

Don't worry about a grocery delivery slot, Instacart will pair you with a real-time shopper

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Instacart is adding new features Wednesday to speed up its delivery service after struggling to keep up with higher demand.

For weeks, customers in many markets had a hard time finding a delivery slot as the coronavirus crisis drove more people to stay indoors and order essentials via Instacart. On Wednesday, the company added two new features aimed at making service faster and more convenient for those under stay-at-home orders.

Instacart is adding a "Fast & Flexible" option that matches customers with shoppers more quickly, and it's rolling out an "Order Ahead" tool that lets you set when you'd like to receive longer-term dropoffs.

'Fast & Flexible'

One of the new features pairs app users with available shoppers in real time to cut down on the time it takes to receive an order. The tool will give customers the option to have an order delivered by the first available shopper, rather than have deliveries pegged to a specific window of time.

Customers will see an estimated delivery range, such as Monday through Wednesday, and they'll get a notification when the order was picked up by a [shopper](#) and is on the way.

'Order Ahead'

After testing out Order Ahead in select markets, Instacart will let all U.S. customers place orders up to two weeks in advance in the coming weeks.

Typically, users could choose delivery windows only up to one week ahead.

The move is meant to enable people to restock their pantry and purchase recurring essentials well in advance of when they'll need them.

Instacart, a [delivery](#) service that partners with more than 25,000 stores in North America, has said orders have surged 150% in recent weeks.

"The [customer](#) demand we expected over the next two to four years has happened on the Instacart platform in the last two to four weeks," said Apoorva Mehta, CEO of Instacart, in a statement.

The company has hired over 150,000 "active shoppers" over the past two weeks to meet increasing demand—continuing its plans to add 300,000 additional workers.

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