Healthy Food Donation List

If you plan to donate canned or packaged food, try using the % Daily Value (%DV) found in the Nutrition Facts table to compare products.

- 5% DV or less is low in a nutrient. Look for products that have 5% or less of sodium and total fat.
- 15% DV or more is high in a nutrient. Look for products that have 15% or more of fibre, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron.

**Vegetables & Fruit**
Includes canned vegetables & fruit, juices and dried fruit. Consider 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 juice with lower sodium.

**Grain Products**
Includes whole grain pasta, crackers, granola bars, hot & cold cereals, and rice. Consider whole grain breads, muffins, and buns if storage facilities are available.

- In the ingredient list, look for the words “whole grain” in the first ingredient listed. For example, “whole grain wheat”.
- Choose fresh bread products (such as bread, bagels, English muffins, and buns) higher in fibre and lower in sodium.
- Choose hot & cold cereal made with whole grains, at least 4 grams of fibre and 8 grams or less of sugar.
- Look for crackers higher in fibre and lower in fat and sodium.
- Look for granola bars lower in fat, lower in sugar, and higher in fibre.
- Choose brown rice and whole wheat pasta.

**Milk & Alternatives**
Includes dry milk powder and canned evaporated milk. Consider liquid cow’s milk, fortified soya beverage, yogurt, and cheese if storage facilities are available.

- Dry milk powder can be added to foods to increase the amount of calcium, vitamin D, and protein.
- Choose lower milk fat (%MF) evaporated milk, such as skim, 1% MF, and 2% MF.
- The amounts of vitamins & minerals in fortified soya beverages are similar to those in cow’s milk. Look for “original” or “plain” flavour to cut back on added sugar.
- Some agencies can accept fresh milk, yogurt and cheese if cold storage facilities are available. Choose 2% MF or less for milk and yoghurt. Choose 20% MF or less for cheeses.

**Meat & Alternatives**
Includes canned meat & fish, peanut butter, nuts, seeds, canned or dried beans & legumes. Consider fresh meat, fish, and eggs if storage facilities are available.

- Choose lower sodium canned meat & fish products; choose fish canned in water.
- Choose canned baked beans that are lower in sugar and sodium. Choose canned beans, lentils, chickpeas, and dry peas that are lower in sodium.
- Choose dry roasted, no-salt added nuts and seeds.
- In addition to peanut butter, consider choosing other nut butters such as almond butter.
- Choose fresh fish, meat, eggs and tofu if cold storage facilities are available.

For more information, contact the Family Health Line at 519-631-9900 ext. 1400 or visit our website www.elginhealth.on.ca

Created in collaboration with Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit.
Why do people use food banks?

Some people in our community do not have enough money to buy enough healthy food. This is called “food insecurity”¹. Charitable food programs may increase access to healthy food and help with hunger relief in the short-term. But, they do not put an end to food insecurity. Food insecurity is an income-based problem not a food-based problem.

Food insecurity affects how much and what kind of food a person eats. This may stop a person from getting enough of the nutrients they need to keep them healthy². In Canada, children and adults in food-insecure homes may not eat enough healthy foods, such as fruits & vegetables and milk & milk alternative products³.

Social Determinants are “the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age”⁴. These determinants impact people’s health. They include:

- Having enough money to pay for basic needs, such as food and rent
- 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.

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 poor working conditions⁵.
- We don’t have safe and healthy food².
- We don’t feel connected and included in our community⁶.
- We have less money and less education⁷.

Research shows a connection between the social determinants of health and higher health care costs. This means that if you don’t have access to healthy food, you are more likely to get sick⁸.

“Working upstream” means changing the causes of poor health before they can harm us and our communities⁵. This includes making sure everyone in our community has enough money for healthy food, safe and affordable housing, daycare, public transportation, and other basic living expenses.

For more information on food insecurity, food security and the social determinants of health see: [https://www.elginhealth.on.ca/costofeatingwell](https://www.elginhealth.on.ca/costofeatingwell)

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1. Tarasuk, V. “Food Insecurity: Dedicated, effective policy solutions”. Webinar 2015  
   http://opha.on.ca/Nutrition-Resource-Centre/Events/Event-Detail.aspx?event=175