

Although Asheville does not have all the options of larger cities, one can order groceries and other household necessities for curbside pickup. Delivery is also available if you live close to the store. The process can be frustrating, but it is possible to order groceries safely. The description below summarizes the experience of a couple of WWPC seniors who have successfully negotiated the process, albeit with a few bumps along the way.

1. AMAZON. If you already have an Amazon account, or even better, a Prime account, you already know how to order a wide variety of nonperishable goods. Amazon sells food items, paper products, hand sanitizer, etc. Of course, some items are unavailable at the moment, but many are available. Watch the prices for gouging. So far, Amazon is doing an incredible job in shipping quickly or updating, and even refunding, for late items. Amazon is also an excellent source for games, books, puzzles, etc. to send to your housebound grandchildren.

Another option if you have an Amazon Prime account is to shop at Whole Foods. If you live in Asheville (unfortunately, not Black Mountain), you can arrange delivery. The website also says the store offers curbside pickup, although neither of us has used it yet.

2. WALMART. Like Amazon, you can order a wide variety of nonperishable goods at Walmart.com. You do have to establish an account if you do not already have one. You can get cases or bundles of staple items such as canned goods, but you can't get paper products delivered. The store in east Asheville is currently promising delivery of all (non-paper) items in the next ten days. They do have dog food. Walmart also offers a curbside pickup option but neither of us have used it.

3. HARRIS TEETER. Harris Teeter apparently uses its own employees to operate a curbside pickup and delivery service. Unfortunately for those of us in Black Mountain, the delivery service is limited to a five-mile radius of the store. To use the curbside pickup, you create an online account, fill your cart, and select a pickup time. Once you have submitted an order, you can call the store to make up to five changes in your cart. The Harris Teeter folks are very pleasant in changing and filling your order. When your order is ready, you drive to a pickup location at the front of the store. The biggest problem is the limited number of time slots. The store schedules them six days out and releases a new day each night at midnight; by the next morning, all of the slots have generally been taken. The store does reserve Thursday pickups from 9 – 2:30 for seniors (over 60); seniors also get a 5% discount on that day.

4. PUBLIX. Publix uses Insta-cart, a third party shopping company for its curbside pickup. The process is similar to Harris Teeter. You open an account, choose a pickup time, and fill your cart. Two aspects of the Publix approach make it easier to use. First, it has been easier to get a pickup time. As demand grows, it is likely to be more difficult to get pick up windows, but keep trying. Second, it is easier to change your order with Insa-cart. You can update your order any time before the shopping begins, and the shopper will call or text you with alternatives for items that are not available. This communication is easier if you use the telephone app. When your order is ready, you park in a designated parking slot, and someone brings the groceries out.

5. OTHER STORES. Unfortunately for those of us in Black Mountain and Swannanoa, Ingles does not yet have curbside pickup or delivery. Other stores probably do, but we have not used them. If anyone wants to expand this list, please do so.

## A FEW GENERAL COMMENTS

1. Experts recommend leaving cardboard deliveries for at least 24 hours. Leave deliveries on your porch and wait a few days to open. If you are willing to go to extra trouble, here is a video from a doctor explaining how to make your food even safer (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?e=sjDuwc9KBps>).

2. For pickup groceries, re-bag and refrigerate perishable items in a particular place for a few days. Non-perishable items can remain in your vehicle for several days, or you can pick them up with gloves

and place them in the garage or on the porch. The virus is supposed to have the shortest life on paper, cardboard, etc. It lives longer on plastic, and survives longest on most metals.

3. It is nice to leave a gratuity for the person who brings the items to your car – and for your shopper, if there is a means to do so. Some sites let you leave a tip for the shopper. You can also put a tip in an envelope and remind the person who delivers to your car, to pick it up.