

Increasing Access to Healthy Food in Our Network



Why are we using the SWAP stoplight system?

As a foodbank, we recognize the strong connection between hunger and health. We know that many food pantry guests face the double burden of food insecurity and chronic diseases. We want to ensure that we provide food that will help support our community's health and wellbeing. We are committed to distributing healthy, nutritious food in our network. To do that, we are adopting a nutrition stoplight system called **Supporting Wellness at Pantries (SWAP)**.

What is SWAP?

SWAP is designed to help promote healthy food choices at foodbanks and food pantries. SWAP ranks food based on levels of **saturated fat, sodium, and sugars** because these nutrients are linked with increased risk of chronic diseases. SWAP is a program of Foodshare/Connecticut Food Bank. SWAP was revised in 2020 to align with the Healthy Eating Research (HER) Nutrition Guidelines for the Charitable Food System. The HER Nutrition Guidelines were developed by an expert panel convened by HER and were adopted by Feeding America.

What do the rankings mean?



Food that is Green:

- Choose Often
- Low in saturated fat, sodium, and sugar
- Supports health



Food that is Yellow:

- Choose Sometimes
- Medium levels of saturated fat, sodium, or sugar
- Can contribute to good health



Food that is Red:

- Choose Rarely; think of as a treat
- High levels of saturated fat, sodium, or sugar
- Limited health benefits

Unranked Foods: Some food groups like cooking supplies, condiments and baby food are “Unranked” or “Not Eligible” for SWAP ranking. Some food categories are more challenging to rank because they arrive in large batches of miscellaneous items and are labeled “Assorted–NotRanked”.

How can SWAP be implemented?

The nutrition ranks will be added to our ordering system so you will be able to view which foods are Green, Yellow, and Red to promote healthy foods in your programs. By using SWAP, we will work with our food donors to encourage them to donate healthy foods. We would encourage you to talk with your local food donors and those running food drives to donate healthy items. We also hope by using SWAP that you can promote nutritious foods in your programs for the people you serve.

If you have any questions about the SWAP system or want to know how you can use SWAP in your programs, please contact the Central Illinois Foodbank program staff at the food bank at (217) 522-4022.



Illinois Extension
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In partnership with:
Connecticut Foodshare
Institute for Hunger
Research & Solutions

This tool was revised in 2020, with funding provided by Healthy Eating Research (HER), a national Program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, to align with the HER Nutrition Guidelines for the Charitable Food System.

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