



THE “OFTEN” FOODS

More commonly known as **Green** foods, these are the “choose often foods” or foods with the least amounts of saturated fat, sodium(salt), and added sugars in accordance with Healthy Eating Research (HER) Guidelines.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables with NO added sugar or sodium(salt)
- Low-sodium(salt) vegetables
- Fruit canned in 100% juice or in water

GRAINS

- Whole Grains
- Whole wheat pasta/breads
- Whole grain cereal with less than 6 grams of added sugar
- Plain oatmeal

PROTEIN

- Dried beans
- Low-sodium(salt) canned beans
- Nuts
- Fresh/Frozen poultry
- Fish
- Low-sodium canned tuna
- Canned salmon

DAIRY

- Skim, 1%, 2% milk
- Fat-free and reduced fat cheeses

BEVERAGES

- Plain water
- Flavored and unflavored sparkling water
- Plain coffee
- Unsweetened tea

LABEL READING TIPS

- Use the **5/20 Rule**: if the % Daily Value (%DV) is less than 5%, there is a low amount of that nutrient, and if the %DV is greater than 20% then there is a high amount of that nutrient.
- **Added sugars** include all sugars added to foods or beverages. They can include natural sugars (white or brown sugar), honey or agave, and manufactured sweeteners (high fructose corn syrup).
- Choosing foods with **less** added sugars can help **prevent or manage** health problems such as **type 2 diabetes and heart disease**.



Note: We do not discriminate against foods at the Houston Food Bank! Instead, we believe all foods have a space on our plate and should be enjoyed equally.



THE “SOMETIMES” FOODS

More commonly known as **Yellow** foods, these are the “choose sometimes” foods or foods with varying amounts of saturated fat, sodium(salt), and added sugars in accordance with Healthy Eating Research (HER) Guidelines.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- 100% juice
- Fruit canned in light syrup
- Canned vegetables
- Plain dried fruit

GRAINS

- Refined grain products
- Oatmeal with added sugar
- Whole or non-whole grain cereal with 7-11 grams of total added sugar

PROTEIN

- Canned beans
- Regular canned fish
- Pork

DAIRY

- Some reduced fat or whole milk cheeses
- Whole Milk

BEVERAGES

- Diet soft drinks
- Diet iced teas

PROCESSED/ PACKAGED SNACKS

- Plain popcorn
- Whole wheat crackers
- Unsalted whole grain pretzels

BEST PRACTICES:

- **Reducing sodium(salt)** intake is related to a **decreased risk** for heart disease and high blood pressure.
- You can rinse your canned vegetables with water to reduce excess sodium(salt)!
- Look at the first item of the ingredient list; if it says “enriched”, “bleached”, or “wheat” then it is a refined grain.



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THE “RARELY” FOODS

More commonly known as **Red foods**, these are the “choose rarely” foods or foods with higher amounts of either saturated fat, sodium(salt), added sugars, or a combination of all three in accordance with Healthy Eating Research (HER) Guidelines.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Dried fruit with sugar added
- Fruit canned in heavy syrup
- Tomato sauce with added sugar
- Vegetables canned with high sodium/salt

GRAINS

- Rice and pasta with salt-based seasoning mixes
- Whole or non-whole grain cereal with greater than 12 grams of sugar
- Most bakery items

PROTEIN

- Refried beans
- Deli meat
- Sausage
- Bacon
- Most red meat

DAIRY

- Full-fat cheese

BEVERAGES

- Sweetened energy drinks
- Sports drinks
- Regular sodas
- Non-100% juice drinks with added sugar

PROCESSED/ PACKAGED SNACKS

- Pretzels
- Cheese crackers
- Potato chips

LET’S CLARIFY THIS!

- **Reducing** foods that are **high** in saturated fat, added sugars, and sodium(salt) can **lower the risk** for heart disease.
- Please note that we are not saying to STOP the consumption of these items!
- Instead, when enjoying these equally satisfying food options, we recommend eating them in combination with other foods in the Green and Yellow categories.



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