

Food Banks Feel Pinch of Rising Food Costs



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From California to New York and everywhere in between, rising food and fuel costs are causing a big pinch for local food banks. **The average cost of groceries has been climbing 5% annually – the highest in 17 years.** According to the USDA, eggs are up 40% in the past year; milk up 26% a gallon; a loaf of bread, 20%.

Food bank representatives say that despite strong community support, donations are down and **prices for commodity foods have increased dramatically** in the past month – some as much as 55%!

To add to this imbalance, **food distribution at food banks across the country is up about 20%**, as more people look to food banks to supplement their food supply.

The long-term outlook isn't totally gloomy, however. The USDA's chief economist, Joseph Glauber, expects retail food price *inflation to "...gradually moderate over the next several years."*

In the meantime, local food banks are working their best to accommodate the increased demand for their services. **If you're considering donating**, consider staple items such as beans, brown rice, peanut butter and pasta.

For a list of **healthy foods to donate to your local food bank** ; or a tip sheet outlining **money saving tips for the grocery store**, go to:

<http://www.co.missoula.mt.us/healthservices/EatSmart> and scroll down to the tip sheets links!

Missoula Food Bank: www.missoulafoodbank.com

Information from this newsletter adapted from:

- Food Navigator USA Newsletter: <http://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/news>
- Health Castle Newsletter: <http://www.healthcastle.com>
- LA Times Newspaper: <http://www.latimes.com/business>
- PBS Online Journal: <http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/04112008/profile4.html>



Next time you make a donation to your local food bank, consider the nutrient quality of the foods you drop off. Beans, whether dried, canned, frozen or fresh provide big health benefits. They can help prevent heart disease and cancer; aide in regulating blood sugar; and are packed with protein and fiber!