



NUTRITION GUIDELINES

I. Purpose

The Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo expresses within its values statement that “every human being has the right to nutritious food”. Our Nutrition Guidelines communicate to clients, affiliated local pantries and other agencies, donors, government programs and the community-at-large that we are committed to providing healthful foods to clients.

The purpose of the Nutrition Guidelines is to define what nutritious foods are and to establish parameters for distribution of those foods. The Nutrition Guidelines will set specific details to model food procurement decisions and promote consistent decision making to acquire more healthful foods for distribution.

II. Rationale and Benefits

These guidelines were developed using data from the 2012 Hunger Free Communities Survey, which was conducted in conjunction with Cal Poly, as well as additional information disseminated by various health and nutrition organizations. As stated by the USDA in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, nutritious foods and beverages are those which “help achieve and maintain a healthy weight, promote health and prevent disease”.

Additionally, Feeding America’s ‘Detailed Foods to Encourage’, or F₂E, framework specifies nutrition criteria for distinguishing between more and less healthful foods in each of the Nutrition Guidelines’ categories. These criteria were developed to identify foods in each category that are nutritionally preferable to others; in other words, not all meats, not all grains, and not all dairy foods are the most healthful. Foods that are nutritionally superior to others are those that contain more vitamins, minerals, and/or fiber without a lot of added fat, sugar or sodium.

SLO Food Bank recognizes the increasing role that food banks play in providing healthful foods to vulnerable community members. Our guidelines to procure and distribute foods of high nutritional quality demonstrate to the community that we take our role and responsibility seriously.

These guidelines provide staff, volunteers, and partners with a basis for clear and consistent decision making about the types of foods and beverages they should procure, encourage and prioritize in fulfilling SLO Food Bank’s mission.

III. Nutrition Guidelines

A. Food Inventory Sources Covered by the Guidelines

1. Donated Foods- Foods and beverages donated by food manufacturers, distributors, retailers, organizations, producers, and community members
2. Government Foods- Foods and beverages obtained from government programs
3. Purchased Foods- Foods and beverages purchased by the food bank



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B. 'Foods to Encourage' Covered by the Guidelines

Listed below are foods that the Food Bank is committed to sourcing, obtaining, and sharing with the community. The foods listed in the 'Foods to Encourage' section include, but not exclude, items that are offered in Public Food Distribution sites. Below are examples of food items that are deemed nutritionally preferable and are foods that promote health and prevent disease.

1. **Fruits and vegetables, including:**

- a. Fresh produce (including ready-to-use or bagged)
- b. Frozen fruits and vegetables
- c. Canned fruits- in water, 100% juice, or light syrup
- d. Canned vegetables- with no added salt, or reduced sodium (F₂E guidelines: ≤230 mg sodium per serving with no partially hydrogenated oil in ingredient list)

** The Food Bank strives to distribute fresh produce beyond a minimum quantity of 50% by weight of total food distributed. This will be achieved through increasing existing fresh produce programs, partnering with local farmers, and increasing produce acquired by Food Bank's GleanSLO Program.*

2. **Whole grain foods, including:**

- a. 100% whole grains (e.g. rolled oats, barley, brown rice, popcorn)
- b. Whole grain-rich bread, pasta, and tortillas (F₂E guidelines: ≤2g saturated fat/serving, 0g of trans-fat, ≤230mg of sodium/serving, ≤10g total sugar/serving, or >2.5 g fiber/serving)
- c. Whole grain-rich cereals (F₂E guidelines: ≤2g saturated fat/serving, 0g of trans-fat, ≤230mg of sodium/serving, ≤12g total sugar/serving, >3 g fiber/serving)

** When making food purchases, the Food Bank will prioritize whole grain product purchases that meet the guidelines listed above.*

3. **Dairy and dairy substitutes, including:**

- a. Plain milk and yogurt (unflavored/unsweetened)
- b. Milk substitutes, unsweetened (e.g. soy milk, almond milk)
Flavored yogurt- low-fat (1%) or skim/non-fat (F₂E guidelines: ≤3g saturated fat/serving, 0g of trans-fat, ≤480mg of sodium/serving, ≤30g total sugar/serving)
- c. Cheese- reduced fat or low-fat (F₂E guidelines: ≤3g saturated fat/serving, 0g of trans-fat, ≤480mg of sodium/serving)

** When making food purchases, the Food Bank will prioritize low-fat dairy product purchases that meet the guidelines listed above.*



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4. **Lean Protein Foods, including:**

- a. Meat, poultry, seafood and beans- low-fat, low-sodium (F₂E guidelines: <4.5g of saturated fat/serving, 0 g trans-fat, ≤480 mg sodium/serving)
- b. Eggs
- c. Nuts and seeds, including spreads such as peanut butter with no added sugar (F₂E guidelines: 0g of trans-fat, ≤230mg of sodium/serving, <4 g sugar per 2T/1 oz.)
- d. Beans and lentils (with nothing added)

** The Food Bank is committed to providing at least one protein source meeting the above guidelines at every Public Distribution.*

C. **'Foods to Reduce' Covered by the Guidelines**

Although the Food Bank will accept all food and beverage products that are donated to the organization (this excludes products that contain alcohol), some items do not meet the standards that have been defined in the "Foods to Encourage" section of the Nutrition Guidelines. We recognize that many of these foods are high in added salt, sugar and/or fat and are therefore less healthful than the "Foods to encourage" as described in the Guidelines. The food items listed below are not directly distributed at Food Bank sites. However, these foods will be available to agencies for shopping and distribution to their clients. The Food Bank recommends that agencies prioritize foods listed in the 'Foods to Encourage' section and also recommend that agencies monitor and limit the distribution of the foods listed below. Additionally, we have provided recommendations to help guide agencies as they compare and select food products.

** Snacks should not exceed 200 calories per serving, no more than 10% of saturated fat per serving, no trans fats or hydrogenated fats, no more than 200 mg of sodium per serving. Items must contain no more than 15 grams of sugar per serving. This does not apply to fresh produce, dried fruits without added sugar, and canned fruits in juice, not syrup.*

1. **Savory snack foods, including, but not limited to:**

- a. Chips (corn, potato, puffed cheese, tortilla; not including lower/reduced fat or baked)
- b. Crackers (not including lower/reduced fat or baked)
- c. French fries, onion rings, tater tots
- d. Flavored, sweetened, salted popcorn
- e. Other savory snacks exceeding F₂E guidelines

2. **Sweet snack foods and desserts, including, but not limited to:**

- a. Bars (including granola, cereal, energy, snack bars)
- b. Candy and chocolate
- c. Frozen desserts, popsicles, frozen yogurt and ice cream
- d. Fruit snacks and gummies
- e. Cakes, muffins, pastries, cookies, donuts and pies
- f. Puddings and gelatins

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3. **Sugar sweetened beverages, including, but not limited to:**
 - a. Energy drinks (e.g. Monster Energy Drink®, Red Bull Energy Drinks, Rockstar Energy Drink®)
 - b. Fruit drinks (e.g. Coconut water with caloric sweetener, fruit-flavored drink or water with caloric sweetener, fruit nectars, fruit punch, fruit smoothies with caloric sweetener)
 - c. Sodas (e.g. soft drinks (including diet), sugar cane beverage, sugar-sweetened carbonated water)
 - d. Sports drinks (e.g. Gatorade Sports Drinks®, Powerade Sports Drink®)
 - e. Sweetened coffees (e.g. blended iced coffee drinks, café mocha, pre-sweetened powdered coffee mix, presweetened ready-to-drink coffee)
 - f. Sweetened teas (e.g. pre-sweetened ready-to-drink tea, presweetened tea mix)
 - g. Sweetened shakes and smoothies (e.g. Ready-to-drink milkshakes, eggnog)
 - h. Vitamin-enhanced waters with caloric sweeteners (e.g. Vitamin water™, Propel Fitness Water®)

4. **Miscellaneous food Items, including:**
 - a. Flavored yogurt snacks, trail mix
 - b. Canned soups and canned meals (e.g. beef stew, canned ravioli)*
 - c. Frozen meals and prepared foods such as pizza and microwaveable dinners
 - d. Refrigerated and pre-packaged dips and cheese spreads (as recommended by F2E guidelines)
 - e. Shelf-stable packaged meals such as macaroni and cheese, instant potatoes, and instant noodles.
 - f. Condiments/additives including mayonnaise, salad dressing, pickles, relish, gravy, jelly/preserves, refined sugars and syrups, and seasoning packets.

** However, we recognize that some items provide clients with some important nutrients and/or the ability to serve quick and easy meals.*



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D. Health Comes First: How We Can Support and Reinforce the Nutrition Guidelines

In placing inventory orders as well as in receiving food transfers (through Feeding America via Food Bank of Santa Barbara County, for example), the Food Bank will strive to accept and distribute food products that allow clients to follow the above recommendations listed in Section B.

Furthermore, the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County shall endeavor to accomplish the following goals toward helping to improve the health of the community:

Nutrition Education

1. Educate the community and Food Bank recipients on the importance of balanced nutrition and having healthy eating habits. Collaborate with partners to provide nutrition information, healthy recipes and food demonstrations at distribution sites.
2. Promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables through nutrition tabling, recipe samples, lessons, and presentations on MyPlate.
3. Educate the community on the availability of other food assistance programs such as WIC and Cal Fresh, which will further ensure that all eligible recipients have access to additional resources and nutrient-dense foods.
4. Work in conjunction with the Food Bank Food Safety Committee to educate staff, volunteers, community partners and general community on various food safety and nutrition topics such as proper food storage, food labels and expiration dates, the dangers of mercury in tuna, and the potential risks of long-term consumption of excess fat and/or sugar.

Note: Please be advised that there may be foods that interact with certain prescribed drugs and medications. While the Food Bank makes every effort to accommodate clients with food allergies/intolerance and/or special dietary needs, it is the responsibility of the client to consult with his or her doctor about dietary intake and to communicate any special needs when receiving food assistance.

Operations

1. Educate donors about the importance of nutritious and healthy food donations. Donation request lists and communications to the public and commercial institutions will be reviewed and updated as needed to include preferred healthy options, thus reducing unhealthy donations. Pursue cash donations in lieu of food donations, as well as single category food drives (e.g. protein food drive, low-sodium canned goods drive).
2. Provide healthy recipes to accompany donated foods in which sodium or fat content exceeds the recommended intake for a meal (approx. 500mg of sodium, less than 100mg of dietary cholesterol, and less than 10% of overall calories) thus reducing the unhealthy intake by additions of whole grains or fresh fruits and vegetables.
3. Expand outreach and food distribution in food desert areas such as California Valley and Shandon by providing food assistance and resources through collaborative efforts with community partners.
4. Create and implement a system to help staff, agencies, and Food Bank clients identify healthy, moderately healthy, and unhealthy foods in the warehouse and food pantries. While the Food Bank is transitioning to a healthier operation, foods may still be donated that are less healthy. To assist the recipient in making the best possible decisions regarding those foods, the Food Bank shall maintain a system with easily recognized markers.
5. Continue to explore alternative uses for donated food items that are not in keeping with the Nutrition Guidelines.



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IV. Guideline Implementation and Review

A. Guideline dissemination and communication

1. These guidelines have been approved by the Nutrition Committee, 03/22/2018 for implementation by the Board of Directors. These guidelines will be effective 03/22/2018, and will be integrated into Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo's official Policies and Procedures Manual as an addendum by April 2018. The guidelines will be communicated and disseminated to all stakeholders by June 2018.
2. The Nutrition Program Manager is responsible for the oversight of initial communications and dissemination of the guidelines to staff, donors, and member agencies. Training of all staff involved in the implementation of the guidelines will be initiated in June 2018 and repeated annually. The Director of Operations is responsible for oversight of training, beginning with food procurement staff, regarding identification of items that do and do not meet the guideline criteria for 'Food to Encourage' and finding new sources of priority foods
3. The Nutrition Committee will meet bimonthly to review and report the progress of guideline implementation. The guidelines will be reviewed 6 months after initial implementation (December 2018) and annually thereafter by the Nutrition Committee, Director of Operations, Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Directors.
4. For questions about the Nutrition Guidelines or if you are interested in attending in a Nutrition Committee meeting, please contact one of the following individuals:
 - Melissa Danehey
Nutrition Program Manager
Food Bank Coalition of SLO
(805) 610-7191
mdanehey@slofoodbank.org
5. For questions about the Nutrition Guidelines in regard to food procurement and food sourcing, please contact:
 - Tim Parker
Operations Director
Food Bank Coalition of SLO
(805) 369-9206
tparker@slofoodbank.org
6. Nutrition Committee Members for the 2019-20 year

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