

## Healthy Food Bank Donations

### 1. 100% Fruit or Vegetable Juice

Food banks like to have juices on hand, especially for kids, but juices with high fructose corn syrup can be harmful for kids who are struggling to get proper nutrition.

### 2. Canned Tuna, Canned Chicken, and Canned Salmon

Canned tuna, chicken, and salmon are non-perishable and can be added to many meals for a much needed protein boost.

### 3. Unsalted Nuts

Mixed nuts are a great and highly needed source of protein and vitamins. They tend to be more expensive and hard to keep stocked at food banks, which makes them a welcome donation.

### 4. No Sugar Added Canned Fruits and Fruit Cups

Canned fruits and fruit cups are good snacks for kids, high in Vitamin C and nutrients, and keep well on food bank shelves. Donate fruits packed in water or fruit juice rather than heavy syrup.

### 5. Shelf-Stable Milk

Milk is a great source of calcium and protein but it's hard for food banks to buy and manage fresh milk that will go bad in a week or two. Food banks are always in need of shelf-stable cow's milk, soy milk, almond milk, rice milk and powdered milk.

### 6. Whole Grain Pasta

Pasta is a filling non-perishable food that goes a long way, but white pasta doesn't have a high nutritional value. Try to donate whole grain varieties if you can. Whole grain pasta is a great way to promote fiber intake. It's also easy to turn into a meal without too many extra ingredients.

### 7. Brown Rice

Like whole grain pasta, brown rice is a filling and versatile base for many meals, high in fiber and vitamin B. Boxed rice is easy to store, easy to distribute, and helps make meals go further. Other easy-to-store grains like quinoa and barley are also healthy choices.

### 8. Oatmeal

Oatmeal is a healthy and filling breakfast. Because you don't need other ingredients to make oatmeal, it's a great thing for food banks to keep stocked. It is also a good source of carbohydrates and fiber.

### 9. Canola and Olive Oil

Canola and olive oils are highly sought after by most food banks. Oil is important for cooking and these oils provide relatively healthy calories from monounsaturated fats. Because oil tends to be on the expensive side, food banks often depend on them being donated.

### 10. Peanut Butter

Peanut butter is yet another protein-rich food that's always in high demand. Other nut butters to consider for donation include almond butter, cashew butter and sunflower butter.

### 11. Low-Sodium Soups or Stews

Soups and stews are a great way to get all of the food groups together in one hearty bowl. Again, most food banks prefer lower-sodium versions (less than 500 mg of sodium per serving) to make sure people seeking assistance are getting healthy meals as often as possible. It's also very helpful if the can doesn't require a can opener.

### 12. Beans

This is a good high-protein staple that food banks can keep on their shelves easily. Beans also have the benefits of being filling and maintaining most of their nutrients even when canned. They are "nutrition powerhouses" full of fiber, protein, and Vitamin B.

### 13. Whole Grain Breakfast Cereals

Cereals are a quick and nutritious option for breakfast and are kid friendly. Choose cereals with less than 10 grams of sugar per serving and at least 3 grams of fiber per serving. Look for whole grain oats, wheat bran, whole grain corn, whole wheat or oat bran as ingredients.

### 14. No Added Salt Canned Vegetables

No added salt canned vegetables are a food bank staple and are a healthy, low sodium choice for families. Again, it is also helpful if the can does not require a can opener.

Donors should try to limit or avoid donating foods high in sodium, fat, oils or sugar; chips, candy and cookies; sugary beverages; items in glass bottles and items that are expired or in damaged packaging. Some food pantries are able to accept frozen foods such as turkey, chicken and vegetables and other perishables like fruit and milk, but donors should call prior to donating these items.