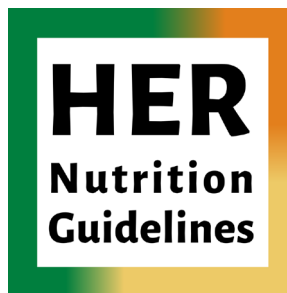


HER Nutrition Guidelines: Communicating About Red – Choose Rarely

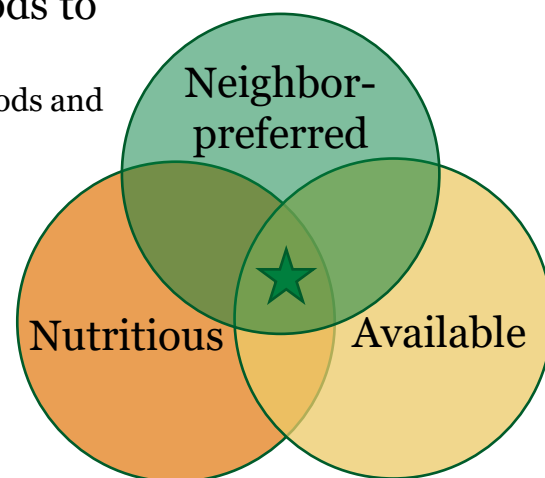


[The Healthy Eating Research \(HER\) Nutrition Guidelines for the Charitable Food System](#) provide clear, specific, measurable guidelines for charitable food. When food banks and food pantries rank their food nutritionally with the HER Guidelines, they are working to increase access to healthy, nutritious foods for their neighbors. Communicating about these guidelines should be grounded in strengths-based language, focusing on the possibilities for improving our food system and neighbors' health, without stigmatizing or making choices for neighbors. Foods are not “good” or “bad” but everything we eat impacts our health over time.

Key Points:

- Choose rarely **does not mean** choose never! We all enjoy red foods.
 - Ask staff and volunteers to describe their favorite “red-choose rarely” foods.
- It is important to understand **why** red foods are ranked that way
 - High in saturated fat, sodium, or added sugar OR a combination of all three
 - These nutrients are linked to diet-related chronic diseases when eaten in large quantities
- Importance of **choice** and **access**
 - *Choice* means providing neighbors with the nutrition information to select the foods that best meet their needs and creating the space to promote food choices without judgement.
 - *Access* means making nutritious foods available. Choose rarely foods are more easily accessible in marginalized communities and choose often, nutrient-dense foods, such as fresh produce, lean proteins, and whole grains, are often more difficult to access. Food banks and food pantries can play a critical role in increasing healthy food access.
- Focus on the positive opportunities when using the HER Guidelines
 - Explore promotional strategies for Green and Yellow foods like nudges, recipes, meal bundles, no limits or attractive displays.
 - Reinforce messaging with volunteers that “all foods fit” to respect people’s food choices.
- All cultures have nutritious and quality foods to promote
 - Understand your neighbor’s culturally preferred foods and align with nutrition standards.

“Neighbors [from Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala and Columbia] tend to decline canned food ... in favor of fresh produce and dried beans. In response, we have reduced the amount of canned items for this location and have shifted to increasing fresh foods.” – Food Bank Staff



Developed by:

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