood and recorded the name, address, and type of all food retail and food service establishments, including bodegas, supermarkets, fast food restaurants, full-service restaurants, Green Carts, fruit and vegetable carts and stores, food carts, and specialty groceries.
- At bodegas and supermarkets that agreed to participate, data collectors used a standardized tool to measure the availability of healthy foods and beverages and the promotion of selected products within each store. Assessments were completed at 216 stores (194 bodegas and 22 supermarkets) for a 74% participation rate.

### Bodegas, supermarkets, fast food and full-service restaurants in Crotona-Tremont, Bronx, 2012



Source: Crotona-Tremont Food Environment Audit 2012

### Food Establishments

This study included *food service establishments* that primarily serve ready-to-eat, prepared foods, including full-service restaurants, fast food restaurants, and mobile food carts, as well as *food retailers* selling food and food products intended for off-premises consumption, such as supermarkets, bodegas, and mobile produce carts.

### Types of Food Service Establishments

**Fast food restaurants** serve prepared foods and do not offer table service.

**Food carts** are mobile street carts selling prepared foods.

**Full-service restaurants** serve prepared foods and have table service with menus.

### Types of Food Retailers

**Bodegas** (or corner stores) are small convenience stores that have no more than two cash registers and sell a variety of mostly non-perishable grocery items.

**Green Carts** are mobile produce carts that have Green Cart permits, can only sell fresh, unprocessed fruits and vegetables, and vend in designated areas of New York City. For more information visit:

[nyc.gov/html/doh/html/living/greencarts.shtml](http://nyc.gov/html/doh/html/living/greencarts.shtml)

**Fruit and vegetable carts** are non-Green Cart mobile produce carts.

**Fruit and vegetable stores** sell primarily fresh produce.

**Specialty groceries** specialize in one product area, and include bakeries, butcher shops, etc.

**Supermarkets** are large chain or independent stores carrying a wide selection of fresh produce and other grocery items.

### Background on Crotona-Tremont

The South Bronx, New York, neighborhood of Crotona-Tremont consists of three ZIP codes—10453, 10457, and 10460 (see map on left), with a population of 206,116. Sixty-six percent of the population is Hispanic and 38% has an income less than the federal poverty level (US Census).

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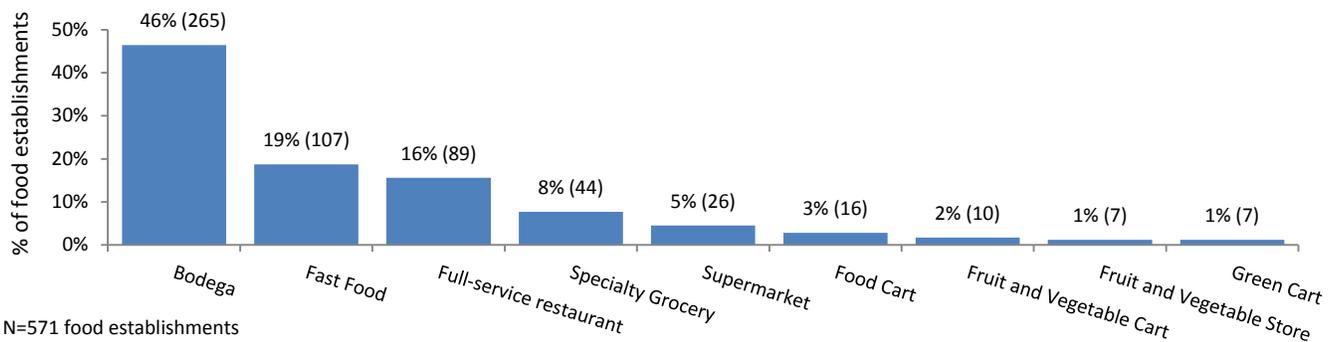
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### MORE New York City Health Data and Publications

- For complete tables of data presented in this Brief, visit [nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/epi/datatable44.pdf](http://nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/epi/datatable44.pdf)
- Visit EpiQuery – the Health Department’s online, interactive health data system at [www.nyc.gov/health/EpiQuery](http://www.nyc.gov/health/EpiQuery)

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## Distribution of food establishments in Crotona-Tremont, Bronx, 2012



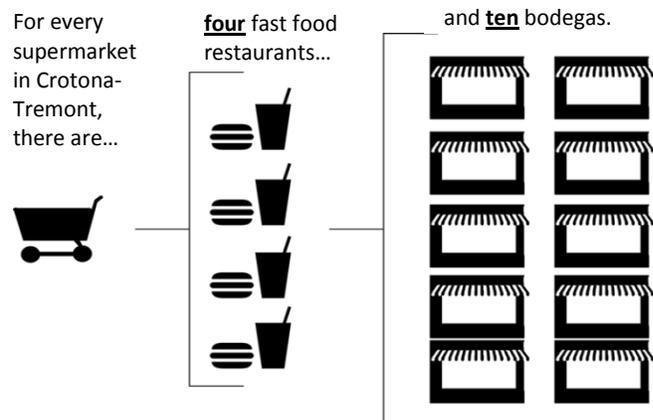
N=571 food establishments

Source: Crotona-Tremont Food Environment Audit 2012

## Distribution of food establishments in Crotona-Tremont, Bronx

- Among the 571 food establishments identified in Crotona-Tremont, bodegas accounted for the largest component of the food environment (46%, N=265). Among food retail stores alone (bodegas, supermarkets, specialty groceries, and fruit and vegetable stores), bodegas were by far the most common, accounting for 77% of these stores.
- Fast food restaurants were the second most common food establishment, at 19% (N=107).
- Sites that specialized in fresh produce (Green Carts, fruit and vegetable carts and stores) were the least common, comprising 4% of food establishments in Crotona-Tremont.
- On average, there were 88 bodegas and 36 fast food restaurants per Crotona-Tremont ZIP code, compared to just 9 supermarkets.

### Ratio of supermarkets to fast food restaurants and bodegas in Crotona-Tremont, Bronx, 2012



Source: Crotona-Tremont Food Environment Audit 2012

## Availability of healthy foods in supermarkets and bodegas

- Although most bodegas sold fresh produce<sup>1</sup> (91%), 20% sold no fresh vegetables (excluding onions and potatoes) and 13% sold no fresh fruit.
- At stores with delis offering prepared foods (168 bodegas, 20 supermarkets), only 3% of bodegas and 5% of supermarkets posted healthy options as menu items (i.e., sandwiches on whole wheat bread<sup>2</sup> or meal combinations with fruit or water).
- Bodegas typically carry a wide variety of packaged snack foods; however, healthier snacks were limited. Though most bodegas (93%) had grab-and-go packages of unsweetened nuts and/or dried fruit, only 10% carried baked potato chips and only 7% carried granola bars that met NYC Food Standards.<sup>3</sup>
- Fewer than half (44%) of bodegas offered low-sodium canned vegetables, beans or soup<sup>4</sup>, and roughly a third did not offer whole wheat bread<sup>2</sup> or low-fat milk.
- All supermarkets offered produce, whole wheat bread<sup>2</sup>, and low-fat milk. However, 18% did not offer all three types of low-sodium canned goods<sup>4</sup> assessed (vegetables, beans, and soup).

#### Definitions

<sup>1</sup>**Produce** – fresh fruits and vegetables (excludes onions, potatoes, lemons, limes, herbs, and canned, frozen, or dried fruits and vegetables).

<sup>2</sup>**Whole wheat bread** – At least 2 grams of fiber per slice and whole grain listed as the first ingredient.

<sup>3</sup>**Healthier snacks** comply with the [NYC Food Standards](#) and are in a grab-and-go, snack-sized package; excludes items such as boxes containing multiple granola bars and large bags of chips.

<sup>4</sup>**Low sodium canned goods** – 480 mg of sodium or less per serving for soup, 290 mg of sodium or less per serving for beans and vegetables, AND front label indicates that the product is low in sodium.

<sup>5</sup>**Sugary drinks** have added caloric sweetener and more than 25 calories per 8-ounce serving.

<sup>6</sup>**Unhealthy snacks** do not comply with the [NYC Food Standards](#).

<sup>7</sup>**Low-calorie drinks** have 25 calories or fewer per 8-ounce serving.

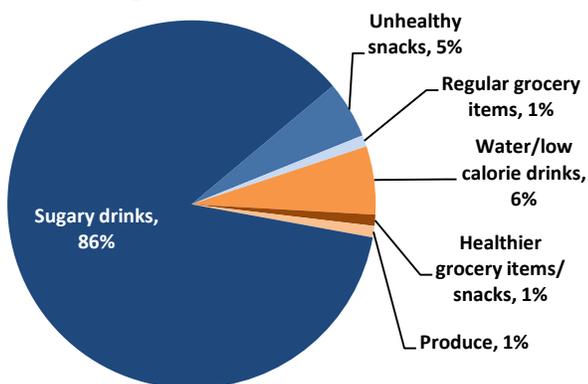
## Promotional placement of healthy and unhealthy products

- Fewer than half of all stores placed refrigerated water at eye level (43% of bodegas, 41% of supermarkets).
- Supermarkets heavily promoted sugary drinks.<sup>5</sup> On average, sugary drinks were found on eleven special displays or end caps (outward facing shelving at the end of aisles) per supermarket.
- Unhealthy snacks<sup>6</sup> were heavily promoted at bodegas and supermarkets. Seventy-three percent of bodegas and 91% of supermarkets placed unhealthy snacks at checkout, and 68% of bodegas and 82% of supermarkets displayed unhealthy snacks on end caps. All supermarkets and 58% of bodegas featured unhealthy snacks on free-standing displays.

## Advertising for unhealthy products is widespread in supermarkets and bodegas

- We assessed the presence of alcohol and tobacco advertising and counted the number of advertisements for several categories of food and non-alcoholic beverages, including sugary and low-calorie<sup>7</sup> drinks, water, regular and low-fat milk, unhealthy snacks, healthier snacks, canned goods, bread, and produce. Advertisements that were incorporated into the product display (e.g. branded refrigerators, advertisements on awnings, etc.) and advertisements for multiple products (e.g. advertisements for sugary and low-calorie drinks together) were excluded.

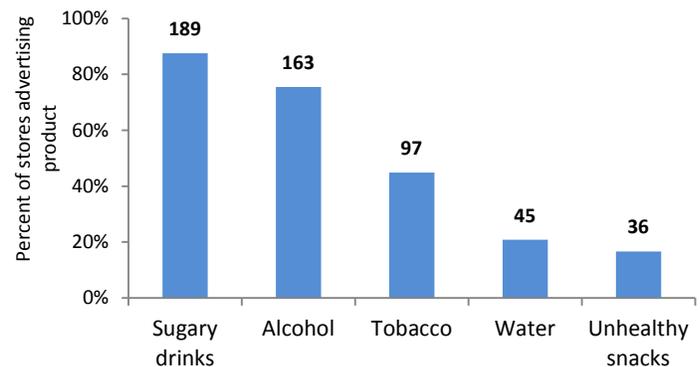
### Distribution of food and non-alcoholic beverage advertisements in supermarkets and bodegas in Crotona-Tremont, Bronx



N=2,317 advertisements

Source: Crotona-Tremont Food Environment Audit 2012

### Top five products advertised by bodegas and supermarkets in Crotona-Tremont, Bronx



N= 216 stores (bodegas and supermarkets)

Source: Crotona-Tremont Food Environment Audit 2012

- The top three products advertised by assessed stores were sugary drinks, advertised by 88% of stores, alcohol (75%), and tobacco (45%). Few stores advertised healthier products: 20% advertised water, 14% advertised low-calorie drinks, 4% advertised produce, and 1% advertised healthy snacks.
- For every healthy advertisement (for low-calorie drinks, water, low-fat milk, healthy canned goods, whole wheat bread, healthy snacks, and fresh produce), there were roughly eleven unhealthy advertisements (for sugary drinks, whole milk, white bread, regular canned goods, and snacks that do not comply with NYC Food Standards). The vast majority (86%) of advertisements were for sugary drinks.

### Data Sources

**Crotona-Tremont Food Environment Audit 2012:** The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's South Bronx District Public Health Office and Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Tobacco Control conducted a survey of food establishments.

**US Census American Factfinder:** Data on the characteristics of the Crotona-Tremont neighborhood are from the Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics (2010) and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2007-2011).

**NYC Community Health Survey 2011:** South Bronx obesity prevalence was obtained from the Community Health Survey, an annual telephone survey of adult New Yorkers conducted by the Health Department. For more information, visit

[www.nyc.gov/health/survey](http://www.nyc.gov/health/survey).

**The Health Department's Shop Healthy NYC program works to improve the food retail environment in neighborhoods throughout NYC. Please note that the data presented here were collected prior to implementing Shop Healthy programming in the neighborhoods included in this study. For more information on the Health Department's work with food retailers, visit [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health) and search Shop Healthy.**