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Study reveals the unexpected impacts of food delivery services — here's what you should know before placing your next order

Story by Tina Deines • 22m • 3 min read



Today, one in five consumers has groceries delivered to their doorstep at least once a month.

Online grocery delivery services like Instacart have gained popularity in recent years, and this could actually be good for the environment, experts say.

OPB reported on the trend, noting that a few studies indicate getting meals delivered may produce less planet-warming pollution than an average trip to the grocery store. For instance, a 2022 study from the University of Michigan's Center for Sustainable Systems pointed out that meal delivery vehicles are often clustered with numerous orders for dropoff in a given neighborhood. This makes these services more efficient than each family driving a separate car to the grocery store.

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Meal kits through services like HelloFresh — even with all of their excess packaging — also come out on top. A [2019 study](#) published in the Resources, Conservation and [Recycling](#) journal found them to be a more efficient use of food. Overall, the researchers surmised that prepackaged kits produced 33% less carbon pollution than a meal made with ingredients purchased at a grocery store.

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 BrightDrop 400 electric vans to assist Walmart's last-mile deliveries in major U.S. cities

Chevrolet's BrightDrop 400 electric vans are being deployed in major U.S. cities this year to support Walmart's InHome delivery service. The introduction of these electric vans will help Walmart expand its delivery capabilities, reduce emissions, and provide drivers with vehicles designed for safety, efficiency, and comfort.

Walmart InHome associates, who deliver groceries directly to customers' homes, participated in a pilot program with General Motors to evaluate the BrightDrop 400. The pilot included real-world testing in various driving conditions, including urban areas and residential neighborhoods. According to feedback from the associates, the vans performed well, particularly in areas such as battery range, maneuverability, and advanced safety features like the 360-degree HD Surround Vision camera and blind-zone steering assist.

The electric vans were noted for their ability to navigate congested areas and

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