

# Make your Donation Count



Your food pantry donation is an important contribution to those in need in your community. Many pantries have food safety policies that will not allow them to distribute foods that are of poor quality or that may be unsafe. Make your donation count by donating only safe, high quality foods. Not all pantries can accept perishable items—call ahead to **Make your Donation Count! Give:**

## Shelf stable foods

- Shelf-stable packaged foods in their **original packages** with the **label intact**. Packaging should be unopened and not damaged.
- Packaged foods that are within the sell-by or use-by date.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables grown using good gardening practices.
- Bakery items that can be safely stored at room temperature. Check with the pantry before donating custard- or crème-filled bakery items or desserts topped with whipped cream. Do not donate home-prepared bakery items or those from an unlicensed retailer.

## Perishable foods

- Perishable foods such as deli items, frozen meats, and fresh-cut produce in their **original packages** with the label intact. Packaging should be unopened and not damaged.
- Perishable foods should be within the sell-by or use-by date.
- Meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs should come from a licensed processor.
- Milk and juice must be pasteurized.

## Fresh fruits and vegetables

- Fresh-cut fruits and vegetables that have been kept cold and in their original/unopened package.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables that is free of visible dirt, ripe, and with a remaining shelf life of at least 3-5 days.
- Donated garden produce grown using good gardening practices. **Do not use fresh, uncomposted manure for fertilizer.**

## Do not donate:

- Home-canned or home-prepared foods
- Foods from unlicensed dealers
- Foods that are spoiled or rotten (or getting that way)
- Foods past their 'Use by' or 'Sell by' date

### Maintain temperature control

Perhaps the most important thing to remember when transporting food is the importance of temperature control: **Keep hot foods hot, keep cold foods cold.**

- Check the temperature of foods that are being donated to the pantry.
- Frozen or refrigerated food should be cold (**41°F or below**) and labeled (sample on right)
- If your pantry can handle **hot foods**, these must be **kept hot at 135°F or higher** and **reheated to 165°F** prior to serving. **Hot foods** must be in a food-safe container and labeled with the date of preparation and retailer/donor.
- Use **insulated containers** to transport hot or cold food. The temperature of food should be checked on receipt. Do not accept cold food that is above 41°F, or hot food that is below 135°F.
- Be sure to **keep records** of perishable foods that you receive and their origin.

### Personnel

- Individuals transporting or handling food should take care to **prevent contamination.**
- Practice proper hand washing and help out only when you well (not sick).

### Fresh produce

- Fresh fruits and vegetables must be handled to **prevent contamination.**
- Use dedicated boxes or bins/totes for transporting fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Do not accept obviously spoiled or rotten produce.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables that are cut, peeled, or sliced **are highly perishable and must be kept cold (below 41°F).**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Food Pantry representative

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of food

Date of preparation (or contain 'use by' date on package)

Retailer/donor

"Keep frozen" or "Keep refrigerated"