

Oven Free Guideline

These nutritional guidelines have been put together by Registered Dietitians from Centrepoint to provide an optional resource for staff and volunteers running IFAN food banks and other food aid providers when possible. They are evidence-based and could be used to support beneficiaries to receive a nutritionally balanced parcel of food which takes individual needs such as health conditions, culture and kitchen facilities into account.



Nutrition and health

Eating a balanced diet is very important for good health, and protects us from a range of diseases. Nutritious food helps maintain our health by giving our bodies the energy and nutrients it needs to work at its best, fight off infections and also affects our mental health. Eating a variety of foods from the main food groups (fruit and vegetables, carbohydrates, protein-rich foods, dairy and alternatives and fats) and eating less salt, sugar and saturated fats is the basis of a healthy diet.

Many beneficiaries using the food bank may not have access to cooking facilities such as an oven and hob, which restricts what you can provide in the food parcel. For people with limited cooking equipment it can be more difficult to prepare healthy food, however, there are still many nutritious options that can be included in the parcel. Where equipment such as a kettle, fridge or microwave are available, more can be prepared than you might think! For those with no cooking facilities it is more challenging but still important to try and offer a balanced parcel.

The following questions may be useful to ask the beneficiary, if you have the ability to further tailor their parcel:

- Which facilities do you have available? Microwave, kettle, hob, nothing?
- Do you have a tin opener? **TIP: if no, offer cans with a ring opener**
- Do you have a fridge? **TIP: even long life milk and dairy are not a good choice without a fridge. Offer small cartons if these are available.**
- Are there any foods you don't like/don't eat?
- Do you have any dietary requirements or cultural preference that you would like to be considered? **See other guidelines for more information. If they have children or infants see the child-friendly guidelines.**
- Would you like some no-cook Recipe Cards with your parcel? **See below**

The following Recipe Cards are appropriate without an oven or hob:

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| • Tuna Bean Salad (no cook) | • No fry Noodles (kettle) |
| • Kettle Pasta (kettle) | • Microwave Vegetable Soup (microwave) |
| • Scrambled Eggs (microwave) | • Overnight Oats (no cook) |
| • Kettle Couscous (kettle) | • Microwave Mashed Potato (microwave) |
| • Breakfast Yogurt Pots (no cook) | • Tomato mackerel (no cook) |
| | • Microwave Peach Pudding |

For resources on nutrition and healthy eating go to : <https://www.bda.uk.com/>

The following food items are all good options for someone with limited cooking facilities, try to include some from each group:

Carbohydrate-rich foods:

- Cereal products e.g. porridge oats, cereals, oat bars, crackers, biscuits
- Plantain chips
- Tinned potatoes
- Tinned pasta e.g. ravioli
- Bread products and crackers
- Microwave pouches of rice/pulses/grains

If they have a kettle or microwave:

- Dried pasta and noodles
- Rice and grains e.g. couscous
- Instant couscous/noodles/pasta

Protein-rich foods:

- Tins of beans e.g. baked beans, kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas
- Microwave pouches of pulses
- Tins of meat e.g. chilli, beef, ham
- Tins of fish e.g. tuna, mackerel (fish in sauce or tinned fish salad needs no preparation)
- Packs of nuts, jars of nut butter
- Protein bars/shakes
- Tofu (long life)

TIP: If eggs are available, these can be cooked in the microwave.

Fruits and vegetables:

- Tins of fruit e.g. pineapple, peach
- Tins/jars of vegetables e.g. spinach
- Tinned soup e.g. lentil, vegetable
- Tomato/garlic/ginger paste
- Long life juice (stock small cartons)
- Packs of dried fruit

TIP: If they have a freezer, frozen veg can be microwaved and is pre-prepared

Dairy and alternatives:

- Tins or individual pots of rice pudding, custard, soya desserts
- Long-life dairy or plant-based milks. Stock small cartons (250ml) for people with no fridge
- Evaporated milk/ milk powder

TIP: If they have a fridge, fresh items like yoghurt and cheese can be offered.

Other items: *Jars of sauces (pasta, curry, pesto), seasoning (spices, dried herbs, stock cubes), condiments, oil, coconut milk, packs of tea, hot chocolate, coffee, squash. Foods like crisps & biscuits can be included but ideally in small amounts.*

If you have access to fresh or frozen food you could also add:

Bakery products and eggs don't need refrigeration, nor do most fresh fruit and vegetables. Potatoes and yams can be microwave-cooked. Fresh dairy is suitable if they have a fridge, and frozen foods if they have a freezer. If you have fresh prepared meals available these can be provided.

An example 3 day parcel could include:

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| • 500g bag of pasta | • 1 box of long-life juice |
| • 2 x 250g pack microwave grains | • 2 tins of beans e.g. kidney, baked |
| • 500g of cereal or porridge | • 2 tins of meat/fish e.g. tuna, chilli |
| • 1 packet of crackers/biscuits/bars | • 1 box of milk (cows or dairy-free) |
| • 500g jar of pasta sauce/pesto | • 1 tin of custard or rice pudding |
| • 2 tins of fruit e.g. peach, pineapple | • 1 condiment e.g. hot sauce |
| • 2 tins of vegetables e.g. spinach | • 1 pack spices e.g. all purpose, chilli |
| • 1 tin of soup | • 1 pack of tea/coffee/hot chocolate |

For someone with no cooking facilities at all (no kettle or microwave):

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| • Tinned pasta e.g. ravioli, hoops | • 2 tins of beans e.g. mixed beans |
| • 3 x 250g pack microwave grains/pulses | • 3 tins of meat/fish in sauce e.g. tuna sweetcorn salad, chilli |
| • 500g of cereal | • 250ml cartons UHT milk (cows or dairy-free) or milk powder |
| • 1 packet of crackers/biscuits/cereal bars | • Individual custard/soya desserts |
| • 500g jar of tomato pasta sauce | • 1 condiment e.g. mustard |
| • 2 tins of fruit e.g. peach, fruit cocktail | • Seasoning e.g. chilli powder |
| • 2 tins of vegetables e.g. sweetcorn | |
| • 250ml of long-life juice or squash | |