



Community Food Sharing & Food Safety

Supporting Our Neighbors, Safely

Many people in our community are showing kindness by offering free food through neighborhood “pop-up” pantries, sharing tables, or community bins. These efforts come from a place of generosity and we can all help make sure they stay safe and supportive for everyone.

Before You Take Food

- Check the packaging: Avoid foods with torn, bulging, or damaged packaging, or any food with visible mold or unusual odors.
- Be cautious with perishable foods: Foods that require refrigeration (milk, cheese, eggs, meat, leftovers) should be kept cold (below 41°F). If they’re sitting out or warm to the touch, it’s best not to take them.
- Inspect fresh produce: Choose fruits and vegetables that look clean and free of mold or decay. Wash all produce thoroughly before eating.
- Look for labeling: Check expiration or “use by” dates when available. Avoid any food that looks or smells off.

If You’re Donating or Hosting a Food Table

- Stick to nonperishable foods: Canned goods, dry pasta, rice, cereal, and other shelf-stable items are safest for outdoor pantries.
- Keep food covered and protected: Use containers or bins with lids to prevent pests or contamination.
- Check regularly: Inspect food often and remove any expired, opened, or damaged items.
- Avoid home-prepared foods: Share only commercially packaged items that haven’t been opened.

We All Want the Same Thing: A Healthy, Caring Community

By taking a few simple precautions, we can keep community sharing efforts both kind and safe for everyone.

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