

Running A Successful Share Table

A share table is a place where program participants can place unwanted food or drink. Share tables are a simple way to help decrease food waste and allow for hungry participants to take an additional helping of food or drink. When setting up a share table this summer, be sure to ask yourself the following questions.

- **What type of items can be shared?**
Currently, only shelf stable, pre-packaged fruits and whole fruits with non-edible peels (i.e., banana) may be shared on a share table. Check with your local health department whether items with an edible peel and temperature-control cold items may be shared on a share table with an approved plan.
- **When should I reach out to the health department?**
Prior to utilizing a share table this summer and keep any verification by your local health department including documentation that an approved plan is not required by your county.
- **Who will monitor the share table?**
Foodservice staff or volunteers with knowledge of food safety should be assigned to make sure items are in the appropriate bins and packaging is intact for participants who choose to get an item available.
- **What type of storage bin/container to use?**
Dry bin for shelf stable items. Temperature-controlled cold bin that has been recommended by your local health department.
- **Where to set up a share table?**
Somewhere visible and close to the point of service for temperature-controlled items.
- **When should participants share items on share table?**
Temperature-controlled items right after point of service. Packaged, shelf-stable items can be shared at any time.
- **If using time as temperature control, temperature-controlled items must be discarded. They cannot be recycled for future meal service, donated, or gifted.**

Post a clear sign of share table rules that includes:

- When to place unwanted food items.
- Who is allowed to take from the share table.
- What can be shared, and items not allowed.
- Items must be unopened.

The poster on the second page is intended as a guideline. Be sure to work with your Local Department of Health to ensure all local health codes are met, share table rules may differ in your county.



Items For Program Participants Only

SHARE TABLE RULES

A share table is a place where program participants can place unwanted food or drink. Any hungry participants can choose to take a helping of food or drink from the share table.

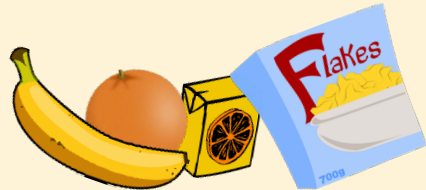
Share at ANYTIME

- **Shelf Stable Packed Food**

Cereal | Crackers | Juice box | Bars | Applesauce cup

- **Whole Fruits with a non-edible peel**

Orange | Banana



NOT ALLOWED

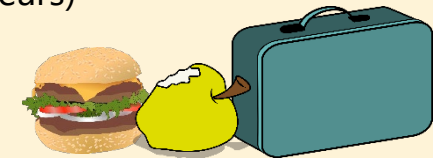
- **Partially eaten or opened items**

- **Hot food**

- **Food brought from home**

- **Fruit cups that are not commercially packaged**

- ***Unpackaged fruits and vegetables with edible peels** (apples, pears)



Share table items **MUST** be unopened!

***Check with your Local Health Department whether items with an edible peel and temperature-control cold items may be shared on a share table.**

- **Commercially Packaged/ Individually Wrapped Cold food.**

Milk | Yogurt | String Cheese | Bagged fruit and vegetables (sliced apples, baby carrots)

If approved by local health department, cold items must be placed on share table immediately following point of service in a cold bin and maintained at 41°F or below.



Resources:

- [Washington State Retail Food Code Page 40](#)
- [The Use of Share Tables in Child Nutrition Programs](#)
- [Share Tables \(ospi.k12.wa.us\)](https://ospi.k12.wa.us)

