

Healthy Food Donation List

If you plan to donate canned or packaged food, please consider using the % Daily Value (% DV) found in the Nutrition Facts Table to compare products. In general, products with 5% DV or less for sodium and total fat are a healthy choice. Products with 15% DV or more for fibre, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron are also healthy choices.



Vegetables & Fruit

includes canned (and fresh or frozen if storage facilities are available)

- For canned vegetables, tomato products and soup choose those with no added salt or the lowest sodium content.
- For canned fruit choose those packed in water or fruit juice rather than syrup.
- Choose 100% juice instead of fruit beverages, drinks or cocktails.
- Choose unsweetened apple sauce.
- Choose plain dried fruit such as raisins, apricots etc. instead of fruit leathers and "fruit" candies.
- Choose vegetable juices with lower sodium.

Milk & Alternatives

includes milk, fortified soya beverage, yogurt and cheese (if storage facilities are available)

- Dry milk powder can be added to foods to increase the calcium, vitamin D and protein, for example it can be added to casseroles, liquid milk, cream soups and more.
- Choose lower fat (skim, 1% and 2% MF) evaporated milk. MF stands for milk fat.
- Some agencies can accept fresh milk, fortified soya beverage, yogurt, & cheese if cold storage facilities are available – choose 2% MF or less for milk and yogurts; for cheese choose 20% MF or less.
- Choose puddings made with skim milk as the first ingredient.

Grain Products

includes pasta, crackers, granola bars, hot & cold cereals, rice

- Look for the words "whole grain" in the first item on the ingredients list, for example, whole grain wheat.
- If storage facilities are available choose fresh bread products higher in fibre and lower in sodium.
- Choose hot & cold cereal made with whole grain, higher in fibre and lower in sugar.
- Look for crackers higher in fibre and lower in fat and sodium.
- Look for granola bars lower in fat, lower in sugar, higher in fibre.
- Choose brown rice and whole wheat pasta.

Meat & Alternatives

includes meat, fish, eggs, (if storage facilities are available) peanut butter, nuts, seeds and beans & legumes

- Choose the lower sodium canned meat & fish products; choose fish canned in water.
- Choose canned baked beans, dried or canned beans and lentils. Look for the lowest sodium content.
- Choose dry roasted, no-salt added nuts and seeds.
- Look at the ingredient list for peanut butter. Choose those with only peanuts listed.
- In addition to peanut butter, consider choosing other nut butters such as almond.
- Choose fresh fish, meat, eggs and tofu if cold storage facilities are available.

Why do people use food banks?

Sometimes, people in our community do not have enough money to buy healthy food, or enough food. This is called “food insecurity” or sometimes called “hunger”.¹

Food insecurity affects how much and what kind of food a person eats and may stop a person from eating enough of the calories they need for energy, and the vitamins and minerals needed to keep them healthy today and in the future.² Adults and teenagers in Canadian food-insecure homes may not eat enough healthy foods, such as fruits and vegetables and milk and milk alternative products.³

Being able to buy and eat healthy food (or food security) is a key social determinant of health. The social determinants are things like how much money you have to spend for things you need and extras too, having a good job, being able to go to school, getting support from friends and family and living somewhere where you feel safe and happy. These things or determinants influence the health of people, communities and countries. They are “The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age.”⁴

Because our living conditions affect our health, not everyone has the same chance to be healthy. For example, research shows that we are less healthy over our lifetime if:

- We aren’t working or have bad working conditions.⁵
- We don’t have safe and healthy food.²
- We don’t feel connected and included in our communities.⁶
- We have less money and education.⁷

Research also shows the connection between the social determinants of health and higher health care costs. Some social and economic conditions, including food insecurity, are strongly linked with high-cost health care use, meaning if you don’t have access to healthy food, you are more likely to get sick.⁸

If all the people in our communities have a chance for fair wages, safe working conditions, affordable housing, daycare and public transportation then everyone will be able to afford and access safe and nutritious food that they can enjoy in a way that makes them feel good about themselves. These actions are known as working upstream – changing the causes of poor health before they can hurt our lives and the health of our communities.⁵

For more information on food insecurity, food security and the social determinants of health see <http://www.healthunit.org/nutrition/foodsecurity> and <http://www.healthunit.org/healthequity/> or call 1-800-660-5853.

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2. Tarasuk, Valerie. “Health Implications of Food Insecurity.” In *Social Determinants of Health: Canadian Perspectives*, by Dennis Raphael, 187-200. Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press Inc., 2004.
3. Kirkpatrick, S.I. & Tarasuk, V. “Food Insecurity Is Associated with Nutrient Inadequacies among Canadian Adults and Adolescents.” *The Journal of Nutrition*, 2008: 604-612.
4. World Health Organization. *Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social*. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2008. http://www.who.int/social_determinants/final_report/csdh_finalreport_2008.pdf accessed 01 October 2015
5. National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health. *Let’s talk...Moving upstream*. Antigonish, NS: National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health, St. Francis Xavier University., 2014.
6. Berkman, L.F. & Kawachi, I. “Social Cohesion, Social Capital and Health.” In *Social Epidemiology*, by L.F. & Kawachi, I. Berkman, 174-190. 2000.
7. Raphael, Dennis. *Social Determinants of Health: Canadian Perspectives*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press Inc., 2004.
8. Fitzpatrick, T., Rosella, L.C., Calzavara, A., Petch, J. “Looking Beyond Income and Education: Socioeconomic Status Gradients Among Future High Cost Users of Health Care.” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 2015: 161-171.