

How to Select Recipes for the Food Pantry

When you consider providing recipes to food pantry clients, use the following checklist to guide your decision.

Are the recipes consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans?

- Encourage eating fruits, vegetables, whole grains, skim or low-fat milk and lean meats.
- Use salt sparingly or designate “optional” if possible.
- Minimize the use of foods with low nutritional value and high in solid fat and/or added sugar such as whipped topping, chocolate syrup or cream cheese.
- Follow food safety guidelines. Recipes should not include unsafe practices, such as using uncooked eggs in the finished product or marinating meat at room temperature.

Are the recipes appropriate for your clients?

- Ingredients should be familiar and readily available.
- The recipe should not specify brand names.
- Choose recipes that do not use expensive equipment or ingredients.
- Consider the cultural preferences of your clients.
- Consider client’s experience with food preparation.
- Choose recipes that are quick and easy. If possible, choose recipes with fewer than eight ingredients and can be prepared in less than 45 minutes.
- Pre-testing recipes is highly recommended to make sure the product is the quality you expect.

Are the recipes written clearly?

- The ingredients are listed in the order they will be used.
- Measurements are spelled out rather than abbreviated (i.e. use tablespoon rather than Tbsp.)
- The recipe specifies sizes of cans.
- The method of preparation is described using short, simple, numbered steps. Pan sizes, temperature and baking time are specified.
- The recipe states expected yield in number and size of servings.
- The recipe includes Nutrition Facts.

Use recipes from public sources such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture or National Institutes of Health. **Get permission to reprint any recipes that are copyright protected.** State your source on the recipe.

Examples of public sources for recipes:

<http://fyi.uwex.edu/foodsense/>

<http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/>

<http://www.kidsacookin.ksu.edu/>

www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/facts/

<http://recipes.extension.iastate.edu/>