



# The Aliveness Project

# Healthy Foods Policy

## PURPOSE

The Aliveness Project is committed to providing nutritious food to its members both in the food shelf and at meals. Proper nutrition is essential for people living with HIV/AIDS to maintain a healthy immune system and energy balance. Food insecurity can contribute to malnutrition and poor health outcomes related to HIV/AIDS. By providing access to healthy foods The Aliveness Project supports members to live healthy, self-directed lives.

## NUTRITION GUIDELINES

The Aliveness Project will prioritize food distribution based on the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

### FOODS TO PRIORITIZE:

#### Fruits and Vegetables

*Aim for a variety of fruits and vegetables.*

- Fresh fruits and vegetables\*
- Frozen fruits and vegetables\*
- Canned fruits (no sugar added, or in its own juice)
- Canned vegetables (no salt added, or low sodium)
- Shelf-stable fruit cups
- Dried fruit
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- 100% vegetable juice
- Spaghetti or tomato sauce

#### Grains

*Aim for 100% whole grain or whole grain as the first ingredient.*

- Brown rice or barley
- Cereal (low-sugar, high fiber)
- Oatmeal
- Quinoa
- Whole grain bread\*
- Whole grain tortillas\*
- Whole grain crackers
- Whole grain pasta
- Whole wheat flour

#### Protein

*Aim for lean protein sources.*

- Canned beans, chili, and stew (no salt added, or low sodium)
- Dried beans and peas
- Canned chicken, tuna, and salmon (water-packed preferred)
- Eggs\*
- Nuts
- Peanut butter and other nut butters

## Dairy

*Aim for low-fat (1%) or non-fat dairy products.*

- Boxed shelf-stable milk
- Calcium-fortified milk alternatives (e.g. soy, rice, almond milk) \*
- Dry milk
- Evaporated milk
- Low-fat cheese\*
- Low-fat plain yogurt\*

## Fats and Oils

*Aim for shelf-stable healthy fats.*

- Olive oil
- Vegetable oil
- Non-stick cooking spray
- Canola oil

## Spices and Condiments

*Aim for whole leaf dried herbs to help members season food without salt.*

- Basil
- Bay leaves
- Black pepper
- Cayenne pepper
- Chili powder
- Cinnamon
- Cumin
- Curry powder
- Dill
- Fennel
- Garlic powder
- Mustard
- Onion powder
- Oregano
- Parsley
- Red pepper flakes
- Rosemary
- Salsa (jarred)
- Thyme
- Turmeric
- Vanilla extract

\*Suggested only if offsite safe storage (e.g. during a food drive) is possible.

## **FOODS TO LIMIT:**

- Candy
- Chocolates
- Sugar sweetened beverages
- Pudding
- Gelatin (Jell-O)
- Fruit snacks
- Refined grains
- High-sodium products
- Chips
- Cookies

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### Purchased Products

- The Aliveness Project will maintain contact with current food distributors and determine which priority foods they have available. Foods from the priority list will be purchased most often.
- To better meet the nutrition commitment, The Aliveness Project will evaluate and adjust the purchasing of foods to limit.
- The Aliveness Project will purchase culturally specific foods based on current membership.

## Donated Products

- The Aliveness Project will create and distribute a new set of food drive guidelines for all community partners.
- The Aliveness Project will continue and develop new partnerships with farmers and community gardens to ensure fresh produce is available for members.
- The Aliveness Project will consider the nutritional value of all bulk donations to the food shelf or kitchen. The Aliveness Project reserves the right to not accept donations that fall under the foods to limit list from this policy or the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

## Meal Preparation

- The Aliveness Project meal program will favor scratch cooking methods allowing greater control over meal quality, healthfulness, and cost. Preprocessed items will be kept to a minimum, particularly those higher in sodium, added sugars or saturated fat.
- The Aliveness Project meal program will offer, whenever possible, variations of the featured entrée to accommodate food allergies or other dietary needs (i.e. lactose-free, gluten-free, pork-free, vegetarian, etc.).
- The Aliveness Project meal program will promote intake of anti-inflammatory foods by featuring a variety of plant-based foods in the daily salad bar, by offering at least one seafood option per week, and by using fresh herbs and spices with proven anti-inflammatory properties.

## **NUTRITION COMMITMENT**

In addition to providing healthy and nutritious foods, the Aliveness Project is committed to improving the health and well-being of its members through the following:

- Full-time dietitian on staff to provide expertise for purchasing, meals, and member counseling
- Development of a food shelf task list to outline ways to promote healthy food
- Continuous evaluation of healthy food policy activities to ensure feasibility and success
- Continuous education of staff and members on nutrition-related topics when feasible
- Collaboration with similar community programs

## **RESOURCES**

- Position of the American Dietetic Association: Nutrition Intervention and Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection
- AIDS.gov: Nutrition and Food Safety. <https://www.aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/staying-healthy-with-hiv-aids/taking-care-of-yourself/nutrition-and-food-safety/>
- United States Department of Agriculture: 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>