



ORGANIZATION SOLUTIONS

## Policies and Procedures Pantry Organization

### Getting Started

More often than not, it is easiest to remove everything from the pantry and start from scratch.

As you are removing the food, medicine and vitamins - check for expiration dates. Any item that is expired should be pulled to one location in the kitchen so that you can confirm with the homeowner that they can be tossed. This will also allow the homeowner to make a list of any items they would like to replace.

Sort by Category – You want to take all remaining food items and get them grouped by category:

- Breakfast Items
- Pasta, Rice & Beans
- Pre-Packaged Side Dishes
- Instant Meals
- Canned Goods
- Jarred Goods
- Oil & Vinegar
- Peanut Butter / Jelly / Honey
- Condiments
- Spices
- Bread Items (Bread, Buns, Tortillas, Bagels)
- Snacks (Salty & Sweet)
- Baking

### Breakfast Items

It is best to place the breakfast items in the most accessible area of the pantry since it is likely that they are used daily. If there are children in the home you will want to place these on a lower shelf that will allow the children to help themselves.

This category will include items such as: Cereal, granola, granola bars, hot cereal, oatmeal, syrup, pancake mix.

Cereal boxes should be in a single row on the shelf, and if possible they should go tallest to shortest.



## Breakfast Items – Continued

Hot cereal, and granola or breakfast bars are great items to take out of their boxes and put into a basket. This not only makes it easier to grab each morning, but it's easy to see into the basket and know what the inventory level is for each item.

However, it is important to make sure that for any item you remove from the box – the information about the item (ex. Flavor) is listed on the individual packaging.

Syrup should be kept in the breakfast area near the pancake mix or the oatmeal.

## Pasta, Rice & Beans

This category will include all dried pasta (including Kraft Mac & Cheese), rice, risotto and beans.

They will be in the same area of the pantry together, but within this section of the pantry you want to keep your rice together, your pasta together, etc.

The items that are not in boxes or jars, and are instead packaged in a bag, should be stored in a basket. It's ok to put a mixture of items in this category in one basket if you don't have enough inventory to warrant a basket for each type.

*Canned pasta dishes like Chef Boyardee Ravioli will be kept with the soups in the canned food section.*

## Packaged Side Dishes

This category includes items such as instant potatoes, stuffing and hamburger helper.

These items should be located near the pasta, rice and bean section as they all serve as side dishes.

You may need a basket for some of these items depending on how they are packaged.

## Instant Meals

This category includes items that can be prepared in a matter of minutes, and typically require nothing more than heating.

Instant soup, Mac & cheese in a cup, and Ramen noodles are a perfect example of the types of items we consider instant meals.

These items should be placed in an area that is easily accessible to the children.

## Canned Goods

Canned goods are considered one category, but within this category you have several sub-categories.

Soup ~ Vegetables ~ Fruit, ~ Beans ~ Sauce ~ Meat

AND – within your sub-categories you want to sub-categorize.

Green Beans ~ Carrots ~ Corn ~ Creamed Corn ~ Mushrooms

## Canned Goods – Continued

Due to their size - canned goods are best kept on a shelf that is eye level for easy viewing.

Using an expand-a-shelf for canned goods will give you the cleanest presentation and allows you to see the back section of the shelf.

## Jarred Goods

Just like canned goods – you will find several categories of items in jarred goods and it will be important to sub-categorize these items as well.

Pickles and Relish ~ Sauces ~ Jelly & Jam. ~Olives and Artichokes ~ Salad Dressing

There are a few sub-categories within the jarred category that are substantial enough that they should be treated as a category by themselves.

An example of those sub-categories is:

- Oil and Vinegar
- Complimentary Items
- Condiments
- Spreads (Peanut butter, Honey, Jelly)

For the remaining jarred goods – you want to house these items near the canned goods and they too should be at or near eye level for easy viewing.

## Oils & Vinegars

Oils and vinegars should be kept together in one area, and they should be sub-categorized by type.

These items are typically in a pantry, but can also be found in the kitchen near the stove.

If you are placing them in the pantry – they too need to be located on a shelf at eye level like your other jarred goods.

Unlike most of the other jarred items that get opened and used immediately –oil & vinegars are opened and used over the course of several months. For this reason, it is imperative to keep the most frequently used items in the front.

It is not only inconvenient to reach over several bottles to grab the one that is open, but by doing so you are creating the opportunity to knock bottles over in the course of the reach and removal.

Most of these bottles are too tall to allow for the use of an expand-a-shelf so they will need to be “lined” up neatly by type.

## Honey, Peanut Butter and Jelly

These items are commonly found in households with school-age children. The open / in-use jars can be kept together on a shelf that is easy to access, both daily and by the children.

Back-stock items can be housed together in a less accessible area.

## Complimentary Items

Complimentary items are items that are used most often with another item or category.

Examples of complimentary items are listed below.

- ☑ Marinara Sauce + Pasta
- ☑ Salad Dressing + Croutons
- ☑ Salsa + Chips
- ☑ Karo Syrup + Baking
- ☑ Syrup + Breakfast

These jarred items should not be housed with the other jarred items, and should instead be housed near the item they compliment

## Condiments

Condiments – mustard, mayonnaise and ketchup – if bought in bulk is a sub-category within the jarred items that you can separate and house by itself as a category.

## Spices

The pantry is not our preferred storage space for spices for the sole reason that the bottles are too small for the typical pantry shelf.

If the pantry is your only storage option – these items should be stored on the narrow-most, eye-level shelf and a shelf-expander should be used to increase visibility.

Unless directed otherwise – the spices should be placed in alphabetical order.

## Bread Items

Bread ~ Bagels ~ Buns ~ Tortillas

Most bread items are best placed in a large basket and on low, convenient shelf in the pantry that is easy to see into and easy to grab.

## Snacks

Snacks are divided into two categories – sweet and salty.

Salty snacks include:

Chips ~ Pretzels ~ Popcorn ~ Crackers ~ Nuts

Sweet snacks include:

Cookies ~ Candy ~ Rice Krispies ~ Fruit Rollups

This category of sweets does not included items that need to be baked or prepared – those items belong in the baking category.

## Snacks – Continued

Snacks, both salty and sweet, come in an assortment of packaging – large bags, individual bags, boxes and jars.

Baskets are best for the items that are in bags. You will want to separate the large bagged snacks from the individually bagged snacks.

Snacks that are in boxes or in large plastic jars can sit on the shelf by themselves, and should be next to the baskets of snacks.

## Dried Fruit

Dried fruit – raisins, cranberries and prunes– can be grouped together and near the other snack items.

## Baking

The baking category includes a multitude of items and to keep things simple – we have divided the category into 3 tiers.

### Tier 1 –The Basics

Flour ~ Sugar ~Brown Sugar ~ Powdered Sugar ~ Baking Soda ~ Baking Powder ~ Crisco

Find out from the homeowner how often they are using the basics. If not regularly – these items can be placed on an upper shelf.

The bags of flour, sugar, brown sugar and powdered sugar are great candidates for storage canisters for several reasons. The storage canisters make for a far better presentation, make the items easier to see, and the alternative – a basket – is not often a good solution due to the weight of the items.

### Tier 2

Baking Chocolate ~ Chocolate Chips ~ Sprinkles ~ Extract

These items are typically small and are best stored in a basket. This basket should be labeled accordingly, and placed on an upper shelf, as they are not used frequently – even for the frequent baker.

### Tier 3

The last tier is made up of the boxed cake, muffin, bread and brownie mixes. These items can also be placed on an upper shelf and should be near the second tier items.

## Canisters

Canisters and storage jars can be a great way to store food items in the pantry, but they don't always make sense for items that are consumed quickly.

Cereal and snacks are a great example of items that are consumed so quickly that moving them from the box to the canister is more trouble than it is worth.

## Food Allergies

Food allergies, while not common, are an important safety issue and should be addressed, and identified, PRIOR to organizing the pantry.

Peanut allergies and sensitivity to gluten are the most common issues you will face.

Anytime you find you are organizing a pantry in a home where food allergies are present – it is important to get the client's input on ways to organize the pantry to maximize safety.

Taking items out of their original boxes to be placed in baskets is NOT an option if the ingredients are not listed on the individual packages.

## Possible Additions

It is possible that some “miscellaneous” items will find their way into the pantry due to space constraints in the kitchen and other areas.

Listed below are some of the typical items you could expect to find in the pantry

- ☒Cook Books
- ☒Small Appliances
- ☒Large Items (Stock Pots, Cake Stands)
- ☒Vases
- ☒Dog Food
- ☒Trash Bags or Grocery Sacks
- ☒Vitamins
- ☒Plastic Cutlery & Paper Plates
- ☒Lunch Boxes

Available space and frequency of use will determine where these items get placed in the pantry.

## Labeling

This is one of the most important steps in the pantry. For each basket that you have added and for each jar you have used to store dried goods – you need to add a label.

Pantry labels should be made in advance of the appointment and taken with you so that the majority of items can be labeled before you leave. Any missing labels should be made and delivered immediately.

## Tools

Baskets / Bins  
Canisters / Storage Jars  
Expand-a-Shelves  
Labels