

“

We can finally get out of our compound! It was such a pleasure to shop again in a supermarket ... The time was so limited that I had to rush, and that made me sweat with anxiety.

She said that Carrefour began planning for resumption of service in mid-April. After basic supplies were brought in, she ordered snacks for customers long deprived of their favorite comfort foods.

“Now we have ample stocks Lay’s, Oishi and Orion potato chips,” she said.

Not everyone has found the new shopping freedoms a blessing.

A 70-year-old man surnamed Xu sat on a bench at a bus stop on Xincun Road, with his empty shopping basket next to him. He wasn’t waiting for a bus. Most haven’t resumed full service yet. He was simply resting.

Xu hadn’t received a Carrefour invitation card that day, but he still made a shopping list and went out to see if any other stores might be open.

“There were few stores open, but I couldn’t walk far,” he said. “So I didn’t get anything.”

Xu lives with his wife and his 90-year-old mother. Due to the poor health of his wife and his mother’s advanced age, he was responsible for the shopping.

During the lockdown, Xu learned how to engage in buying groups to ensure that his family had enough to eat. However, items such as yogurt, milk, coffee and beer haven’t been available for more than two weeks.

The medicine he wanted to buy also was not available.

Xu’s wife suffers from insomnia. Before the lockdown, he went to the Wanli branch of the Putuo District Traditional Chinese Hospital to get sleeping pills for her. They have now run out.

Sitting on his bench, he said: “It takes me half an hour to walk there. I’m tired, and I’ll rest here for a while before heading back.”

Some 1,193 of the 1,626 outlets of 12 major supermarket chains in the city had resumed operations as of last week, with 220 stores resuming offline operations, said Gu Jun, director of the city’s Commerce Commission.

In addition to supermarkets,

convenience stores are also reopening. However, online takeout orders continue to be the main service mode.

On Xincun Road, a FamilyMart convenience store was lit up, but the door was open only wide enough to hand out plastic bags to deliverymen.

Store manager Zhuo Yi said that the store reopened on April 22 and she has been living in the store since then.

“The shop is always well-stocked every morning,” she said. “We begin accepting orders at 8am every day, and there are frequently dozens of orders at once.”

Zhuo formed a WeChat group with customers from the surrounding community. She notifies them of any new items in stock.

As of last week, Shanghai had about 700 FamilyMart convenience stores reopened, with most operating on the online delivery platform Ele.me.

However, restrictions continue. Customers can purchase only bento boxes, sandwiches, rice balls, fresh milk, bread, instant noodles and a few snacks. For takeout, the starting delivery fee is 50 yuan.

Deliveryman Jiang Cheng waited in front of the FamilyMart for three orders he had to take to residential compounds.

“This isn’t much,” he said. “I sometimes pick up more than 10 orders at a time.”

Jiang works for Ele.me. He said there are significantly more deliverymen on the road now that convenience stores and restaurant chains are resuming online orders.

“The fast food, bakery and fruit stores that have reopened are pretty busy,” he said.

In addition to Putuo District, citizens within the designated areas in Jiading, Fengxian, Jinshan, Chongming, Qingpu and Songjiang are also allowed to go to supermarkets, drugstores and hospitals in their districts. Private cars are allowed in limited areas, and public transport is being gradually restored.



Instant noodles, milk, eggs are among products that the woman surnamed Li bought at Carrefour’s Wanli outlet. — Ti Gong



A woman enters the Carrefour outlet, producing her pass, the store’s “invitation card” and a negative COVID-19 nucleic acid test result. — Zhou Shengjie



Above: An “invitation card” from Carrefour’s Wanli outlet. — Ti Gong

Left: Government passes for residents in a compound of Wanli Subdistrict in Putuo District to go out during certain hours at different dates for activities, including shopping at nearby supermarkets.