

Supporting Wellness at Pantries (SWAP)

What is SWAP?

- Supporting Wellness at Pantries (SWAP) is a Stoplight Nutrition Ranking System designed to help promote healthy food choices at food banks and food pantries.

The goal of SWAP is to create an easy to use, easy to understand nutrition ranking system to categorize food offered in food pantries, and to encourage clients to choose healthy items.

Why is this important?

- More than half of the families who visit food pantries have a household member with high blood pressure and one-third have a member with type II diabetes.
- These chronic diseases can often be prevented, managed, and reversed through the foods we eat.
- This system will help clients make healthy choices, and influence the types of food donated to the pantry.

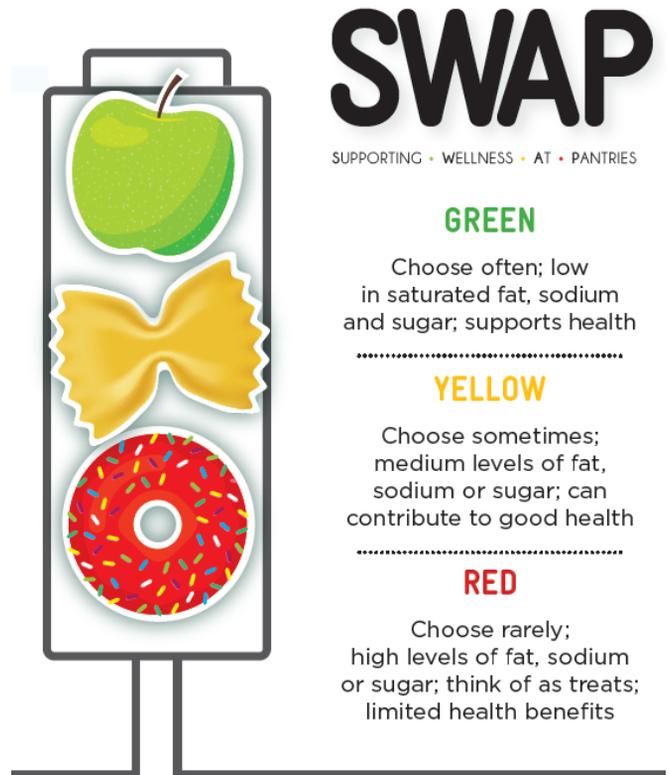
How does SWAP work?

To rank foods, SWAP uses this information from the nutrition food label:

- Saturated fat
- Sodium
- Sugar

Why only these nutrients?

- These nutrients are the most dangerous ones for chronic diseases
- These are listed as “nutrients to limit” in the United States Dietary Guidelines for 2015.



FOODSHARE

Hunger is big. Our community is bigger.

Supporting Wellness at Pantries (SWAP) is a program of Foodshare. SWAP was developed by researchers at the Univ. of Saint Joseph (USJ) Department of Nutrition and Public Health and SNAP-Ed program, and was a collaboration between USJ, the UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity, and the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport. Funding to develop SWAP was provided by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and the Johns Hopkins Global Obesity Prevention Center.

SWAP in Action

In the Spring of 2016, researchers at the University of St. Joseph developed the SWAP food categories and nutrition rankings, and field tested them with over 500 actual foods. They partnered with the UConn Rudd Center to conduct focus groups with food pantry staff and volunteers, and conducted surveys with over 200 food pantry clients to measure their preferences for healthy food. They conducted baseline inventories in six food pantries in Greater Hartford and Bridgeport, Connecticut in the Summer of 2016, implemented SWAP in the Winter of 2017, and conducted follow-up inventories in Summer 2017 to measure changes over time. We found significant improvements in the amount of green foods and reductions in red foods over one year.

SWAP is now a program of Foodshare, and Foodshare created a Toolkit to train the trainer in additional food banks and food pantries, and we are recruiting more food banks and pantries to use SWAP. The Toolkit contains background information and tips for implementing SWAP in a food bank or food pantry. Visit the Toolkit at:

<http://site.foodshare.org/swaptoolkit>



We use posters and shelf tags with nutrition information and health messages to “nudge” clients to choose the healthy food items. In six food pantries piloting SWAP in CT, the percentage of healthy green foods increased by 3.5% over one year, and the percentage of less healthy red foods decreased by 3%. In addition to dozens of food pantries using SWAP, multiple food banks around the country are currently using SWAP to rank foods in their inventory databases, and more are interested.

In addition to Foodshare, several other food banks are currently using SWAP, including the Greater Boston Food Bank, Central Texas Food Bank, Maryland Food Bank, 3 Square Food Bank and the Greater Chicago Food Depository. Through this community of practice, we share resources and best practices. We look forward to working with additional food banks and food pantries around the country who are interested in SWAP.

For more information about SWAP, please contact Katie Martin at kmartin@Foodshare.org.