

Making the Most out of Food Donations

When making donations of food, there are some things to consider to ensure that you are providing the best possible donation. Donating healthy food provides the essential nutrients to support optimal health and reduce the risk of disease. By making a healthy food donation, local food banks and programs can offer foods that promote health for CK residents. The best donations are ones that reflect a nutritious dinner plate, similar to Canada's Food Guide. It is easy to use donations as a chance to clean out your cupboards, but these items don't always make the best donations.

What items do make good donations?

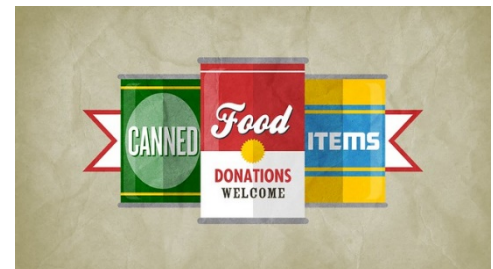
- Choose food that are high in fibre, vitamins and minerals, low in sodium, sugar and saturated fats. Remember that it is important that these foods provide nutrition and are not just there to try to fill you up.
- Donate foods that you would like to eat. Try to donate foods that you would want to feed your family as part of a healthy meal.
- Donate foods that are easy to open (such as flip top cans or jars) or easy to eat and don't require heating (tuna, peanut butter, etc).
- Consider donating foods that will be easy to create a healthy meal. Check out the "Create a Meal" section below for ideas.
- Donate non-perishable snack and lunch foods that are peanut free and offer healthy nutrients that can be taken to school.
- Consider donating foods that help with special dietary requirements such as gluten free, diabetic , etc.
- Donate fresh vegetables, fruit and meat ONLY if your food bank accepts these foods. Always check with your local food bank before donating perishable foods.

WHOLE GRAIN FOODS

- Rice
- Pasta
- Quinoa
- Barley
- Cereal – aim for those with at least 2 grams of fibre per serving, and less than 10 grams of sugar
- Oats, cream of wheat or other hot cereals
- Crackers

PROTEIN FOODS

- Powdered skim milk
- Canned unsweetened evaporated milk
- UHT Shelf stable fortified soy beverage
- UHT Shelf stable milk
- Canned fish like tuna or salmon in water
- Canned beans, chickpeas, and lentils
- Dry beans, chickpeas, and lentils
- Canned meat like chicken or turkey
- Peanut butter or other nut butters (e.g., almond butter)
- Seed butter (e.g., sunflower seed butter)
- Nuts or seeds



VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

- Lower sodium:
 - Canned vegetables
 - Pasta sauce
 - Soup
 - 100% vegetable cocktails
- Canned fruit packed in 100% fruit juice
- Applesauce without added sugar
- Fruit cups without added sugar
- 100% fruit juice

OTHER ITEMS

- Baby items
 - Food
 - Diapers
 - Wipes
- Cleaning supplies
- Feminine hygiene products
- Personal items
 - Shampoo
 - Soap
 - Deodorant
 - Toothpaste
 - Tooth brushes
 - Adult absorbent undergarments

Money is by far the best donation you can make to your local food bank. Financial donations give food banks the flexibility to buy fresh perishables for their hampers or load up on items they're not getting enough of.

Foods NOT to donate

Many donated foods are not suitable and may be thrown out:

- badly dented cans
- cans with no labels
- home canned foods
- opened food packages
- wild game or uninspected meat
- expired baby formula or meal replacements
- food that is old and past the best before date
- alcohol
- medications
- dietary supplements (vitamins, minerals, etc.)

Information on food banks in Chatham-Kent including locations, contact information and hours of operation can be found on the CK Food Policy Council website at www.letstalkfood-ck.com

“Create a Meal” Ideas

When making donations, a consider creating “Meal Bags” with items that can be used to create a simple meal. Here are some examples:

Tuna Noodle Casserole

- Whole wheat macaroni
- Canned tuna
- Canned peas
- Cream of mushroom soup
- Skim milk powder.

Vegetarian Chilli

- Canned diced tomatoes
- Tomato sauce or tomato paste
- Canned beans – chickpea, black bean, kidney beans, etc
- Chilli powder

Easy Burritos – combine ingredients and heat. Fill tortillas and enjoy.

- Canned beans – kidney, black beans, etc
- Rice
- Salsa
- Tortillas
- Canned corn

Tomato Bean Soup – just add a cup of water and cheese if available and you have a delicious soup!

- Canned diced tomatoes
- Canned beans in tomato sauce
- Italian seasoning