

## **Hillcrest Food Pantry Guidelines**

**The following information is designed to help the community decide what to donate to our pantry:**

1. Consider a monetary donation. Cash is useful to food banks and food pantries as they can generally buy quantities of food for less. Monetary donations can also buy the items most needed by their clients.
2. It is important that donated food be safe and nutritious as possible rather than just what is in the back of your cupboard. In other words, don't just "clean out your pantry" and donate food that you don't want or can't use anymore unless it meets specific guidelines.
3. Purchase food specifically for the food pantry recipients. Think about what foods other families like yours might like to eat. Also keep in mind that food pantry and food bank recipients range in age from infants to elderly residents.
4. Donate retail-sized food containers. In other words, the size of items you'd pick up at your local grocery store for yourself or family.
5. Donate food that is in its original package with the label intact — unopened and not damaged.
6. Do not donate food that is past its "best by," "use by," or "sell by" date. Although some food is still safe to consume after these dates it is best practice not to donate them.
7. If canned food has a sharp dent, a dent deep enough to rest a finger in, severe rust pits, swollen or bulging ends or any evidence of leaking, the food is unsafe to eat and should be discarded and not donated. Canned vegetables and meats with any size dent should be thrown away.
8. Because of the risk of botulism in improperly home-canned food and the large variation in the level of safety of the methods used by home canners, food banks and food pantries do not accept any home-canned goods.

**For more information or to verify eligibility of food donations, please contact Hillcrest Children and Family Center's Food Pantry Program via email at: [info@Hillcrest-dc.org](mailto:info@Hillcrest-dc.org).**