



# Handling Food Donations



It's hard to say "No thanks" to free food. Snacks and meals may be one of your program's biggest expenses.

It's always exciting when a local business or program supporter offers to donate food. Some food donations are healthier than others, and accepting unhealthy food donations does not benefit children or your program.

To avoid receiving unhealthy food donations, provide a list of foods your program does and does not accept as donations.

For example:

## Healthy choices our program accepts:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Whole grain foods
- Protein sources (eggs, dairy, fish, poultry)
- Nuts
- Water

## Unhealthy choices our program does not accept:

- Candy
- Cookies, Cakes
- Ice cream, popsicles
- Chips
- Soda or other sugary drinks

## Healthy or unhealthy?

It's not always easy to figure out. Baked goods may include whole grains but still be high in sugar. Trail mix may include both nuts and candy. Use your best judgment to decide which foods your program will accept.

## What to do if you receive an unhealthy food donation:

- Thank the business for their generous offer and let them know you recognize the importance of partnering with community organizations to provide children healthy food.
- Explain that your program partners with Let's Go! to increase healthy eating, and works hard to limit unhealthy choices and provide healthy meals and snacks.
- Express interest in working together in the future. Suggest healthy food items you would accept. Ask that the business contact you next time a food donation is available.