



mid michigan  
**COMMUNITY**  
*Action*

"Helping People, Changing Lives."

September 2021

# Tidbits

Senior Food Program Publication

Like us on Facebook for agency updates & info! 

## Reminder Calls

Monthly customers will receive an automated call the day before distribution reminding you to pick up your box. If you no longer want to receive calls, press 7 at the end of the call to opt out. If you are not currently receiving calls and would like to, please call 989-386-3805 to update or verify your phone number.

## Your Commodity Box: Re-use or Recycle?



- Return **clean** boxes to us at the next distribution so that we can **reuse** them after disinfection.
- **Recycle** boxes through your residential recycling service if they are **dirty, stained**, or have been **exposed to pests**

## Focus On: Help for Health Benefit Decisions

The Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP, Inc.) is a free health-benefit counseling service. Their goal is to help you find your way through the health benefits maze. MMAP accomplishes its mission through MMAP sites housed in regional Area Agencies on Aging, County Departments on Aging, Senior Services Agencies, Commissions on Aging and other similar organizations located throughout Michigan.

Call 1-800-803-7174 to be connected with a local MMAP counselor who can help you:

- Find prescription drug assistance
- Explain Medicare Health Plan Options
- Understand healthcare billing
- Help with eligibility, enrollment, coverage, claims and appeals
- Enroll in Medicare Savings Programs
- Review your Medicare supplemental
- Explore long term care financing options, including long term care insurance

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

## Slow Cookers & Food Safety

Opening the front door on a cold winter evening and being greeted by the inviting smells of beef stew or chicken noodle soup wafting from a slow cooker can be a dream come true. Winter is not the only time a slow cooker is useful. But is a slow cooker safe?

Yes. The slow cooker, a countertop electrical appliance, cooks foods slowly at a low temperature—generally between 170° and 280° F. The low heat helps less expensive, leaner cuts of meat become tender and shrink less. The direct heat from the pot, lengthy cooking and steam created within the tightly-covered container combine to destroy bacteria and make the slow cooker a safe process for cooking foods.

Begin with a clean cooker, clean utensils and a clean work area. Wash hands before and during food preparation. Keep perishable foods refrigerated until preparation time. If you cut up meat and vegetables in advance, store them separately in the refrigerator. The slow cooker may take several hours to reach a safe, bacteria-killing temperature. Constant refrigeration assures that bacteria, which multiply rapidly at room temperature, won't get a "head start" during the first few hours of cooking.

Always thaw meat or poultry before putting it into a slow cooker. Vegetables cook slower than meat and poultry in a slow cooker so if using them, put the vegetables in first. Large cuts of meat and poultry may be cooked safely in a slow cooker, however since slow cookers are available in several sizes, consult the instruction booklet for suggested sizes of meat and poultry to cook in your slow cooker. Then add the meat and desired amount of liquid suggested in the recipe, such as broth, water or barbecue sauce. Keep the lid in place, removing only to stir the food or check for doneness.

Most cookers have two or more settings. Foods take different times to cook depending upon the setting used. Certainly, foods will cook faster on high than on low. However, for all-day cooking or for less-tender cuts, you may want to use the low setting. If possible, turn the cooker on the highest setting for the first hour of cooking time and then to low or the setting called for in your recipe. However, it's safe to cook foods on low the entire time — if you're leaving for work, for example, and preparation time is limited. While food is cooking and once it's done, food will stay safe as long as the cooker is operating.

Store leftovers in shallow covered containers and refrigerate within two hours after cooking is finished. Reheating leftovers in a slow cooker is not recommended. Cooked food should be reheated on the stove, in a microwave, or in a conventional oven until it reaches 165 °F. Then the hot food can be placed in a preheated slow cooker to keep it hot for serving—at least 140 °F as measured with a food thermometer.

*Reprinted in part from <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/slow-cookers-and-food-safety>*

## Questions? Give Us a Call!

Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Mecosta,  
Midland & Osceola Counties: 989-386-3805

Gratiot, Ionia, Isabella, & Montcalm Counties: 616-754-9315

Online: [www.mmcaa.org](http://www.mmcaa.org)

## Featured Commodity: Canned Diced Tomatoes

### Nutrition Information:

- 1 cup of canned tomatoes counts as 1 cup in the ChooseMyPlate.gov Vegetable group.
- Tomatoes are an important source of many nutrients, including vitamins A, C, and an antioxidant called lycopene which is good for heart health and eyesight.

### Uses & Tips:

- Canned tomatoes can be mixed with onions and peppers to make a quick salsa.
- Out of tomato sauce for a recipe? Puree a can of undrained tomatoes in a blender for a quick and easy tomato sauce. Add garlic and basil for more flavor.

## Upcoming Distribution Schedule

If someone else is picking up your food for you, please send a signed note allowing them to do so. We will ask the person picking up your food for their ID. If you missed your distribution you can attend "Make Up Day" at our Food Warehouse, located at 2300 East Ludington Drive, Clare. Please note that scheduling changes may occur. Changes will be posted on [www.mmcaa.org](http://www.mmcaa.org), Facebook, and sent to monthly customers via robocall. **You may also call 989-386-6849 for a recording of all upcoming dates.**

- **Albright Shores Eagles:** Oct 12, 10:30-11:30
- **Alma Elks:** Oct 25, 9:30-11:00
- **Bay City Town Center:** Oct 13 1:00-2:30
- **Clare County Fairgrounds, Harrison:** Oct 19, 10:00-11:30
- **Clare Moose Lodge:** Oct 21; 10:00-11:30
- **Essexville Community Church:** Oct 4; 12:30-1:30
- **Evart Moose Lodge:** Oct 20; 11:00-12:00
- **Gladwin Free Methodist Church:** Oct 11, 10:00-11:30
- **God's Helping Hands, Remus:** Oct 6, 2:00-3:00
- **Grace Community Church, Howard City:** Oct 7, 1:30-2:30
- **Gratiot Commission on Aging:** Oct 25, 12:30-1:30
- **Greendale Township Offices:** Oct 5, 1:00-2:00
- **Greenville Armory:** Oct 7, 10:30-11:30
- **Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mt. Pleasant:** Oct 27, 10:00-11:00
- **Ionia Moose Lodge:** Oct 26, 10:30-11:30
- **Marion VFW Post:** Oct 20, 1:30-2:30
- **Pinconning United Methodist:** Oct 12, 1:00-2:00
- **Resurrection Life Church:** Oct 6, 11:00-12:00
- **Sanford American Legion:** Oct 5, 10:30-11:30
- **United Methodist Church of Reed City:** Oct 21, 2:00-3:00
- **Food Warehouse Make-Up Day:** Oct 28, 9:00-11:00

*Private distributions are not listed. Call 989-386-6849 for a recording of all upcoming monthly distribution dates. The calendar is also available at [www.mmcaa.org](http://www.mmcaa.org)*

**Customers must inform Mid Michigan CAA of changes in income or household composition within 10 days of the change.**

## September Recipe: Slow Cooker 3 Bean Chili

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb ground beef or turkey
- 2 cans diced tomatoes
- 1 can tomato sauce
- 1 can pinto beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 small can chopped green chiles
- 1 tbsp chili powder
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 pinch ground cumin
- Salt & pepper to taste

### Directions

1. Cook and stir ground beef or turkey in a large skillet until completely browned, 7 to 10 minutes; transfer to slow cooker.
2. Stir tomatoes, tomato sauce, pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, onion, green chilies, chili powder, garlic, oregano, and cumin with the meat in the slow cooker.
3. Cook on High for 4 hours or on Low for 7 hours.

**Trivia!** Where does the word "tomato" come from?



**Answer:** The name comes from the Aztec "xitomatl", which means "plump thing with a navel."

### October Recertifications

All CSFP Customers at **Center Ridge Arms, Maplewood Manor, and Pineview Apartments** will be due for recertification in October. Customers will be provided with a pre-filled form that they can sign, update, and return. Recertification is required for ongoing enrollment.