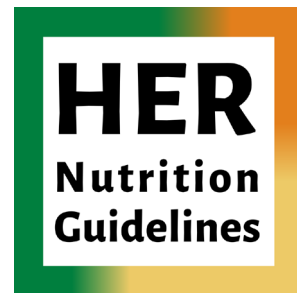


Healthy Eating Research Nutrition Guidelines for the Charitable Food System: Overview and Talking Points



Food insecurity is a complex issue. The issues of hunger and health are closely connected, leading to a growing focus on nutrition security. People living in food insecure households face a number of barriers to eating healthy that make them vulnerable to diet-related chronic diseases, including obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease.

The [Healthy Eating Research \(HER\) Nutrition Guidelines for the Charitable Food System](#) provide clear, specific, measurable guidelines for charitable food. When food banks and food pantries rank their food nutritionally with the HER Guidelines, they are working to increase access to healthy, nutritious foods for their neighbors.

Key Points:

The HER Nutrition Guidelines:

- Are tailored to the unique needs and capacity of the charitable food system (food banks, pantries) that relies heavily on donated food
- Will help improve the nutritional quality of foods in food banks
- Will increase access to and promote healthier food choices in food banks and with their partners
- Rank food into four categories – Choose Often, Choose Sometimes or Choose Rarely or Unranked
- These ranks are based on the following nutrients, linked to increased risk for diet-related chronic diseases: Saturated fat, Sodium & Added sugar
- Were created by experts in the fields of nutrition, policy, and charitable food as a step beyond Foods to Encourage, F2E, a binary system (yes/no) that can miss nutritional improvements within categories like dairy and mixed dishes.

HER Rank	What it Means	Examples
GREEN – CHOOSE OFTEN	Low in saturated fat, sodium and added sugar. Supports health.	Fresh produce, whole grain bread, lean meats
YELLOW - CHOOSE SOMETIMES	Contains medium amounts of saturated fat, sodium or added sugar. Can be part of a healthy diet.	100% fruit juices, refined (non-whole) grains, peanut butter
RED – CHOOSE RARELY	High in saturated fat, sodium, and/or added sugar and not health promoting. A treat.	Desserts, sodas, most processed snacks
UNRANKED	Foods used in small amounts to add flavor, used in scratch cooking or meet specific dietary needs	Condiments, cooking staples, baby food

Developed by:

