



Nutrition Guidelines

The mission of Gallatin Valley Food Bank (GVFB) is to improve Food Security in Southwest Montana. GVFB is committed to providing access to nutritious foods. Individuals and families that seek food bank emergency services are typically more at risk of eating nutrient-poor foods and, in turn, are at risk of a variety of chronic diseases. While choice is paramount at Gallatin Valley Food Bank, providing opportunity for proper nutrition is equally as important.

Donation Guidelines

To include more nutritious and less processed foods GVFB will post wish lists of healthy food options on our website and newsletters. Items include, but are not limited to, canned fruit in juice, dried fruit with no added sugar, low sodium canned vegetables, low sodium canned tomatoes, dried beans, brown rice, whole grain cereals, game meat processed by a licensed processor, canned tuna, and fresh fruits or vegetables of any kind. Donor communication guidelines will be posted on the website and on all wish lists and outreach efforts.

All food items are inspected for the safety of our clients.

Procurement Guidelines

Procurement of food will focus on nutritious and lightly processed food items. Long range efforts will also be made to transition to more nutritious and unprocessed foods. To enable us to offer more fresh and unprocessed foods, it will be important to implement facilities to allow for the processing of fresh produce that can be available during the winter months. Purchasing or requesting a donation of dried beans, lentils, grains, cereals and produce from local growers will also take priority over foods from out of state.

Examples of items that the GVFB will exclude from the inventory are:

- Sugar-sweetened beverages
- Candy
- Alcohol
- Dented Cans
- Canned goods older than 2-years past expiration
- Dry goods greater than 1-year past expiration
- Baby food or formula past the expiration date
- Frozen meat older than one year from package date

Items that the GVFB will make a strong effort to limit are:

- Ultra-processed foods, foods with additives like soft drinks and candy
- Foods with added fats
- Foods with trans fats
- Foods with added sodium
- Refined grains

- Desserts and sweets
- Foods with added sugar
- Fruits canned in syrup

Donated foods within the above categories will be limited in the food bank, however **alternative food outlets** will be used to re-distribute food that does not adhere to the organization's "guiding principles" while also minimizing food waste. An example of this is to donate candy to special community events.

In addition to providing nutritious food, the GVFB is committed to a healthy food environment which encourages clients' choice of food that adheres to the organization's "guiding principles." Efforts will include:

- Product placement encouraging healthier choices
- Improved Labeling
- Client Education
- No limits on fresh produce

GVFB is committed to improving the food environment and will review guidelines annually. This will be completed by the entire staff, key volunteers and advisory council at the end of every fiscal year.

Nutritious foods are more satisfying, essential for brain development, decrease the chance of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease, and decrease the likelihood of obesity and display respect for those receiving the emergency food services provided by the GVFB. Together, we can make a healthier community.

"Although it affects all socioeconomic levels, obesity rates are most prevalent among the lower-income population [i]. During the emergence of the obesity epidemic, observers noted that many who were overweight were also undernourished and food insecure, a phenomenon that became known as the "hunger-obesity paradox" [ii]. Hunger and obesity seem to coexist, yet the causes and mechanisms for this association are still poorly understood.

Today many food banks approach their mission of ending hunger not only by providing food but also by helping to provide low-income households with the opportunity to pursue physically, financially, and emotionally healthy lives. This more holistic approach has led to an increased focus on the quality and quantity of foods provided through the system. The foods distributed are intended to contribute to the good health of recipients."

Sources:

i] Flegal, K., M. Carroll, B. Kit, and C. Ogden. 2012. Prevalence of obesity and trends in the distribution of body mass index among US adults, 1999–2010. Journal of the American Medical Association 307(5):491–497.

[ii] Gooding, H., C. Walls, and T. Richmond. 2012. Food insecurity and increased BMI in young adult women. Obesity (Silver Spring) 20(9):1896–1901. <https://www.foodbankcny.org/nutrition-information/nutrition-policy/>