

# Guidance for those Preparing and Delivering Food Parcels in the Community Setting

This document aims to assist those groups preparing and providing food parcels/hampers for onward distribution to vulnerable individuals within the community by giving a brief overview of the following;

- Helpful food and drink items to include in food parcels for everyone
- Simple suggestions for improving the nutritional balance of food parcels
- Accurate information on what should or should not be included in parcels for those individuals with dietary restrictions due to cultural or religious reason
- Simple recipes and recipe video instructions
- Contact details for SHSCT Community Nutrition & Dietetic Service re. advice for what to buy/include for those on \*medically prescribed diets

\*A medically prescribed diet is one that has been prescribed by a doctor i.e. general practitioner (GP) or hospital doctor. In some circumstances, diet may be the only treatment of a medical condition or can form a major part of it. These diets can be required for a wide variety of medical conditions- some examples (NB. not exhaustive): diabetes, coeliac, low fat, low salt etc.

**For patients with any Type of Diabetes with concerns about COVID 19, the volunteer and / or client can also ring the regional COVID 19 Diabetes Helpline – 02895360600 (7 days / wk 9am – 3 pm)**

# Suggested Items to Include in Emergency Food Parcels

## Starchy Foods

Porridge  
Cereal  
Rice  
Noodles  
Pasta/ Spaghetti/ Lasagne Sheets

Crackers  
Longer life bread  
Instant Mashed potato  
Tinned potatoes

## Protein Rich Foods

Tinned or dried beans e.g. kidney beans/ chickpeas/ mixed beans/ cannellini beans/ butter beans/ black beans.

Baked beans/ spaghetti in tomato sauce

Tinned or dried lentils

Tinned fish e.g. tuna, mackerel, sardines, salmon

Tinned meat/ chicken

## Soups and Sauces

Tinned soup  
Jars/ packets of curry/ chilli sauce etc.

Jars of pasta sauces e.g. tomato/ pesto

## Drinks

UHT fruit juice  
Diluting juice  
Instant coffee  
Tea bags  
Hot chocolate powder

## Fresh Items (When possible to include)

Milk  
Eggs  
Poultry/ Meat  
Fresh fruit and vegetables  
Bread/ Pitta/ Wraps/ Bagels/ Pancakes

Potatoes  
Yoghurt  
Cheese  
Butter/ Low fat spread

## Fruit and Vegetables

Tinned fruit e.g.  
pears/ apples/  
pineapple

Tinned vegetables  
e.g. carrots/  
sweetcorn/peas

Tinned or cartons  
of chopped  
tomatoes

## Dairy

UHT long life milk  
Tinned custard  
Tinned rice pudding  
Custard powder

# Suggested Items to Include in Emergency Food Parcels

## Snack Ideas

Plain biscuits e.g. rich tea/ digestive/ oat/ malted milk

Oatcakes and rice cakes

Baked crisps, bread sticks and popcorn

Unsalted nuts and dried fruit mix

Where possible the following budget friendly ingredients could also be included within food parcels to help make the food go further, and to add more flavour and variety to meals.

## Cooking Ingredients

Cooking Oil e.g. vegetable/ rapeseed/  
olive/ groundnut oil

Tomato Puree

Stock Cubes e.g. vegetable/ chicken/  
beef

## Herbs and Spices

Pepper

Garlic powder/ Puree

Mixed dried herbs

Mixed spice/ curry powder

## Baking

Flour e.g. plain/ self-raising/ wholemeal

Sugar e.g. Caster/ brown

## Condiments

Peanut butter

Honey

Marmalade

Jam

# Simple ways to make food parcels healthier

We appreciate that many food parcels are made on limited budgets and with limited choice of food and drink items. However where possible it is important to try to provide a range of nutritious food and drink items.

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Keep these simple points in mind to help you choose healthier options:

Choose fruit tinned in its own juice or water rather than sugary syrup.

Choose vegetables tinned in unsalted water rather than those tinned in brine or salted water.

Choose fish tinned in spring water, sunflower oil or sauce such as tomato/ barbeque/ curry, rather than brine.

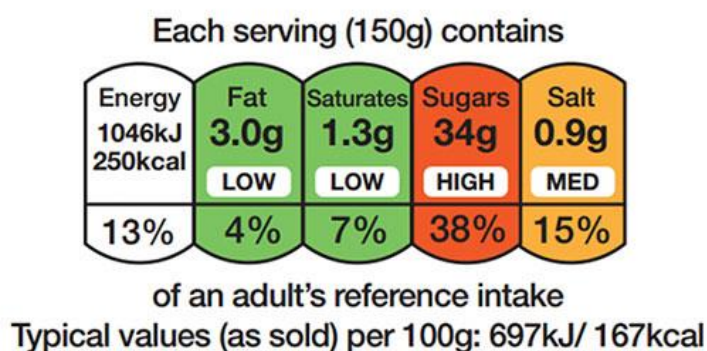
Choose reduced sugar and salt baked beans and tinned spaghetti.

When buying starchy foods such as cereals, bread, pasta and rice, try to include wholegrain and wholemeal versions.

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For items such as cereal, soups, tinned meats, tinned meals and sauces, have a look at the food label to help you pick those items that are lower in fat, sugar and salt.

Most will have a colour- coded front of pack label like this one-



Simply try to pick products with more greens and ambers, and fewer reds.

# Further Information

A recipe book 'Get cooking...Making the most of your food parcel', has been developed by BHSCCT Community Dietetic Health and Wellbeing Team for use by those accessing food banks or receiving food parcels. The recipe book focuses on making the most nutritious meals out of what you have available, and is full of simple, low cost recipes using basic items that may be found in a food parcel, or indeed already in your store cupboard.

To order copies of this free recipe book, contact SHSCT Cook it! Team:

[cookit@southerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:cookit@southerntrust.hscni.net) Tel: 02837564544

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For helpful advice and ideas for healthy eating check out

<https://www.safefood.eu/Healthy-Eating.aspx>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/eatwell-guide>

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A range of recipe ideas and suggestions may be found at

<https://www.choosetolivebetter.com/content/healthy-recipes>

<https://www.safefood.eu/Recipes.aspx>

Some of these recipes are also linked to video instructions- see below:

<https://www.safefood.eu/Recipes/Breakfast/Porridge.aspx>

<https://www.safefood.eu/Recipes/Lunch/Omelette.aspx>

<https://www.safefood.eu/Recipes/Dinner/Homemade-burgers.aspx>

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# Medically Prescribed Diets

A medically prescribed diet is one that has been prescribed by a doctor i.e. general practitioner (GP) or hospital doctor. In some circumstances, diet may be the only treatment of a medical condition or can form a major part of it. These diets can be required for a wide variety of medical conditions- some examples (NB. not exhaustive): diabetes, coeliac, low fat, low salt etc.

For volunteers/organisations requiring advice on what to buy for clients on medically prescribed diets, the **SHSCT Community Nutrition and Dietetic Service** can be contacted on the numbers below:

- **Armagh & Dungannon locality 028 37565308**
- **Craigavon & Banbridge locality 028 37561049**
- **Newry & Mourne locality 028 37562060**

The following information will be required from the volunteer.

- Organisation/Volunteer Name and contact number
- Type of medically prescribed diet
- Name of client, their DOB & postcode

The service will then check to confirm the client is on a medically prescribed diet, and if the records give any other specific dietetic instruction. When this information has been verified we will then ring the volunteer/organisation with advice on the contents of the food parcel for the client.

If the client is not on a medically prescribed diet we are not covered to give advice. We are aware that some people choose themselves to restrict their diet, by avoiding certain allergens like gluten, milk etc. We can not give specific advice for these clients.

# A Brief Guide on Food Choices for Religious Faiths

This brief guide may be used when preparing emergency food parcels. Always ask the individual what, if any, dietary restrictions they are following. This can vary widely between different denominations, families and individuals.

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Buddhist</u></b></p> <p>Many are vegetarian, and some may be vegan, therefore check whether individual eats meat, poultry, fish, dairy foods and eggs.</p>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Sikh</u></b></p> <p>Beef, and beef products, halal and Kosher meats are typically avoided.</p> <p>Many are vegetarian therefore check whether meat, poultry, fish and eggs are eaten.</p>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Jewish</u></b></p> <p>Typically, beef, lamb, poultry and fish must be Kosher. Kosher refers to foods that have been selected and prepared according to particular rules of the Jewish religion.</p> <p>Pork and pork products, shellfish and seafood without fins and scales are typically avoided.</p> <p>Many also exclude gelatine and other ingredients that have come from animals that are not Kosher.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Muslim</u></b></p> <p>Many practising Muslims will only eat halal beef, lamb, poultry and fish. Halal meat is from animals that have been killed according to Muslim law.</p> <p>Pork and pork products, shellfish and seafood without fins and scales are typically avoided.</p> <p>Some individuals may also avoid eating gelatine and other ingredients from animals that are not halal.</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Hindu</u></b></p> <p>Beef and beef products are typically avoided.</p> <p>Many are vegetarian therefore check whether individual eats meat, poultry, fish and eggs.</p> <p>Strict Hindus also avoid eating fat that has come from an animal source e.g. butter. They also avoid onions, garlic, mushrooms, tea and coffee.</p>   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Rastafarian</u></b></p> <p>Pork and pork products are typically avoided.</p> <p>Many are vegetarian or vegan therefore check whether individual eats meat, poultry, fish, dairy and eggs.</p> <p>Many prefer to eat a pure and natural diet so may exclude coffee, tea, processed or canned and non-organic foods.</p>  |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Seventh Day Adventist</u></b></p> <p>Many are vegetarian, and some may be vegan, therefore check whether they eat meat, poultry, fish and eggs.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Individuals may also exclude tea and coffee.</p>   |  |

Information adapted from 'Guidance on food for religious faiths, Public Health Agency, 2009.

# A Brief Guide to Vegetarian and Vegan Diets

This brief guide may be used when preparing emergency food parcels. Where possible, it is always best to ask the individual what dietary restrictions they follow.

Vegetarian and vegan diets, now commonly known as 'plant-based diets', are those diets which are based on foods which come from plants, including vegetables, wholegrains, legumes, nuts, seeds and fruits, with few or no animal products.

Types of plant-based diets include:

## Lacto-Ovo vegetarians

Eat dairy foods and eggs but not meat, poultry or seafood.

## Ovo vegetarians

Include eggs but avoid all other animal foods, including dairy.

## Lacto- vegetarians

Eat dairy foods but exclude eggs, meat, poultry and seafood.

## Vegans

Don't eat any animal products at all, including honey, dairy and eggs. Many shop bought ready-made products may contain animal ingredients.

**Other variations of plant-based diets include:**

**Pescetarians:** Eat fish and/or shellfish.

**Semi-vegetarians/ Flexitarians:** Occasionally eat meat or poultry.

Information adapted from '*Plant-based diet: Food Fact Sheet*', British Dietetic Association, 2017.