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## 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: The Hearing Aid Project

Obtaining a hearing aid that meets an individual's unique hearing loss needs can make a real difference in their personal and professional life. Improved hearing can allow a parent to hear their child's laughter, assist in gaining employment, and even help someone advance their career.

Hearing Charities of America has created the Hearing Aid Project because we believe that healthy hearing should be enjoyed by all; regardless of income. Before applying for The Hearing Aid Project assistance, explore local resources by calling 211, and check for eligibility for veteran's benefits on the US Department of Veteran Affairs website (<https://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/>)

If you are unable to find the assistance locally, you can contact The Hearing Aid Project for more information at 816-895-2410 or email [info@hearingcharities.org](mailto:info@hearingcharities.org).

Adapted from <https://hearingaiddonations.org/get-an-aid/>

## Protecting Your Heart

February is American Heart Month, a time when we can focus on our cardiovascular health.

Blood pressure is the pressure of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries. Arteries carry blood from your heart to other parts of your body.

Blood pressure normally rises and falls throughout the day, but it can damage your heart and cause health problems if it stays high for a long time. Hypertension, also called high blood pressure, is blood pressure that is higher than normal.

You can help prevent high blood pressure by making healthy choices and managing other health conditions you may have. Eating nutritious foods, being physically active, and maintaining a healthy weight are great ways to help keep your heart healthy. Make sure to visit your doctor or medical care professionals for accurate blood pressure readings and to find out what eating and activity plan is best for you.

Each month, your CSFP box will contain a variety of fruits, vegetables, protein, and healthy grains to help keep your heart healthy. For more information on blood pressure, hypertension, and heart health visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

*Reprinted from materials provided by the Michigan Department of Education Household Nutrition Programs. The material provided is intended to be used as general information only and should not replace the advice of your physician. Always consult your physician for individual medical care.*

## Food Safety Tip

"Best if Used By" is a type of date you might find on a meat, poultry, or egg product label. Are dates required on these food products? Does it mean the product will be unsafe to use after that date?

- A "Best if Used By/Before" date indicates when a product will be of best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.
- A "Sell-By" date tells the store how long to display the product for sale for inventory management. It is not a safety date.
- A "Use-By" date is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. It is not a safety date except for when used on infant formula as.
- A "Freeze-By" date indicates when a product should be frozen to maintain peak quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.

## 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)

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

## Featured Commodity: Canned Sweet Potatoes

### Uses & Tips:

- Sweet potatoes are an important source of nutrients including vitamins A and C, B vitamins, fiber, and potassium.
- Starchy vegetables like sweet potatoes contain carbohydrates which give you energy.
- Canned sweet potatoes can be used to make cookies, breads, muffins, and pies.
- Mash canned sweet potatoes and use as a substitution for canned pumpkin in recipes.
- Add canned pumpkin/mashed sweet potatoes to your pancake and waffle batter or other baked goods for extra flavor and vitamin A.

### 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, including dates for private sites.**

- **Albright Shores Eagles:** March 8, 10:30-11:30
- **Alma Elks:** April 25, 9:30-11:00
- **Bay City Town Center:** March 9, 1:00-2:30
- **First Congregational Church, Harrison** (*Will be returning to Clare Co Fairgrounds beginning in March, pending snow is clear*): March 15, 10:00 - 11:30
- **Clare Moose Lodge:** March 17, 10:00-11:30
- **Essexville Community Church:** March 7, 12:30-1:30
- **Evart Moose Lodge:** March 16, 11:00-12:00
- **Gladwin Free Methodist Church:** March 14, 10:00-11:30
- **God's Helping Hands, Remus:** March 2, 2:00-3:00
- **Grace Community Church, Howard City:** April 7, 1:30-2:30
- **Gratiot Commission on Aging:** April 25, 12:30-1:30
- **Greendale Township Offices:** March 1, 1:00-2:00
- **Greenville Armory:** April 7, 10:30-11:30
- **Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mt. Pleasant:** April 27, 10:00-11:00
- **Ionia Moose Lodge:** April 26, 10:30-11:30
- **Marion VFW Post:** March 16, 1:30-2:30
- **Pinconning United Methodist:** March 8, 1:00-2:00
- **Resurrection Life Church, Big Rapids:** March 2, 11:00-12:00
- **Sanford American Legion:** March 1, 10:30-11:30
- **United Methodist Church of Reed City:** March 17, 2:00-3:00
- **Food Warehouse Make-Up Day:** March 24, 9:00-11:00

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

## February Recipe: Creamy Sweet Potato Chicken Soup

### Ingredients:

- 1 pouch CSFP chicken
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 can carrots
- 1 stalk celery, diced
- 64 ounces reduced sodium chicken stock
- 1 can sweet potatoes
- 2 tsp oregano
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 2 tsp coriander
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 4-5 cups fresh spinach (4-5 heaping handfuls)
- 1/2 cup half-and-half (heavy cream may be substituted)

### Directions

1. In a large pot, sauté the onions, carrots, and celery until they begin to become tender; about 7 minutes over medium high heat.
2. Add chicken, chicken stock, sweet potatoes, and seasoning.
3. Allow to simmer for about 15 minutes.
4. Turn off heat, and add spinach. Stir for about one minute.
5. Mix in half and half or cream; serve.

**Trivia!** Which state has declared the Sweet Potato their State Vegetable?

**Answer:** North Carolina named the sweet potato as their state vegetable in 1995. Louisiana followed suit in 2003, and Alabama also declared the sweet potato their state vegetable in 2021.