

Interfaith Food & Farms Partnership

A Project of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon



Donating Healthier Alternatives

First and foremost ask your local food pantry or food bank what their most needed healthy items are. From there use these tips and ideas for each food group to select healthy options to donate:

Vegetables & Fruit - Most people should aim for at least **nine servings** (4½ cups) of *vegetables* and *fruits* a day (sorry - potatoes don't count). Go for a variety of kinds and colors of produce, giving the body a mix of nutrients it needs.

Recommended: Canned Vegetables & Fruit, Dried Fruit (no sugar added), 100% Fruit or Vegetable Juice

1. Look for low or no salt options for canned vegetables
2. Look for fruits in their own fruit juice or water (try & avoid fruit in syrups when possible)
3. Look for BPA-free lined cans

Proteins - Vegetable sources of protein, such as beans, nuts, and whole grains, are excellent sources of protein as they offer healthy fiber, vitamins and minerals. The best animal protein choices are fish and poultry, especially if looking at canned options.

Recommended: Canned Meats (not packed in oil): Chicken, Tuna, Salmon; Canned or Dried Beans: Black, Pinto, Navy, White, Garbanzo, Lentils, etc.; Shelf-Stable Milk: Soy, Almond, or Rice Milk

1. Look for canned beans, meats, and seafood that have no or low sodium added – or buy dried beans
2. Try to buy seafood that is caught in a safe and sustainable manner
3. Look for BPA-free lined cans

Fats: Oils & Nuts - The *type of fat* eaten is what really matters, not whether it is high, low, or total fat. "Bad" fats (saturated & trans fats) increase risk for certain diseases. "Good" fats (monounsaturated, polyunsaturated fat) lower disease risk. Keep a healthy diet, substitute good fats for bad fats, & avoid trans fats.

Recommended: Cooking Oil: Olive, Coconut, Canola, Sesame, etc.; Nuts, Seeds: Almonds, Walnuts, Cashews, etc.; Pumpkin/Sunflower Seeds; Nut Butters: Natural, Non-Hydrogenated

1. Nuts & nut butters have lots of good fat & keep for long periods of time
2. Look for low or no sodium options
3. Pantries rarely have good oils (like olive & coconut) but desire them

Whole Grains - The best sources of carbohydrates (whole grains, vegetables, fruits and beans) promote good health by delivering vitamins, minerals, fiber, and important phytonutrients. Refined grains, white bread or rice, pastries, sugared sodas, and highly processed foods may contribute to weight gain, interfere with weight loss, and promote diabetes and heart disease.

Recommended: Whole Grains: Rice (Brown or Wild); Oats (Whole, Steel Cut, 5 Minute); Quinoa or Couscous; Pasta (Whole Wheat or Brown Rice); Whole Grain & High Fiber: Breads, Cereal, Crackers

1. Buy products with ingredients using the word **whole** (grains or wheat).
2. Try & buy available local products
3. Buy alternative *grains* such as quinoa, wild/brown rice, steel cut oats, or barley

Whole Meals - Finding healthier alternatives to prepackaged meals can be tricky as they are often high in fat, sodium, & have many hidden preservatives & additives - when possible cook with whole, fresh foods.

Recommended: Canned/Boxed Meals: Chili, Soups, Meat & Vegetarian Options, Low-Fat, Low-Sodium

1. Look for reduced/ low-fat and low/ no added sodium options
2. Read the label. The fewer and more identifiable ingredients, the better.
3. Look for BPA-free lined cans

Food Justice – Food Justice seeks to ensure that the benefits and risks of where, what, and how food is grown, produced, transported, distributed, accessed and eaten are shared fairly. It represents a transformation of the current food system, including elimination of disparities and inequities, and seeks to ensure that we care for our neighbors and for our land. The most basic form of care to ensure that the food we grow and the land we use is treated with respect to guarantee its capability to grow an abundance of food. The harvest of our land is a gift that is meant to be shared with one another, not just a privileged few.

BPA Free Cans & Food – *What is BPA?* Bisphenol A (BPA), an industrial chemical used to make certain plastics often used in containers storing food & beverages. The National Toxicology Program (NTP) at HHS has reported *some concern* about possible health effects of BPA on the brain, behavior, and prostate gland of fetuses, infants and children.

Great ways to minimize exposure to BPA

1. *Seek out BPA-free products.* Most aluminum cans or bottles are BPA lined, steel bottles or cans are not.
2. *Use alternatives.* Use glass, porcelain or stainless steel for hot foods/liquids instead of plastic.
3. *Cut back on cans.* Reduce use of canned foods as many cans are lined with BPA-containing resin.

BPA-free canned options

All canned products: **Eden of Organic Beans & Native Forest/Native Factor**; Albacore: **Eco Fish Oregon’s Choice, Oregon’s Choice** (6oz lightly salted), **Wild Planet** (and 5oz skipjack), & **Vital Choice Seafood** (and salmon, sardines, mackerel); **Trader Joe’s** (corn, beans, fish, poultry, beef)

*Willy Street Coop expands on other brand’s BPA status: <http://www.willystreet.coop/BPA>

Reducing Intake of Sodium/Salt & Sugar – Eating less salt and sugar is a healthy choice. A high-sodium diet can raise the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, and stroke. The healthiest way to eat canned fruit is by choosing those canned in their own juice or in water, as syrup adds additional calories and sugar, making the fruit far less healthy.

Quick Tips

<i>Cutting Back on Sugar</i>	<i>Cutting Back on Salt & Sodium</i>
<i>Read nutrition labels.</i> Look for fruits packed in fruit juice or no sugar added.	<i>Scan the label.</i> Look for canned, boxed, frozen, and prepared foods with < 300 mg of sodium per serving.
<i>Consider alternatives.</i> Sugar-free frozen fruit, fresh fruit, or learn to can fruit.	<i>Downsize portions.</i> High calorie meals equal higher sodium. Seek low-salt options when eating out.
<i>Look at the ingredients list.</i> For fruit, fruit juice, and sometimes water.	<i>Get fresh.</i> Most processed foods are high in sodium. Try seasoning with herbs, spices, and citrus.
<i>Look at calories.</i> Fruit in heavy syrup has more calories.	<i>Call for action.</i> Consumers have a voice, ask producers to cut back on salt.

Health Equity – *What is it?* Health equity is the differences in population health stemming from systematic and avoidable economic and social conditions that are unequal – and thus inherently unjust and unfair. These unequal systems are precipitated by jobs, working conditions, education, housing, social inclusion, and political influence. When societal resources are distributed unequally by class and by race, population, health is distributed unequally along those lines as well.¹ Health outcome disparities are well documented among minority populations & people with low incomes, for example:

- In Oregon, Latinos have the highest incidence of obesity and overweight, at 30.9% and 38.6% respectively and are five times more likely to die prematurely².
- The diabetes rate for African Americans is 13% vs. 6% for Whites³.

¹ Adapted from: <http://www.ok.gov/health/documents/What%20is%20Health%20Equity.pdf>

² *Keeping Oregonians Health*, DHS, 2007

³ *The State of Black Oregon*, the Urban League of Portland