

Nutrition Guidelines for the Food Relief Sector in South Australia

The *Nutrition Guidelines for the Food Relief Sector in South Australia (Nutrition Guidelines)*, have been developed with the South Australian food relief sector to support the *South Australian Food Relief Charter (the Charter)*, with a focus on nutrition and health. Signatories of the Charter are committed to:

- > Maximising the availability of healthy food to food relief recipients through implementation of the Nutrition Guidelines.
- > Supporting individuals and families to improve their food choices and nutrition by providing opportunities to increase skills and knowledge.

In developing these guidelines, we acknowledge that there are a range of food distribution organisations and food relief models in South Australia. These models vary between organisations and include food hampers, pantries, vans, seated meal services and food vouchers (for major supermarket chains or for Foodbank Food Hubs). Across all of these models, there are opportunities to implement the Nutrition Guidelines to improve the availability of healthy food products to food relief recipients.

Aim of the Nutrition Guidelines

These guidelines aim to give food relief recipients improved access to a nutritious food supply. The primary focus is to increase the supply of healthy food choices and decrease the supply of unhealthy food choices available from food relief providers.

The Nutrition Guidelines are based on the definitions and classifications within the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating** (ie five food group foods and discretionary foods) and do not use complicated nutrient criteria.

It is acknowledged that the South Australian food relief sector faces a number of challenges including sourcing enough food to meet demand, particularly sourcing enough healthy options. The Nutrition Guidelines are aspirational guidelines and have been designed to assist food relief providers move towards a healthy food supply.

Principles of the Nutrition Guidelines

- > A wide variety of nutritious everyday foods from the five food groups is important for good health.
- > Eating should be enjoyable. Food plays an important part in our lives, families and communities. Sharing food and preparing, cooking, eating and enjoying food together is important for our social connections and wellbeing.
- > Everyone has a right to be able to make their own food choices. Providing a range of healthy options will support recipients by making healthy choices easy choices.
- > It is important to consider the health needs of food relief recipients and the foods they are requesting.
- > Food sustainability and supporting local growers and producers are important issues. Connection with local suppliers reduces handling and transport costs.
- > Perishable food showing any sign of visible deterioration should be discarded, eg limp/bruised/mouldy fruit and vegetables. This food is not good enough for anyone, including food relief recipients. Fruit or vegetables with small physical imperfections are generally safe to consume.
- > Food past the 'use by' date is unsafe and must not be provided to food relief recipients. Food past its 'best before' date can be available, provided the food and its packaging is not damaged or deteriorated.

Nutrition Guidelines

Our habitual food intake has an impact on our health. A nutritious diet is needed to reduce our risk of chronic health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, some cancers and obesity. The food supplied by food relief providers can significantly contribute to the overall dietary intake, diet quality and health of food relief recipients, particularly long-term recipients.

To support improved access to a nutritious food supply, food relief providers are encouraged to consider:

1. Nutrition quality and quantity of food available
2. Placement of food items so that healthy items are more prominent
3. Promotion of healthy food and drinks
4. Where relevant, using any pricing of food or drinks (eg a handling fee) to increase availability of healthy over unhealthy food products

* The *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* is part of the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Australian Dietary Guidelines* (2013), viewable at www.eatforhealth.gov.au



1. Nutrition quality, quantity and type of food items available

GREEN FOODS

Everyday nutritious foods and drinks recommended to provide and promote. Green foods should comprise at least 70% of total stock volume.

Everyday nutritious foods and drinks are those in the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating's* five food groups, with the addition of healthy spreads and oils, and water. These are summarised briefly below (refer to the *Food Classification Guide* for further detail).

- > **Vegetables and legumes/beans** – all fresh, frozen or plain canned vegetables (preferably no added salt).
- > **Grain (cereal) foods** – include mostly wholegrain varieties of breakfast cereals, breads, couscous and pasta/noodles. Also offer wholegrains such as wheat, oats, rice, barley, millet, quinoa and corn.
- > **Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, and plant-based alternatives such as tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans** – nuts and seeds (no added salt) and legumes/beans (dry or canned, preferably no added salt). Fresh, frozen or canned meat, poultry and fish (preferably no added salt).
- > **Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives** – preferably reduced fat. Fresh, canned (no added sugar) or UHT milk. Plain or fruit flavoured yoghurt. Alternatives to dairy milk, cheese or yoghurt should be calcium enriched.
- > **Fruit** – all fresh, frozen, dried (no added sugar or confectionary) or canned (in natural juice) and 100% fruit juice.
- > **Healthy spreads and oils** – sunflower, safflower, corn, soybean, macadamia, peanut, grape seed, canola, rice bran and olive-based oils or margarines.
- > **Water** – bottled, still or sparkling (no added sugar or intense sweeteners, both artificial eg aspartame, and natural eg stevia).

AMBER FOODS

Other foods available. Amber foods should comprise up to 20% of total stock volume.

'Other foods' are mixed foods/meals or foods that may not fit into the five food groups. The nutrition quality of these foods varies widely. These foods may be available in food relief outlets, as some are suitable additions to a healthy diet or could be used to make healthy meals, however they should not be promoted. They include:

- > 'Ready to eat' type meals (frozen, chilled, shelf stable or canned) ie complete meals of all cuisines based on meat, poultry, fish, Quorn, meat substitutes, tofu, vegetables. These may require re-heating and may include or require adding accompaniments such as potato, rice, noodles or pasta, eg chicken curry, spaghetti bolognese, Irish stew, dahl, Quorn lasagne.
- > Chilled/frozen pizza, dim sims, dumplings.
- > Soups (chilled, canned, shelf stable, dry packet).
- > Canned spaghetti.
- > Foods or ingredients that may be used for preparation and cooking of nutritious or culturally significant foods eg flour, sugar, pasta sauces, curry or meal bases, condiments, dressings and sauces.
- > Miscellaneous foods eg dip, dairy desserts.

RED FOODS

Discretionary foods and drinks not recommended to provide or promote. Red foods should comprise 0-10% of total stock volume.

These are foods and drinks of poor nutrition quality and are considered discretionary foods in the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating**. When these foods are available, they are not to be provided in bulk or promoted.

These foods include potato chips and crisps, sweet biscuits, cakes, desserts, sweet pastries, savoury snack foods, soft drink, muesli bars, confectionary, chocolate, iced buns, muffins, cordial and alcohol.

Note: Non-food items (such as pet food, toiletries and cleaning products) are not covered by these guidelines.



Additional ways to support healthy food choices

Food relief providers are encouraged to consider and support:

2. Placement of food items

- > Using any appropriate means in the environment to place **GREEN** foods in prominent locations or in a way that promotes these foods and increases the likelihood of them being chosen.
- > Using any appropriate means in the environment to place **RED** foods in less prominent locations than **GREEN** foods.

3. Promotion of food items

- > Using promotional materials (eg posters, brand displays) to promote **GREEN** foods.
- > Using advertising activities (eg social media posts or other online posts) to promote **GREEN** foods.
- > Not recommending or promoting **RED** foods through promotional materials, advertising activities or verbally.

4. Pricing (if appropriate) of food items that have a handling fee

- > Where possible, **GREEN** foods are minimally priced and fruit, vegetables and bread are free.
- > Increasing the pricing of **RED** foods to discourage the purchasing of these items.
- > Using income from pricing of **RED** foods to support procurement and cheaper pricing or free provision of **GREEN** foods.





**Government of
South Australia**