

Using Shopping Data for Health Research

We conduct research exploring how everyday shopping behaviours relate to health outcomes across the population. By analysing patterns across a broad range of products—such as food and drink, over-the-counter medications, and personal care items—we can investigate how people manage symptoms, respond to illness, and adapt behaviours over time. These insights support research into prevention, early detection, and better self-management of health conditions.

Data Requirements

We are interested in the following data attributes:

- Pseudo-anonymised customer ID
- Product description
- Product category
- Product sales price and any associated information (e.g. discounts, deals, etc)
- Transaction ID
- Purchase timestamp (date and time of purchase)
- Quantity
- Store location

We may also consider other attributes, depending on the research question (e.g., store size, online/in-person purchase).

Data Governance and Security

All data is handled in line with strict data protection, ethical, and governance standards. Key principles include:

- Use of pseudo-anonymised data only
- Secure data transfer and storage; OR access within the retailers own secure database
- Access limited to approved researchers
- Use solely for clearly defined, ethically approved research purposes

We work transparently with partners to ensure data use aligns with legal, ethical, and reputational considerations.

Impact

By collaborating on this research, partners will contribute to:

- New public health insights that support better management of health conditions
- Improved understanding of how people respond to symptoms in everyday life
- Evidence to inform public health policy, services, and interventions
- Research that reflects real-world behaviour across diverse populations

Participation demonstrates a commitment to societal benefit and maintaining customer trust.