

## Nutrition Statement

The Central Texas Food Bank is committed to healthy foods and healthy lives. We believe it is our responsibility to ensure that the food we distribute is high quality, nutritious, and safe. As a leader in the fight against hunger for more than 30 years, our mission is to nourish hungry people and lead the community in ending hunger.

Since its inception, the Central Texas Food Bank (the Food Bank) has supplied food to help families in need. Those faced with food insecurity have limited access or no resources to buy the nutritious foods that are critical to their overall health, growth, and development. Consequently, inexpensive and less nutritious foods are sometimes the only option. Food insecurity is linked to poor nutrition, poor health, increased risk for the development of chronic diseases, impaired psychological and cognitive functioning and/or substandard achievement. In recent years, the Food Bank has become concerned about the increasing rates of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and other diet-related conditions and diseases in the community we serve. Through our partnerships, programming and advocacy, the Food Bank seeks to not only end hunger, but to find sustainable solutions to address client health needs. We recognize the increasing role that food banks play in providing healthful foods to community members in need – both in emergency situations and often on an ongoing monthly or annual basis. We can presume that we play a larger role in one’s nutritional access and intake knowing that use of food banks has moved from “emergency” to “chronic” use. As the largest hunger relief organization in Central Texas, the Food Bank recognizes the need to play a leadership role in nourishing, not just feeding our community.

## Nutrition Policy

The foundation of a healthy lifestyle includes physical activity and consuming a balanced variety of nutrient-rich foods and beverages in moderation. The Food Bank strives to distribute foods that will improve community health and significantly reduce food insecurity. The purpose of this nutrition policy is to support and guide food purchasing, procurement and distribution decisions to ensure we reach that goal.

This policy applies to all foods acquired by the food bank including:

- Food and beverages purchased by the food bank for all programs
- Foods and beverages donated by food manufacturers, distributors, retailers, organizations, producers and community members<sup>1</sup>

## Healthful Foods to Encourage<sup>2</sup>

The Food Bank will prioritize purchasing items from this category and will actively seek, procure and distribute the following foods:

- A wide-variety of nutrient-dense fresh fruits and vegetables
- Canned and frozen fruits – fruit packed in water or in its own juice
- Canned and frozen vegetables – low-sodium or no salt added
- 100% Whole Grain (that contain whole grain as the first ingredient)
- Unflavored/Unsweetened low-fat (1%) or skim/non-fat milk or yogurt
- Flavored skim/non-fat milk or yogurt
- Reduced fat or low-fat cheese
- Unsweetened milk substitutes (e.g. soy milk or almond milk)
- Lean protein foods including: Meat, poultry, seafood (low-fat, low-sodium); Eggs; Nuts, seeds, beans and lentils (low-sodium or no salt added)
- Plain water

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<sup>1</sup> See page 2 for food sources not covered by this policy

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A for full listing of Healthful Food to Encourage and Foods to Reduce

- 100% Juice
- **We accept and save for special populations: Any item that is designed for specific population health (Glucerna, Ensure, Boost for Seniors; Similac for Infants, etc...). These products are available to Partner Agencies serving nutritionally at-risk clients.**

*The Food Bank uses the Choose Healthy Options Program (CHOP) ranking tool to track our healthy food distribution efforts and to educate partner agencies on the nutritional quality of the food they receive from the Food Bank and distribute to the community. Purchased foods are restricted to CHOP 1 and 2 items – those with the highest nutritional ranking.*

**Goal: Annually, the Food Bank will achieve an overall CHOP score of 85% (rank 1&2) for distributed inventory.**

**Goal: By 2020, a minimum of 50% of the foods distributed by the Food Bank will be fresh produce.**

### **Foods to Reduce<sup>3</sup>**

In order to protect the health of the people we serve, CTXFB will limit the procurement and distribution of these types of foods and beverages. CTXFB will not actively seek foods in this category.

- Savory snack foods, including, but not limited to: chips, crackers or savory snack foods that are calorically dense with low nutritive value
- Sweet snack foods and desserts, including, but not limited to: snack bars, cakes, candy, cookies, donuts, ice cream, pies, pastries
- Sugar-sweetened beverages, including, but not limited to: sodas, sports drinks, vitamin-enhanced waters

### **Central Texas Food Bank Does Not Accept or Distribute<sup>4</sup>**

- Alcohol
- Energy Drinks and Energy Shots
- Dietary Supplements
- Diet products containing appetite suppressants
- Over The Counter (OTC) medications, such as pain relievers, cough medicines, allergy medications, etc...

### **Food Sources Not Covered By the Policy**

In FY14, the Food Bank received over 20% of its food through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) TEFAP program (The Emergency Food Assistance Program). Based on availability, some items received through TEFAP, national donors and other core food bank sources may not fully meet the *Healthful Foods to Encourage* standards outlined through this policy; however, these items do provide clients with some important nutrients and the ability to serve complete meals. In an effort to reduce donations of less healthy foods, the Food Bank will work to communicate with and educate our donors on our Nutrition Policy guidelines and the importance of prioritizing *Healthful Food to Encourage* for the families we serve. The Food Bank will continue to evaluate the nutritive value of these foods and educate our Partner Agencies and clients on ways to shop for and prepare foods that will promote health and well-being.

### **Policy Implementation and Review**

This policy was created by the Nutrition Policy Working Group, a cross-sector group including Food Bank staff, board members, partner agencies, and food donors. This policy will be effective October 1, 2015, and will be fully integrated into each department's policies and procedures by January 1, 2016. The policy will be disseminated

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A for full listing of Healthful Food to Encourage and Foods to Reduce

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B: Position Statement on Non-Distributed Items

and communicated to all stakeholders by January 1, 2016. The policy will be reviewed and updated, as needed, after initial implementation and quarterly thereafter by the Nutrition Policy Working Group.

## Healthful Foods to Encourage

### 1. Fruits and Vegetables

- a. Fresh produce including colorful varieties because they are rich in nutrients and low in calories
- b. Frozen fruits and vegetables packed without syrup or sauces
- c. Fruits canned in water or 100% juice
- d. Vegetables canned with no added salt or reduced sodium

### 2. Whole Grain and Whole Grain-Rich Foods

- a. 100% whole grains such as rolled oats, barley, brown rice
- b. Whole grain-rich bread, pasta and tortillas
- c. Whole grain-rich cereals that contain whole grain as the first ingredient

### 3. Dairy Foods: Low-Fat Dairy or Dairy Substitutes

- a. Plain milk and yogurt: Low-fat (1%) or skim/non-fat milk and yogurt, unflavored/unsweetened
- b. Flavored milk or milk substitutes
- c. Flavored yogurt
- d. Milk substitutes: Unsweetened milk substitutes (e.g., soy milk, almond milk)
- e. Cheese: Reduced fat or low-fat

### 4. Lean Protein Foods

- a. Meat, poultry seafood and beans-low-fat, lower sodium
- b. Eggs
- c. Nuts and seeds (no added salt), including spreads such as peanut butter (no partially hydrogenated oil in the ingredient list)
- d. Beans and lentils (if canned, no added salt or low-sodium)

## Less Nutritious Foods to Reduce

### 1. Savory Snack Foods (including, by not limited to):

- a. Chips (not including lower/reduced fat or baked)
- b. Crackers (not including lower/reduced fat or baked)
- c. French fries
- d. Onion rings
- e. Pork rinds

### 2. Sweet Snack Foods and Desserts (including, but not limited to):

- a. Bars (including granola, cereal, energy, snack bars)
- b. Cakes
- c. Candy
- d. Chocolate

- e. Cookies
  - f. Donuts
  - g. Frozen desserts
  - h. Ice cream
  - i. Fruit snacks
  - j. Muffins
  - k. Pastries
  - l. Pies
  - m. Popsicles
  - n. Pudding
3. **Sugar Sweetened Beverages** (including, but not limited to):
- a. Energy Drinks
  - b. Fruit Drinks (<100% juice)
  - c. Sodas
  - d. Sports Drinks
  - e. Sweetened coffees
  - f. Sweetened teas
  - g. Sweeten shakes and smoothies
  - h. Vitamin-enhanced waters

The Central Texas Food Bank (CTFB) is working at multiple levels to improve community health. Nourishing our community with healthy and nutritious foods is core to that commitment. In prioritizing this mission, there are some items that CTFB receives (often in very limited quantity) that must be deprioritized. These items often fall outside the scope of CTFB's mission and/or take an inordinate amount of capacity to manage for safe distribution. For these reasons, CTFB has decided not to accept or distribute the following items and has provided additional rationale below.

**CTFB Position on Dietary Supplementation, including medical and vitamin supplements and diet products containing appetite suppressants:**

CTFB does not distribute dietary supplements, such as medical and vitamin supplements or diet products containing appetite suppressants due to the efficacy and safety of nutrient supplements and the regulatory issues that affect the use of these products. The best nutrition-based strategy for promoting optimal health and reducing the risk of chronic disease is to wisely choose a wide variety of nutrient-rich foods guided by current federal nutrition recommendations, such as the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Dietary Reference Intakes, as well as individual health goals and personal preference.

**CTFB Position on Over-the-Counter Medications:**

Over-the-Counter (OTC) medications are medicines one can buy without a prescription, such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), fever reducers, cough medicines, sore throat medicines, decongestants, antihistamines, anti-diarrhea, vomiting and nausea medicines, etc. According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), OTC medications are safe and effective as long as one follows the directions on the label and as directed by a health care professional. However, they may not work as advertised and may interfere with other medications. Due to the possibility of OTC medications interfering with prescribed medications or complicating existing health conditions, CTFB does not distribute OTC medications and recommends its clients consult with their healthcare provider before taking any over-the-counter medications or supplements.

**CTFB Position on Energy Drinks and Energy Shots:**

Energy drinks are flavored beverages containing varying amounts of caffeine and, typically, other additives, such as vitamins, taurine, theanine, carnitine, herbal supplements, creatine, sugars, and guarana, a plant product that naturally contains concentrated caffeine. Energy drinks are marketed to improve energy, weight loss, stamina, athletic performance, and concentration. Adults who consume low to moderate amounts of caffeine (1 to 3 mg/kg or 12.5 to 100 mg/day) have improved exercise endurance, cognition, reaction time, and mood. The effects of chronic high-dose caffeine intake in children and adolescents are unknown, but the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that, because of caffeine's potentially harmful effects, intake should be discouraged for

all children.<sup>5</sup> A limit of 100 mg/day for children and 2.5 mg/kg/day for adolescents has been suggested. Energy drinks have no therapeutic benefit, and many ingredients are understudied and not regulated. Current research stating the known and unknown pharmacology of agents included in such drinks, combined with reports of toxicity, raises concern for potentially serious adverse effects in association with energy drink use, especially in vulnerable populations, such as children served by the food bank.

**CTFB Position on Alcoholic Beverages and Prepared Mixes:**

According to the American Heart Association, it is safe to consume alcohol in moderation, meaning no more than one drink per day for women and no more than two drinks per day for men. Drinking more alcohol increases such dangers as alcoholism, [high blood pressure](#), [obesity](#), [stroke](#), breast cancer, suicide and accidents. It is not possible to predict in which people alcoholism will become a problem. Given these and other risks, CTFB does not distribute alcoholic beverages or prepared mixes.

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<sup>5</sup> Persad LA. Energy drinks and the neurophysiological impact of caffeine. *Front Neurosci.* 2011;5:116.