



**Jefferson County Office for the Aging**  
**February 2023**  
**Newsletter**





**Jefferson County Office for the Aging Nutrition Program**  
**February 2023**

Slow Cookers and 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 diner's dream come true. But winter is not the only time a slow cooker is useful. In the summer, using this small electrical appliance can avoid introducing heat from a hot oven. At any time of year, a slow cooker can make life a little more convenient because by planning ahead, you save time later. And it takes less electricity to use a slow cooker rather than an oven.

**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.

Choose to make foods with a high moisture content such as chili, soup, stew, or spaghetti sauce. Vegetables cook slower than meat and poultry in a slow cooker so if using them, put the vegetables in first.

**REMINDERS:**

- Always thaw meat or poultry *before* putting it into a slow cooker.
- Make sure the cooker is plugged in and turned on.
- Keep the lid in place.
- Reheating leftovers in a slow cooker is not recommended.

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.

While food is cooking and once it's done, food will stay safe as long as the cooker is operating.



**JEFFERSON COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING**  
 175 ARSENAL STREET  
 WATERTOWN, NEW YORK 13601-2529  
 (315) 785-3191 Fax (315) 785-5095

Kathleen Kazakoff  
 Director

Louise Haraczka  
 Deputy Director

An important part of **Office for the Aging's** funding comes from your contributions. We provide many services to help maintain your health, independence and quality of living.

As a qualifying recipient of **Office for the Aging's Home Delivered Meals program**, we suggest a contribution of **\$5.00** for each meal that we provide to you. If you receive 5 meals per week, the suggested monthly contribution would be approximately \$100.00.

All contributions are **voluntary** and confidential; **no one will be denied service because of inability or unwillingness to donate**. If you choose to contribute, please make checks payable to Jefferson County Treasurer and send to the address listed above.

We appreciate your continued support. Contributions make it possible for us to continue, expand, and enhance this valuable program.

Free language interpretation services are available from OFA.

Sincerely,  
*Kathleen Kazakoff*  
 Jefferson County OFA Director

If your income is at 185% of the annual Federal Poverty limit or higher, please consider a donation equal to the **actual cost of \$8.25 per meal**.

**Criteria for Home Delivered Meals:**

(per NYSOFA 90-PI-26)

1. Any person age 60 or older is eligible to receive home delivered meals provided that such person:
  - a. Is incapacitated due to accident, illness, or frailty;
  - b. Lacks support of family, friends, or neighbors; and
  - c. Is unable to prepare meals due to a lack of or inadequacy of facilities, an inability to shop, cook or prepare meals safely, or a lack of appropriate knowledge or skills.
2. The spouse of an eligible recipient, regardless of age or condition, may receive home delivered meals when the provision of a meal to the spouse is in the best interest of the eligible participant.
3. Non-elderly disabled individuals, who reside in a non-institutional household with a person eligible to receive home delivered meals, may also receive home delivered meals when the provision of a meal to the non-elderly disabled individual is in the best interest of the eligible participant.

**Visit Office for the Aging on Jefferson County's website for helpful resources:**

Volunteer Transportation Center	315-788-0422
North Country Library System - get your Tech Help here	315-818-0660
Jefferson County DSS (Dept. of Social Services)	315-785-3000
Jefferson County HEAP (Heating) Program	315-785-3229
Jefferson County SNAP (Food Stamp) Program	315-779-5923
Jefferson County Crisis Hotline	315-782-2327

The ability to make **donations online** for Home Delivered Meals, Respite, HIICAP or EISEP is **NOW Available**. Go to the County website- <https://co.jefferson.ny.us/departments/OfficefortheAging>

**Click on the tab at the top of the right side that says "I WANT TO"**

**At the bottom of the drop down that appears, click on "Pay A bill"**

Enter your name as customer, select **Office for the Aging** under **Payment type**, pick what service you want the donation to go to and the amount you wish to donate.

Click **process to payment**



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Louise Haraczka  
Deputy Director  
315-785-5017

**Community Meal Site Survey**

Dear Jefferson County Seniors,

The Jefferson County Office for the Aging wants to make sure your nutrition needs are being met. Please complete this short survey and return it to the Jefferson County Office for the Aging. Complete it online or call and we can send you one to fill out.

Please return surveys to:

Jefferson County Office for the Aging  
175 Arsenal St.  
Watertown, NY, 13601

Survey Questions	Yes	No
1.) Is there a need for a senior meal site in your community?		
2.) Do you currently attend a senior meal site?		
3.) Would you attend a senior meal site if one would be near you?		
4.) Would you need transportation to the site?		
5.) Do you live in a low-income or subsidized housing?		
6.) Do you live in a rural community?		

Please provide your information in the spaces provided below.

Name:	Phone Number:
Address:	

Thank you so much for helping to meet our community's nutritional needs!

