

# CREATE<sup>TM</sup>

## HEALTHY CHOICES

### Pantry Toolkit



## Thumbs Up for Healthy Choices

*Increasing healthy choices and their visibility at Utah's food pantries*

Extension  
UtahStateUniversity®



CREATE<sup>SNAP-ED</sup>  
BETTER HEALTH<sup>TM</sup>

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**A short video series covering the material in this toolkit can be found here:**

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-KHilFp\\_Dhi2IM-KCWbA2m7Nd65mv4tp](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-KHilFp_Dhi2IM-KCWbA2m7Nd65mv4tp)

## Welcome & Project Goals

Welcome to the *Create Healthy Choices* Toolkit! In this toolkit, you will find the information needed to implement this project in your local food pantry successfully. The project's goal is simple: make healthier choices more visible to people receiving food from emergency food sites such as food pantries. We understand that people utilizing these services will not always be in a place where nutritious food is a priority for them, and we respect that. However, if people desire to make healthier choices, we want it to be easy. For a healthy choice, the *Create Healthy Choices* materials will be placed in front of food items that fit specific nutrition guidelines, which are defined in this toolkit. These foods include items that are high in fiber, vitamins, and minerals and low in added sugar, sodium, and saturated and trans-fats. The healthy choice guidelines are based on Feeding America's "Foods 2 Encourage," the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Healthy Eating Research Nutrition Guidelines for Charitable Food Systems, and Smart Snacks in Schools Guidelines. *Create Healthy Choices* (formally known as *Thumbs Up for Healthy Choices*) was developed by the Utah State University Extension's SNAP-Ed program, Create Better Health.

In addition to this toolkit, you can order or print shelf talkers, shelf educators, posters, client information cards, and recipes cards. All the materials can be adapted to a variety of food pantry settings. We encourage you to explore what options work best for your pantry and clients. You can use all the tools, or some available tools, whatever works best for your needs. Throughout the toolkit, you will find tips on using each piece of the project in different settings.

We hope you are as excited about this project as we are. Research has indicated that nudges, like the *Create Healthy Choices* shelf talkers and educators, effectively encourage people to make healthier choices in retail and food pantry settings. We hope that our work can help Utahns make healthier choices that improve the quality of life for themselves and their families.

Happy Nudging!

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## Promoting Nutrition at the Food Pantry: Why Does It Matter?

As you may be aware, there has been a shift in the role of food pantries for many low-income Americans. Historically, food pantries were used as a short-term food source during dire situations. Clients utilized pantries for short periods during emergencies such as a temporary loss of employment or an unforeseen expense. Pantries would serve the clients for a few weeks or a couple of months. Currently, food pantries are used by many as a longer-term strategy for food security. Many individuals and families rely on the food received from pantries for months or even years. This longer-term reliance on food pantries makes it essential that clients have access to healthy choices that are appealing and visible. The shelf talkers, educators, and recipes are a great way to let your clients know which foods will help them and their families support their health through nutrition.

Individuals and families that are food insecure are significantly more likely to struggle with obesity and related chronic diseases, including heart disease, type II diabetes, and certain types of cancer. In addition, children raised in a food-insecure environment are also at an increased risk of being obese as an adult. While a lack of food is certainly one contributing factor to these increased risks, lack of nourishing foods also plays an important role. Therefore, families and individuals who utilize food pantries should have access to foods that will fill their bellies and nourish their bodies.

There is also a misconception that healthy foods are only available to the middle and upper classes. Regardless of geographical location or socio-economic status, we believe that everyone deserves access to foods that will help them be their best and live long, healthy lives. ***Create Healthy Choices* does not intend to decrease the number of foods that don't fit the healthy choice criteria outlined in this toolkit. The program also does not intend to shame people for choosing those options at food pantries. Instead, *Create Healthy Choices* aims to make the healthy choice, the easy choice for those interested in nourishing foods.**

## Defining Healthy Foods

Determining which foods are “healthy” can be overwhelming and frustrating for consumers. *Create Healthy Choices* is designed to make nutritious foods stand out among the rest. Below you will find the requirements for different food categories to get a *Healthy Choice* sign. Foods must meet **all** the criteria to be deemed a “healthy choice.” Meeting all requirements ensures that the program is consistent throughout the state. You will likely encounter different products than those listed below. You may use the criteria for an item that is most like the product. ***But, if you are unsure about an item, it is best not to mark it with a Healthy Choice sign.***

The criteria on the following two pages are all based on a ***per-serving basis***. Information on nutrition fact labels is also on a per-serving basis, so you should be able to compare these values to those on the food labels with relative ease. The criteria were adapted from Feeding America’s Detailed Foods to Encourage, current Dietary

Guidelines for Americans, and Healthy Eating Research Nutrition Guidelines for Charitable Food Systems and Smart Snacks in Schools Guidelines.

## Nutrition Criteria (Updated Feb. 2022)

Category: Fruits and Vegetables	Criteria
Fresh fruits or vegetables	Nothing added
Fruit or vegetable juice	100% juice
Canned, dried, or frozen	No partially hydrogenated oils listed in ingredients <b>AND</b> Sodium $\leq$ 230 mg <b>AND</b> Total sugar $\leq$ 12 g <b>OR</b> packed in lite syrup <b>OR</b> 100% fruit juice <b>AND</b> Saturated fat $\leq$ 2g Trans fat 0 g

Category: Grains	Criteria
Single grain products (oats, barley, rice, quinoa, etc.)	100% whole grain
Bread & pasta	Whole grain listed as the first ingredient <b>AND</b> >10% DV fiber <b>OR</b> $\geq$ 2.5 g fiber
Cereal	Whole grain listed as the first ingredient <b>AND</b> >2g fiber <b>&lt;10 g added sugar</b>

Category: Protein	Criteria
Eggs	No special criteria
Nuts, seeds, dried beans, lentils	Nothing added
Beans, meat, poultry, seafood (canned chicken, tuna, beans, frozen hamburger patties, frozen chicken nuggets, etc.)	Sodium $\leq$ 480 mg/serving Saturated fat $\leq$ 2g Trans fat 0 g*  <b>*Note: beef products have a small amount of natural trans-fat. If a beef product meets all other criteria and does not have any hydrogenated added ingredients, it can be marked with a <i>Healthy Choice</i> sign.</b>
Nuts/seed spreads (peanut butter, almond butter, soy butter, etc.)	Sodium $\leq$ 230 mg/serving Total sugar <4 g per tablespoon or per 1 oz Trans fat 0 g

Category: Dairy	Criteria
Unflavored/unsweetened low-fat (1%) or skim/non-fat milk or yogurt	No special criteria
Unsweetened milk substitutes (soymilk, almond milk, etc.)	No special criteria
Cheese	Sodium $\leq$ 480 mg/serving Saturated fat $\leq$ 3g Trans fat 0 g
<b>Flavored milk or milk substitutes, &amp; yogurt</b>	<b>Saturated fat <math>\leq</math>3g</b> <b>Sodium <math>\leq</math>480 mg</b> <b>Added sugar <math>\leq</math>11 g</b> <b>Trans fat 0 g</b>

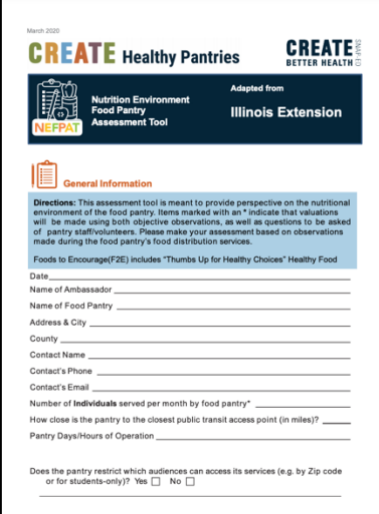
Category: Snack Foods	Criteria
Granola/Protein Bars Trail Mix Cookies Pastries/Brownies Etc.	<b>First ingredient must be a whole grain, fruit, vegetable, protein, or dairy food AND</b>  $\leq$ 200 calories per serving $\leq$ 7 grams of total fat per serving $\leq$ 2 grams of saturated fat per serving $\leq$ <b>6 grams of <i>added</i> sugar per serving</b> $\leq$ <b>200 mg. of sodium per serving</b>
Nuts (not trail mix, see above for trail mix)	$\leq$ 220 calories per serving $\leq$ 3.5 g. saturated fat $\leq$ <b>200 mg of sodium per serving</b> $\leq$ <b>6 g added total sugar</b>
Crackers Pretzels Rice Cakes Chips Etc.	<b>First ingredient must be a whole grain or vegetable (i.e. potato)</b>  $\leq$ 150 calories per serving $\leq$ 1.5 grams saturated fat per serving $\leq$ <b>200 mg. of sodium per serving</b> $\leq$ <b>6 g added sugar</b>

# Nutrition Environment Food Pantry Assessment Tool

To best serve the food pantries in your area, it is best to identify what they are already doing to help clients make healthy choices, in addition to what things they would like to do. We use a slightly modified version of the Nutrition Environment Food Pantry Assessment Tool (NEFPAT), developed by Illinois Extension. We will be using the NEFPAT in all food pantries where we do PSE work.

When you approach a pantry to do PSE work, please complete this assessment of the initiatives they already have in place. Complete an assessment when you begin to work with a pantry or, at the beginning of the fiscal year, for pantries you have worked with in the past. Then, complete a second follow-up assessment using the same form at the end of the fiscal year or when you finish working with the pantry.

Your goal should be to see an improvement in the pantry's total score, which reflects the number of ways the pantry is trying to promote client nutrition. When asking a pantry if you can complete the assessment, ensure that its purpose is to measure the work of Create Better Health, not to critique their work at the food pantry.



The image shows a screenshot of the NEFPAT assessment tool form. At the top, it says "March 2020" and features logos for "CREATE Healthy Pantries" and "CREATE BETTER HEALTH". Below the logos, it states "Adapted from Illinois Extension". The form is titled "Nutrition Environment Food Pantry Assessment Tool" and "NEFPAT". A section titled "General Information" contains the following text: "Directions: This assessment tool is meant to provide perspective on the nutritional environment of the food pantry. Items marked with an \* indicate that valuations will be made using both objective observations, as well as questions to be asked of pantry staff/volunteers. Please make your assessment based on observations made during the food pantry's food distribution services." Below this, it says "Foods to Encourage(F2E) includes 'Thumbs Up for Healthy Choices' Healthy Food". The form includes fields for: Date, Name of Ambassador, Name of Food Pantry, Address & City, County, Contact Name, Contact's Phone, Contact's Email, Number of Individuals served per month by food pantry, How close is the pantry to the closest public transit access point (in miles)?, Pantry Days/Hours of Operation, and a question: "Does the pantry restrict which audiences can access its services (e.g. by Zip code or for students-only)? Yes  No

The Nutrition Environment Food Pantry Assessment Tool is on the staff website under the PSE tab's "Create Healthy Choices: Pantry & Retail Settings" link. You will also find step-by-step instructions about completing the assessment and enter the information into PEARS in the same section of the staff website.

## Using Assessment to Guide Create Healthy Choices Recommendations

There are six objectives that you will measure when filling out the NEFPAT. You can use *Create Healthy Choices* to help pantries improve their scores in each area.

1. Increase Client Choice for Nutritious Options
2. Market & "Nudge" Healthful Products
3. Provide Various Forms of Fruits and/or Vegetables
4. Provide Various Types of Fruits and/or Vegetables
5. Promote Additional Resources
6. Plan for Alternate Eating Patterns

After completing the baseline assessment, you can use the Pantry Picklist to help food pantry managers and volunteers determine the best method for improving the appeal and availability of healthy choices. Some pantries will be able to make many changes,


and some may only make a few. PSE work takes time, and you may need to start small and slowly increase the level of interventions. Create Better Health Ambassadors should use the assessment results to guide their recommendations for the pantry. For example, if the pantry scores low on Objective 2 (Market & “Nudge” Healthful Products), you may point out the strategies on the picklist that help improve that area. Ambassadors should also use it to prioritize their efforts and manage their time commitment working with each pantry.

## Create Healthy Choice Pantry Pick List


January 2022  
**CREATE**  
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HEALTHY CHOICES

**Directions:** This pick list tool is meant to help Create Better Health ambassadors and pantry directors determine interventions that will create healthy choices for pantry clients.


 **General Information**

Name of Food Pantry: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Pantry Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

 **Objective 1: Increase Client Choice for Nutritious Options**


**Select preferred strategies:**

- Hold healthy food drives that are MyPlate-focused.
- Policy changes on procuring healthy foods, food safety or increasing opportunities for clients to access food.
- Support pantry client choice (using shopping style, order forms, etc.).

 **Objective 2: Market & “Nudge” Healthful Products**


**Select preferred strategies:**

- Use shelf talkers or stickers to identify healthy choices foods.
- Provide recipes and/or samples that highlight healthy food pantry items.
- Provide meal kits that highlight healthy food pantry items.
- Adjust product placement to make healthy choices visible and convenient.

 **Objective 3: Provide Various Forms of Fruits and/or Vegetables**


**Select preferred strategies:**

- Share Create Concept recipes that are flexible with different forms of produce.
- Hold Healthy Food Drives focused on produce.
- Connect with community partners to improve capacity for frozen and refrigerated foods.

 **Objective 4: Provide Various Types of Fruits and/or Vegetables**


**Select preferred strategies:**

- Promote Create Concepts recipes that are flexible with types of fruits/vegetables.
- Hold healthy food drives for fresh produce (e.g. Buy Produce for Your Neighbor).
- Support a pantry or community donation garden.

 **Objective 5: Promote Additional Resources**


**Select preferred strategies:**

- Connect with other resource providers in the community.
- Provide Create Better Health classes to pantry clients.


 **Objective 6: Plan for Alternate Eating Patterns**

**Select preferred strategies:**

- Provide Create Better Health classes to pantry volunteers and staff.
- Hold healthy food drives for culturally-relevant foods and/or a variety of protein options.



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## Create Health Choices Strategies

### Increase Client Choice for Nutritious Options

There are multiple ways that pantries can support client choice for nutritious food options that we can support through *Create Healthy Choices*.

- Encourage the pantry to allow pantry clients to choose which foods they want.
  - This can vary from a “shopping style” set up, like a grocery store, to allowing clients to fill out order forms for boxes they pick up, or even giving clients choices on some items.
- Encourage the pantry to allow people to get food from the pantry more than once a month, if possible.
- Hold SNAP-Ed or community led healthy food drives to increase healthy options from all MyPlate food groups. See page 15 for healthy food drive ideas.
  - You may also provide materials and support to help other organizations sponsor healthy food drives.
- Help the pantry create new policies, or update current policies, about procuring healthy food and food safety.
- Connect pantries with other partners, like the local health department, that may have funding or other resources for shelving, refrigerators, and other equipment that would make it easier to stock and promote client choice.

### Market & “Nudge” Healthful Products

Marketing and “nudges” are research-based methods for improving the appeal of healthy food options. Many pantry clients have reported that they are interested in eating healthfully and providing healthy options to their families. However, sometimes it can be hard to identify what food items at the pantry would be best for helping them reach this goal. *Create Healthy Choices* has many tools to support this objective. For more details on specific materials and “nudge” strategies, see page 11.

- Training pantry staff and volunteers on identifying *Healthy Choice* food items and using shelf talkers or stickers to identify healthy options.
  - You may also help place shelf talkers or stickers, but the end goal is that the pantry can eventually do this work on its own.
- Place nutrition education posters or educational shelf talkers in the pantry where clients will easily view them.
- Provide recipes and samples using foods that are available at the pantry.
- Set up an indirect education booth when clients are in the pantry and provide education about the benefits of choosing *Healthy Choices*.
- Prepare prepackaged meal kits that include *Healthy Choices* food items and a recipe.
  - Meal kits are most effective if you provide samples, images, or demos (virtual or in-person) of the highlighted recipe.

- Provide the pantry with ideas for product placement strategies. For example, placing healthy options in highly visible and convenient locations throughout the pantry will help make the healthy choice easy.
  - Place healthy options where food pantry clients enter the pantry and begin to make their food choices.
  - Place fewer healthy options in the back of the food pantry.
  - Place “healthy options” at eye level on the shelves and move less healthy options to the top and bottom of the shelves.
  - Place healthy options in more than one location throughout the pantry. For example, have fresh produce at the beginning of the pantry and in the middle.
  - Make healthy choices convenient or easy to make. Display foods in a way that is easy for people to grab them. Examples may include elevating bread crates, so clients don’t have to search through a pile of bread.
  - Make attractive displays for healthy options. For example, use standing racks, baskets, or other visual displays to make healthy options stand out from the rest of the foods.
  - Create a healthy end-cap (a display at the end of an aisle) and other special displays to promote foods that meet *Healthy Choices* nutrition criteria.

## **Provide Various Forms of Fruits and/or Vegetables**

- Promote flexible ‘Create’ recipes that can be made with various types and forms of fruits and/or vegetables. For example, you can highlight how a soup can be made with frozen, fresh, or canned corn.
- Hold SNAP-Ed or community led healthy food drives to increase the number of fruits and/or vegetables. See page 15 for healthy food drive ideas.
  - You may also provide materials and support to help other organizations sponsor healthy food drives.
- Connect the pantry with other partners, like the health department, that may help the pantry purchase freezers and refrigerators.

## **Provide Various Types of Fruits and/or Vegetables**

- Promote flexible ‘Create’ recipes that can be made with various types of fruits and/or vegetables. For example, you can highlight how a skillet can be adapted to use the types of vegetables in season or provided at the pantry.
- Hold SNAP-Ed or community led healthy food drives to increase the variety of fruits and/or vegetables. See page 15 for healthy food drive ideas. Buy Produce for Your Neighbor (also referred to as Grow Produce for Your Neighbor in areas with no farmers markets) is an excellent option for helping pantries increase their variety of high-quality fruits and vegetables.

- You may also provide materials and support to help other organizations sponsor healthy food drives.
- Support a pantry garden or community garden that donates to the pantry.

## Promote Additional Resources

- Inform the pantry director, staff, and volunteers of other resources for people with low incomes. Some possible resources include SNAP, WIC, and Double Up Food Bucks.
  - Connecting the pantries with the Department of Workforce Services can help them access information about SNAP, TANF, and employment assistance.
- Provide Create Better Health classes to pantry clients.

## Plan for Alternate Eating Patterns

- Provide the adapted Create Better Health classes for pantry workers and volunteers to help them identify healthy choices and help them understand why healthy choices are important.
  - Help the volunteers and staff understand food labels, so they can organize the pantry or guide pantry clients to options that match their needs.
- Hold SNAP-Ed led healthy food drives. See page 15 for healthy food drive ideas.
  - Food drive efforts can focus to increase the variety of healthy protein options at the pantry.
  - Food drive efforts can focus to increase the options of culturally relevant foods that match the clients served by the pantry.

## Create Healthy Choices Nudge Materials

### Shelf Talkers



Shelf talkers are a marketing tool used to direct consumers' attention to a specific product. They are generally small signs, like the ones above, placed on shelves in front of certain items. Shelf talkers have proven to increase the likelihood that a consumer

will purchase the item they are promoting. Many food retail settings use these tools to increase the sales of certain items. We are hopeful our *Thumbs Up* shelf talkers will have the same impact on selecting healthy items at emergency food sites.

There are three different-sized shelf talkers available. Currently, there are 4" signs, 2" signs, and 1x3" strip signs. You may order the size(s) that works best for your pantry. We have clips available to attach the signs to various shelving types. However, if you prefer not to use the clips that is OK. Below you will find some additional ideas on how to attach them.

As a Create Better Health Ambassador, you can use your PSE hours to help with the initial implementation of the *Create Healthy Choices* program. If you find that the pantry needs exceed your availability, a local health department educator may also be available in your area to assist. You are also encouraged to train pantry staff and volunteers on program implementation. Eventually, invested pantries should take on the implementation independently with limited support from Create Better Health. This will allow us to introduce the program into other pantries and settings.

Some pantries find it easier to designate certain shelves or areas of the pantry for healthy choices. Then you, pantry staff, and volunteers use the nutrition guidelines to fill these shelves with appropriate foods. This greatly reduces the time spent moving the *Healthy Choices* signs around the pantry.

Try one of the ideas below, or get creative to attach your shelf talkers *neatly and visibly* to a shelf:

- Order the plastic, expandable shelf clips from the Create Better Health staff order form.
- Punch 1-2 holes in the shelf talker. Then, use a zip-tie, twist tie, or twine to attach to metal shelving.
- Roll duct tape on the back of the shelf talker and tape to wooden or plastic shelving.
- Use a binder clip to attach to thin plastic or metal shelving.

**Adaptation:** Some pantries may not have clients enter the pantry to select food from shelves. In these pantries, you may order stickers of the shelf talkers to stick them to *Healthy Choices* foods placed in boxes for pantries that are not open for clients to select their own products. Encourage pantry workers and volunteers to include some *Healthy Choice* options in each box.

## Posters

The posters received as part of the toolkit are intended to give people more information about the foods deemed a "healthy choice." It doesn't provide all the details of how healthy foods are determined since too much nutrition information can often be overwhelming.

You can order additional posters as needed. The posters are available in English and Spanish.



## Shelf Educators

Shelf educators highlight some of the most common healthy choices available at food pantries. You can print and hang these shelf educators in front of the product they are highlighting. Since these have the *Healthy Choices* symbols, feel free to use these in place of the *Healthy Choices* shelf talkers if you think the pantry clients would like this option. If you need a shelf educator for a product not already included on the website, please contact the state office. We would like ambassadors to be consistent around the state, so we prefer not to create them at the county level.



## Recipe Cards & Sampling

One of the most significant barriers to choosing healthy choices at food pantries is not knowing what to do with them. Sharing simple, tasty, and healthy recipes with clients can increase the likelihood of choosing and using the *Healthy Choices* item. Be sure to mark the healthy ingredients needed for the recipe with the *Healthy Choices* sign within the pantry, so clients know which items to select. In addition, recipe card templates are available on the staff website.

Create Better Health Ambassadors are also approved to do recipe samplings that use *Healthy Choices* items. Ambassadors should set up a sample table in a visible, high-traffic area in the pantry. If the pantry allows, having prepackaged bags with the ingredients needed to make the recipe may be helpful for clients as well. This is also a great place to let people know about your upcoming Create Better Health classes.

## Prepackaged Recipe Bags

Another option that some Ambassadors have used to help increase the selection of healthy foods is to prepackage bags with ingredients needed to make a healthy Create Better Health recipe. You can order strong, clear bags from the staff order form for this strategy. Often the pantry will not have all the ingredients needed to make the full recipe. In this case, be sure to indicate on the recipe card which ingredients are included and which ingredients still need to be obtained. This is a great strategy to use if the pantry has a lot of an item that fits the *Healthy Choices* guidelines that they are hoping to move out of the pantry.

## Client Information Cards

Also available are information cards about the *Healthy Choices* criteria and additional sources of tasty, healthy recipes. These cards are available in English and Spanish and can be ordered from the Create Better Health staff order form.



# Volunteer/Staff Information Sheet

**5 small changes for BETTER HEALTH**

**1 Make half your plate fruits and veggies**  
Fruits and veggies are great sources of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Fiber keeps you full and satisfied.

**Tasty Options**

- Whole fruits or vegetables
- 100% fruit or vegetable juices
- Dried fruits or vegetables
- Canned fruits or vegetables
- Beans and peas
- Berries
- Melons

**2 Make half your grains whole grains**  
Grains are a great source of carbohydrates, our body's preferred source of energy. They provide vitamins and minerals, too. Whole grains have more nutrition than refined grains.

**Tasty Options**

- Whole wheat products
- Brown rice
- Popcorn
- Oatmeal
- Bulgur
- Quinoa

**3 Move to low-fat and fat-free dairy**  
Calcium builds strong bones and teeth. Dairy foods are great sources of calcium.

**Tasty Options**

- Fat-free and low-fat milk
- Fat-free and low-fat yogurt
- Reduced-fat cottage cheese
- Reduced-fat hard cheeses
- Calcium-fortified soy milk
- Reduced-fat milk desserts

**4 Vary your protein routine**  
Protein keeps your cells strong and healthy. It is important to get protein from both plant and animal sources.

**Tasty Options**

- Lean beef
- Poultry
- Fish
- Eggs
- Nuts and seeds
- Beans and legumes

**5 Compare the saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars in your foods and beverages**  
Read the nutrition facts label to find products with less saturated fat and sodium. Use the ingredient list to find choices with fewer added sugars. Cut back and fruit drinks and sugary sodas. Water is your best choice!

**Tasty Options**

- Nuts and seeds
- Vegetable oils
- Low sodium versions of food
- No added-sugar foods

**Choose Thumbs Up for Healthy Choices**

Teach clients to look for the Thumbs Up sign to find foods that are:

**HIGH IN** Vitamins, Minerals, Fiber

**LOW IN** Sodium, Added sugar, Saturated and trans fats

**Elements of the program in the food pantry**

- Shelf-talkers:** Shelf-talkers are small signs placed in front of healthy food items. They encourage clients to choose the labeled items.
- Shelf-educators:** Shelf-educators give more details about the health benefits of the most commonly found healthy food items in the pantry.
- Informational posters:** Posters give more detail on why a particular food is healthy and how to prepare the food in a delicious meal.
- Recipe cards and samples:** Sharing simple recipes that use healthy foods will increase the likelihood of a client choosing the healthier food item.
- Prepackaged recipe bags:** Clients may have the opportunity to opt for a prepackaged recipe bag where all the necessary ingredients are gathered to create a healthy meal.

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Ideally, food pantries will eventually take over the implementation of the *Create Healthy Choices* program so that our ambassadors can move on to different locations. For this to happen, several trainings should take place when the ambassadors are working with the pantry. One tool to help with this transition is the volunteer/staff information sheets. These sheets give an overview of the *Create Healthy Choices* program and support the MyPlate recommendations and Dietary Guidelines. These sheets are also helpful to keep the volunteers and staff informed of the program even when Create Better Health supports its implementation. In addition, this sheet will help volunteers and staff answer client questions about the program.

## Create Healthy Choices Healthy Food Drive Materials

**FOOD DRIVE**  
All families deserve access to healthy foods. While all donations are appreciated, please consider donating the following items:

• Canned or frozen vegetables and beans  
• Canned soups (not chili)  
• Oil-free pasta sauce  
• White rice (not wild)  
• Whole grain (not whole wheat) bread  
• Whole grain (not whole wheat) cereal  
• Whole grain (not whole wheat) flour  
• Whole grain (not whole wheat) oatmeal  
• Whole grain (not whole wheat) quinoa

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**HEALTHY FOOD DRIVE**  
November 14-18

DAY 1: DONATE	DAY 2: DONATE	DAY 3: DONATE	DAY 4: DONATE	DAY 5: DONATE
HEALTHY VEGETABLES	WHOLE GRAIN BREAD	COOKING OILS	HEALTHY SNACKS	HEALTHY DRINKS
Examples: Canned or frozen vegetables and beans, Canned soups (not chili), Oil-free pasta sauce, White rice (not wild), Whole grain (not whole wheat) bread, Whole grain (not whole wheat) cereal, Whole grain (not whole wheat) flour, Whole grain (not whole wheat) oatmeal, Whole grain (not whole wheat) quinoa	Examples: Whole wheat products, Brown rice, Popcorn, Oatmeal, Bulgur, Quinoa	Examples: Fat-free and low-fat milk, Fat-free and low-fat yogurt, Reduced-fat cottage cheese, Reduced-fat hard cheeses, Calcium-fortified soy milk, Reduced-fat milk desserts	Examples: Lean beef, Poultry, Fish, Eggs, Nuts and seeds, Beans and legumes	Examples: Low-sodium, No added-sugar, Low-fat, Fat-free, Sugar-free, No artificial sweeteners, No artificial flavors, No artificial colors, No artificial preservatives, No artificial fragrances, No artificial perfumes, No artificial dyes, No artificial pigments, No artificial colors, No artificial fragrances, No artificial perfumes, No artificial dyes, No artificial pigments

**ALL FAMILIES DESERVE ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS**  
While all donations are appreciated, please consider donating the above listed items. All items are donated to local food pantries.

Extension UtahStateUniversity **CREATE BETTER HEALTH**

**HEALTHY FOOD DRIVE**

**FOOD DRIVE**  
All families deserve access to healthy food!

**Date of Drive**  
While all donations are appreciated, please consider donating healthy items listed on the back. All food is delivered to local food pantries.

Additional details here: **CREATE BETTER HEALTH**

**HEALTHY FOOD DRIVE**

DAY 1: DONATE	DAY 2: DONATE	DAY 3: DONATE	DAY 4: DONATE	DAY 5: DONATE
HEALTHY VEGETABLES	WHOLE GRAIN BREAD	COOKING OILS	HEALTHY SNACKS	HEALTHY DRINKS
Examples: Canned or frozen vegetables and beans, Canned soups (not chili), Oil-free pasta sauce, White rice (not wild), Whole grain (not whole wheat) bread, Whole grain (not whole wheat) cereal, Whole grain (not whole wheat) flour, Whole grain (not whole wheat) oatmeal, Whole grain (not whole wheat) quinoa	Examples: Whole wheat products, Brown rice, Popcorn, Oatmeal, Bulgur, Quinoa	Examples: Fat-free and low-fat milk, Fat-free and low-fat yogurt, Reduced-fat cottage cheese, Reduced-fat hard cheeses, Calcium-fortified soy milk, Reduced-fat milk desserts	Examples: Lean beef, Poultry, Fish, Eggs, Nuts and seeds, Beans and legumes	Examples: Low-sodium, No added-sugar, Low-fat, Fat-free, Sugar-free, No artificial sweeteners, No artificial flavors, No artificial colors, No artificial preservatives, No artificial fragrances, No artificial perfumes, No artificial dyes, No artificial pigments

**ALL FAMILIES DESERVE ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS**  
While all donations are appreciated, please consider donating the above listed items. All items are donated to local food pantries.

Extension UtahStateUniversity **CREATE BETTER HEALTH**

A great way to increase the number of healthy foods in your local food pantry is to hold a community food drive that requests healthy options. Create Better Health Ambassadors and supervisors can conduct food drives in various locations, including Extension offices, farmers markets, local grocery stores, or throughout the community by dropping bags off at individual houses. The first step to conducting a successful healthy food drive is to talk to your pantry manager about foods they would like to see donated that fit both their needs and the health guidelines of our program. Options may include low-sodium canned beans and vegetables, canned fruit packed in 100% fruit juice, whole grain cereals and pasta, nut butter, canned protein (tuna, salmon, chicken, etc.), and low-fat shelf-stable milk. **It is also important to emphasize to the pantry manager and include in all your marketing materials that all food donations are appreciated.** We would not want to discourage people from donating, even if the items do not meet the healthy guidelines.

Another key to a successful food drive is partnering with other organizations that will support and help promote the food drive. Extension faculty will likely have a good idea of which local organizations may be interested in helping. Local grocery stores may also be willing to help by either donating specific foods or allowing you to leave a box and marketing materials requesting the healthy items. You may also support an organization that has an established healthy food drive. You can provide technical support, like suggesting that the food drive encourages healthy food donations. You may also help the organization connect with a pantry partner that needs more nutritious food donations. You can find some marketing materials for healthy food drives on the staff website under the PSE tab in the Create Healthy Pantries section. You can edit the posters to include the items your pantry has requested, as well as your pantry's name and logo. If you need something other than the materials available, the State Office must approve them before distribution.

### **Buy Dinner for Your Neighbor**

Buy Dinner for Your Neighbor Another version of a healthy food drive is the Buy Dinner for Your Neighbor program. This program requires a partnership between Create Better Health Utah—SNAP-Ed, a local grocer, and a food pantry. The ambassador prepackages recipe bags at the grocery store with all the ingredients needed to make a meal for this program. A recipe for how to prepare the meal is also included. These bags are for sale for a set price at the grocery store (the store determines the price). Customers are encouraged to buy a meal bag for themselves and then donate one to the local food pantry. The ambassador must consider the types of products donated to the food pantry. Recipes with all nonperishable items are ideal, but some pantries can manage some perishable ingredients. Talk to your local pantry to see what works for them. The ambassador must coordinate the packaging and distribution of the bags to the pantry. The most successful ambassador will have a booth where the bags are sold to talk to customers about the program and sample the bag's recipe. You can order a standing or hanging Buy Dinner for Your Neighbor banner from the State Office. It can be customized to include the name and logo of the partnering grocery store and pantry.



## Buy Produce for Your Neighbor

You can also use the adaptation of “Buy Dinner for Your Neighbor” at a farmers market called “Buy Produce for Your Neighbor.” This program requires a partnership between Create Better Health, a local farmers market, and a food pantry. Customers are encouraged to buy extra produce to donate to the food pantry. Talk to your local pantry to arrange the donation delivery process and make sure they can receive the donated produce. The Create Better Health Ambassadors must coordinate the produce delivery to the pantry. The most successful Ambassadors will have a booth at the farmers market where they can talk to customers about the program and have buy-in from vendors who will post marketing materials at their booths.

It is crucial to work with your farmers market to ensure that the program is allowed at your market. You can order a standing or hanging Buy Produce for Your Neighbor banner from the State Office. It can be customized to include the name and logo of the partnering grocery store and pantry. You can also order smaller hanging banners for vendor booths and an arrow pointing to where donations are collected.



## Grow Produce for Your Neighbor

Instead of acquiring donations at farmers markets, “Grow Produce for Your Neighbor” encourages gardeners to donate fresh fruit and vegetables from their gardens to local food pantries. Working with partner organizations, this program may also utilize volunteers to help with gleaning surplus produce in the community that may be donated to the pantry.

## Community Garden Work

Getting produce from the garden donated to the local food pantry is another practical approach to increasing the amount of fresh produce available for pantry users. There are a couple of ways you can engage in community garden work:

- Coordinate a day and time for garden members to harvest and leave their excess produce for the local food pantry. The Create Better Health Ambassador should

go to the garden, pick up the produce, and deliver it to the pantry during that day and time. It is essential to ensure the quality of the produce is still high, so providing coolers to the garden for people to leave their produce would be helpful. Make sure to coordinate with the pantry manager about receiving the produce. If they do not have adequate refrigeration, consider bringing the produce to the pantry during distribution time.

- Grow a row for the hungry. Work with other local agencies to plant, maintain, and harvest produce specifically for the food pantry. While some Create Better Health time and resources can help maintain a garden plot, the most successful programs will have partners to assist with the production. Volunteer groups from other Utah State University Extension areas, including 4-H and the master gardeners, are potential partners to explore.
- Work with your local community garden organizers to identify other potential ways to help get garden produce to our priority population.

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program -- SNAP.

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Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**  
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
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