



March 2023 GFB Newsletter



March Happenings

Turn your clocks ahead!

Daylight Savings time begins
March 12, 2023!



Get free at-home COVID-19 tests
Free at home COVID tests are available by signing up at <https://special.usps.com/testkits>



HOMEOWNERS TAX RELIEF PROGRAM

Applications taken at Guilford Assessor's office. February 1st to May 15th. Seniors, Disabled Individuals & Veterans . Call 203-453-8010 for any questions.

Need Free Help Filing Your Taxes?

Free income tax assistance is provided at numerous facilities for low to moderate income taxpayers of all ages, with special attention to those 60 and older. In Guilford, call 203-453-8086, to schedule an appointment to have your taxes prepared by a volunteer at the Guilford Community Center.

The GFB will be closed Friday, April 7, 2023. GFB will be open April 14, 21, and 28, 2023. Please plan accordingly.



SKATING AT MILL POND



Weather Permitting

Skating at Mill Pond

Hours:

Monday-Friday 3:00-7:00PM

Saturday & Sunday 10:00-7:00PM

Please watch for posted signs regarding openings.

COMMUNITY DINING ROOM

Servicing the entire shoreline from East Haven to Old Saybrook

30 Harrison Ave. Branford

www.communitydiningroom.org

Daily Hot Meals

(including all holidays)

Sunday to Saturday – 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM

Tuesday Family Dinner– 5:00pm– 7:00pm

Wednesday and Friday Take-out– Pick-up 12:00pm-2:00pm

The logo for Eversource, featuring the word "EVERSOURCE" in a bold, sans-serif font. The letter "E" is stylized with a green and blue circular graphic element.

Guilford Eversource residents who qualify for the LIHEAP energy program and are having difficulty paying their bills may qualify for additional assistance in keeping up with their payments to Eversource.

Call 203-453-8009 for more information.

ACCESS TO FREE CREDIT REPORTS



The Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) requires each of the nation wide consumer reporting companies– Equifax, Experian and TransUnion – to provide you with a free copy of your credit report, at your request, once every 12 months.

The three nationwide consumer reporting companies have set up a central website, a toll-free telephone number and a mailing address through which you can order your free annual report. To order, visit annualcreditreport.com, call 1-877-322-8228, or complete the annual Credit Report Request Form (You can print it from ftc.gov/credit) and mail it to: Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281.



GUILFORD RESIDENTS HEATING ASSISTANCE

Guilford residents may apply for 2022/2023 State Heating Assistance (LIHEAP) Program and for the Operation Fuel Program, by appointment only at the Guilford Social Services Department, 263 Church St. in Guilford. All types of heating sources are considered: oil, gas, electric, propane, kerosene and wood.

Annual household income limits are based on last 4 weeks of income and size of household: 1/ \$39,761; 2/\$51,996; 3/\$64,230; 4/\$76,465; 5/\$88,699; 6/\$100,933; 7/\$103,227; 8/\$105,521.

Guilford residents should schedule an appointment

Medicare Savings Program (MSP)



Save the cost of your Medicare B premiums.

QMB provides medical coverage equivalent to Medi-gap and pays your Medicare A&B co-pays and deductibles, and pays your Medicare Part B premium. Monthly income cannot exceed Individual's \$2,564; couples \$3,468

SLMB pays your Medicare Part B premium, Monthly income may not exceed Individual's \$2,807; Couples \$3,797

AMLB pays your Medicare Part B premium, but is subject to available program funding. Monthly income limit may not exceed Individual's \$2,989; Couples \$4,043

Eligibility for any MSP automatically qualifies you for Extra Help on you Med D (RX) program. No asset limits on any MSP levels.

Income limits increased on 3.1.2023

Lawyer Time at Women and Family Life

Spend 30 minutes with a volunteer attorney to talk about your legal questions. Discuss general legal information regarding a host of issues, including family law, divorce, domestic violence, real estate, and other legal matters. Open to women and men. No fee, though an appointment is required. Call (203) 458-6699 for appointment.



Customer Assistance Program Overview

Water Rate Assistance Program (WRAP)



- Connecticut Water now offers a Water Rate Assistance Program (WRAP) for income-eligible customers. It is the first program of its kind offered by a water utility in Connecticut.
- WRAP offers income-eligible customers a 15% reduction on their water bill, excluding Linebacker service.

COVID-19 Extended Payment Plans



- Available for any Connecticut Water customer, regardless of income
- Can be spread out for up to 24 months
- Interest-free
- No down payment required

COVID-19 Payment Plans are available until Governor Ned Lamont's COVID-19 Pandemic Emergency Order is lifted.

H₂O - Help 2 Our Customers Assistance Program for Connecticut Water Customers



- Provides financial assistance for income-eligible Connecticut Water customers with matching payments on deferred payment arrangements
- One-time Hardship Assistance Credits available with forgiveness of balances due for customers experiencing unexpected financial hardship or a life-changing event
- Both assistance options require new bills be kept current.

More information on the WRAP program, COVID-19 Extended Payment Plans and the H₂O Customer Assistance Program are available by calling Connecticut Water at 1-800-286-5700 or visiting our website at ctwater.com

Additional Program Offerings:

Connecticut Water Participates in Connecticut's Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program

- This program is offered by the state of CT to income-eligible customers (at or below 60% state median income) and can help with up to \$1,000 towards past due water service and wastewater bills
- The Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS) will be making payments directly to water service providers on behalf of registered customers who qualify for the program.
- Customers can apply for help directly online at www.ct.gov/dss/WaterAssistance or through their local Community Action Agency

Connecticut Water is an Operation Fuel Partner

Our partnership with Operation Fuel, a private, non-profit organization which offers support programs for utility customers across Connecticut, allows customers to apply for assistance with their Connecticut Water bills while also applying for assistance with their other utility bills (ie: electric, oil, gas etc.) The partnership allows Operation Fuel to administer Connecticut Water's WRAP and H₂O programs. More information on Operation Fuel can be found at OperationFuel.org.

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT



What to look for in your
teen's bedroom
and what to say once you
have found it.

VIRTUAL PRESENTATION Wednesday, March 8, 2023 at 6:30PM

Gain insights into current trends in youth substance use, drug paraphernalia and concealment of alcohol & drugs through this online version of our interactive drug education program for parents, caregivers and adults who work with youth. Learn how to talk to youth about alcohol & drugs and what to do if a problem is suspected.

Register here:

<https://bit.ly/GDAY-HIPS23>

A presentation for parents, educators
and other adults.

Questions? Email Leah at
FosterL@guilfordct.gov

IT'S WORTH IT.
A Guilford D.A.Y. Initiative
itsworthitguilford.org



MARCH IS FROZEN FOOD MONTH!

12 Reasons Why Frozen Foods Are Better

By Easy Home Meals

Availability

Within hours of picking, fresh fruits and vegetables are processed and quick frozen to prevent any deterioration of flavor, quality, texture or nutrition. And frozen, which remains virtually unchanged in storage, eliminates losses experienced from spoilage and shrinkage. Frozen at the peak of perfection, there is presently no better method of food preservation. Seasonal limitations are a part of the past.

Convenience

Frozen foods are truly convenient. The cleaning, picking, dicing, chopping and squeezing has been done. Whatever you choose, it's all prepared, ready to take from your freezer, heat and serve.

Economy

Frozen foods are economical. You do not pay for stalks, pits, skins, rinds or damaged food. Edible ounce for edible ounce, frozen food costs are usually less than their fresh counterparts.

According to a U.S. Department of Agriculture study, five of the six vegetables tested, all available either canned, fresh or frozen, were cheapest when purchased frozen. Through price fluctuations, fresh produce can cost 99 cents at the beginning of the season, 39 cents at mid-season and then with no explanation, jump up again. With frozen foods, there are no such widely varying prices.

Frozen prepared foods also compare favorably to their homemade counterparts. The real cost of preparing a food at home must take into account all the ingredients used in preparation. For example, to bake a cake would mean buying flour, sugar, eggs, shortening, spices or flavoring, and whatever else might be needed to make a frosting or topping. These can add up to quite an expensive cake. If you are an infrequent baker and will not use the remaining ingredients, frozen baked goods probably are a better buy.

Food Safety

Frozen foods offer explicit cooking directions, leaving no room for error and under-cooked food. And because the preparation (dicing, chopping, etc.) has already been done, all you have to do is heat and serve—less chance for contamination in the preparation process.

Freshness

Freezing foods seals in freshness. Foods designed for the freezer are selected at their peak of nutrition and flavor, quickly processed and frozen within hours, before there has been any deterioration in quality.

Labeling

Frozen food packages tell you what you're eating. Packages have ingredient and nutrition labeling. If you're health conscious, counting calories or on doctor's orders, frozen foods can help.

Longer Storage

Frozen foods have a longer storage time than fresh, offering maximum flexibility. Frozen broccoli, for example, stays fresh in the freezer for up to eight months, whereas fresh broccoli usually must be consumed within a week.

No Waste

With frozen foods you have food that is 100 percent edible. You don't pay for waste such as the pits of fruits, the shells, peels and outer leaves of vegetables, bones in fish or the fat on the meat. Studies of 13 vegetables show that as much as 40 percent of a raw vegetable is lost in shelling and peeling before the vegetable is ready for cooking—and that's 40 percent of the produce you've paid for.

According to the U.S. Census Department, more than half the households in the country today consist of only one or two people. Many frozen products have been created especially for these households. There are single-serving side dishes, entrees and desserts. There is no waste since there are no leftovers. Individual servings also make it possible for each member of the family to eat his or her favorite dish, without the time and expense of preparing large quantities of each of the foods.

In addition, frozen foods in poly bags (vegetables, fruits, pasta) offer easy portion control. Just pour out the amount needed and return the rest to the freezer for future use.

Nutrition

There's no better known means of preserving food than by freezing. Commercial rapid-freezing processes maintain nutritional quality of products without chemical preservatives. And food quick-frozen and properly stored keep their high nutritional value.

Quality

Frozen foods are consistent in quality. Only the best ingredients are used. That's because of stringent industry quality control procedures that begin on the farm.

Taste

Frozen foods can pass the most discriminating taste tests. An entree which has been correctly formulated, maintained at 0°F. and heated according to manufacturer's specifications, should taste identical to an on-premise prepared item. The recipes formulated for use in frozen prepared foods are created by some of the world's finest chefs. Immediately following preparation, freezing ensures consistently uniform product quality in each and every serving.

Value

Because frozen foods fit the way people live and eat today, they offer incomparable value in a number of ways: dollar savings, nutrition and quality, time savings and energy saving.

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Inclusion in this booklet does not imply endorsement or recommendation of any agency, organization or business.

frozen food storage tips

when shopping

Add frozen foods to your cart toward the end of your grocery shopping trip.

Bag frozen foods in a thermal shopping bag to maintain cold temperature between grocery store and home.

Unload frozen foods from vehicle to home freezer immediately upon arrival.

organize your freezer

For meal-prep ease and convenience, group frozen foods into categories.



How long can food be kept in the freezer?

Frozen foods, stored continuously at 0°F or below, can safely be kept indefinitely.

Maintain freezer temperature at 0°F or below.



Use a frost-free freezer or defrost manually, once a year, to boost efficiency.

Do not overpack your freezer to allow air to circulate properly.



however... quality can degrade over time. Discard or compost anything past its prime.

For frozen food safety, follow preparation and cooking instructions on packages.

It's best to buy what you can use within a few months to a year.



EasyHomeMeals.com



FOR ADDITIONAL FOOD STORAGE TIPS, VISIT [FOODSAFETY.GOV](https://www.foodsafety.gov).



MAKE SMOOTHIES, SOUPS, SIDES, DESSERTS & MAIN DISHES

Use frozen Brussels sprouts, blueberries, broccoli, butternut squash, carrots, cauliflower, corn, cherries, green beans, mangoes, peas, peaches, pineapple, spinach, strawberries and sweet potatoes.

BUDGET SAVING TIPS

MENU PLANNING MATTERS

A weekly menu helps you build and stick to a shopping list with fewer impulse buys. The frozen food aisles offer ingredients, appetizers, sides and main dishes that make home cooking easier.

WATCH FOR SUPERMARKET ADS, DIGITAL COUPONS, & IN-STORE SIGNS

These retail communications can alert you to savings and help you discover new products and bold flavors to try throughout the frozen food aisles.

FROZEN FOODS ARE 100% EDIBLE & BETTER FOR YOUR WALLET

All the peeling, cutting, chopping and prep-work are done, plus related food waste is already discarded.

eating well on a budget

WITH NUTRITIOUS FROZEN FOODS

Frozen foods are real foods that are frozen to preserve quality and offer a longer, more convenient shelf life. Shop the frozen food aisles often to keep your freezer stocked with frozen foods that make home meal prep quick, easy and affordable.

FROZEN FRUITS & VEGETABLES ARE JUST AS NUTRITIOUS AS FRESH
Flash freezing at the time of harvest locks in nutrients. Plus, they're available all year long and often sold at a lower cost-per-serving.



FROZEN, PLANT-BASED VERSIONS OF MEATS, POULTRY, BURGERS, SAUSAGES & SEAFOOD OFFER AMPLE PROTEIN
The flavors and textures are very similar to animal-based counterparts.

FROZEN NOVELTIES ENCOURAGE MODERATION
Single-serve frozen novelties offer portion-control and limit total energy, sugar and fat per serving compared to pricey, super-sized portions served at some ice cream shops. Plus, you'll find affordable dairy-free, gluten-free, high-protein or low-glycemic options.



FROZEN, WHOLE-GRAIN WAFFLES, PANCAKES, BAGELS & MUFFINS SUPPLY A SOURCE OF FIBER
Select varieties are fortified with added protein too. Plus, grab-and-go options like these are inexpensive alternatives to breakfast at the drive-through.

FROZEN BEANS ARE AN AFFORDABLE SOURCE OF PROTEIN
They also supply dietary fiber, vitamins and minerals. Look for green soybeans, (edamame), black beans, pinto beans, garbanzo beans (chickpeas) lima beans and more. Pairing beans together with brown or white rice provides complete protein.



FROZEN, INDIVIDUAL MEALS ARE INFORMATIVE & BUDGET FRIENDLY
This is especially true when comparing to similar meals at restaurants. Labeling on frozen food packages offers guidance on portion sizes, nutrition facts per serving, and info to help meet the individual dietary needs.

Brought to you by:

NFRA



EasyHomeMeals.com

Recipes of the Month

Chicken Pepper Bake

Recipe adapted from Oregon State University Food Hero's "Chicken Pepper Bake"

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb boneless chicken breast
- 2 red or green bell peppers
- 3 cups small potatoes
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 tsp Cajun seasoning
- 1 tsp dry Italian herbs
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Gently rub produce under cold running water.
- Cut the peppers and potatoes into bite size chunks
- Cut the chicken into bite size chunks. Do not rinse raw poultry or meat. Wash utensils after touching raw meat.
- Place the meat and vegetables into a large bowl. Sprinkle with oil, Cajun seasoning, Italian herbs, salt and black pepper. Toss to coat evenly.
- Wash large bowl after touching raw meats. Wash utensils after touching raw meat.
- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Place the chicken and vegetables on a metal baking pan.
- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Roast in a 425 °F oven for 35 to 45 minutes. Toss a couple times while roasting. Cook until internal temperature reaches 165° F on a food thermometer.



Hot Chocolate Cookies



INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
 - 12 oz semi-sweet chocolate chips
 - 1/4 cup Processed Cocoa Powder
 - 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
 - 1-1/2 tsp baking powder
 - 1/4 tsp salt
 - 1-1/4 cup light brown sugar, packed
 - 3 large eggs, room temperature
 - 2 tsp pure vanilla extract
 - 8 oz dark chocolate, cut into 1/2" squares, plus more grated for garnish
 - 12 large marshmallows, cut in half
- Combine butter and semi-sweet chocolate chips in a small sauce pan over medium-low heat. Stir constantly until chocolate is melted and smooth. Remove from heat and let cool for 10 minutes.
 - In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together cocoa powder, flour, baking powder and salt until combined.
 - In a large mixing bowl, beat brown sugar, eggs and vanilla on medium speed until smooth. Add cooled melted chocolate and beat until just combined. Add flour mixture in batches, beating on low speed until just combined, stopping to scrape down sides of bowl as needed. Wash hands with soap and water.
 - Cover and chill dough in refrigerator for 1-2 hours.
 - Preheat oven to 325°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Remove dough from refrigerator and scoop dough into 2-tablespoon sized mounds onto prepared baking sheet, spacing cookies 2-3 inches apart. Flatten cookies slightly. Wash hands after handling raw dough.
 - Bake cookies 10 minutes, until tops start to crack. Remove from oven and place a square of dark chocolate onto the center of each cookie. Top the dark chocolate with the marshmallow halves, cut side down, pressing down slightly into cookie. Return to oven for 4-5 minutes, until marshmallows soften.
 - Remove cookies from oven and let cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes before transferring to wire rack to cool completely. Top cookies with shaved dark chocolate and serve immediately
 - Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.