

Overflow the Opera House Healthy Foods Donation Guide

Why is this important? Several studies find increased rates of obesity and chronic diseases among people from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Limited access to healthy foods is a key factor in this relationship. The volunteer leaders of both Project Feed The Thousands and the Healthy Communities Coalition of Windham County ask you to help us break this link by donating foods from the list below:

| Items | What to Look For |
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| Dried Fruit with no added sugar | Examples: Dates, prunes, figs, apricot, peaches, apples and pears. |
| Canned Fruit in Juice, not Syrup | Look for "in juice" on the label. Syrup adds unnecessary calories and sugars. |
| Reduced-sodium canned Vegetables | Look for "reduced-sodium" or "low-sodium." High sodium intake can cause high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. |
| Canned Meats (tuna, chicken) | Packed in water, not oil. Compare labels to find products low in sodium, saturated fats and cholesterol. |
| Whole Grain Pasta | A "whole grain" should be the first on the ingredients' list. There are several health benefits to whole and multigrain pasta over other forms of pasta. |
| Brown Rice | Several studies have found that brown rice reduced the risks for Type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases compared with white rice. |
| Whole Grain Bread | A "whole grain" should be the first on the ingredients' list. There are several health benefits to whole and multigrain bread over those made of made from refined flour. |
| Whole Grain Cereal | A "whole grain" should be the first on the ingredients' list. There are several health benefits to whole and multigrain cereals. |
| Whole Grain Crackers | A "whole grain" should be the first on the ingredients' list. There are several health benefits to whole and multigrain crackers over others. |
| Low or No Salt Crackers | Whether Whole Grain or not, check the packaging for sodium content. "Low Sodium" is 140mg sodium or less per serving. |
| Plain Bottled Water | Water is the recommended beverage because it contains no calories and offers many other health benefits. Make sure there are not added sugars or artificial sweeteners such as, saccharin or aspartame. |
| 100% Juice | The label will usually state if the liquid has 100% juice. If not 100% fruit juice, the product has added sugars, salt and/or artificial ingredients that contribute to obesity and other chronic diseases. |
| Soy Milk | Soy milk has about the same amount of protein as regular milk with less saturated fats and no cholesterol. Get "calcium enriched." The brands available on the store shelf can be stored without refrigeration. |
| Granola Bars | Look for bars with less than 200 calories per serving, less than 35% of calories from fat and less than 17 grams of sugar. |
| Popcorn with limited salt and butter | Low Sodium is 140mg sodium or less per serving. No salt or butter minimizes the negative health effects of sodium and added calories from fat. |



*prepared by Meeting Waters YMCA and its
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