Community Meals *Notes*

Senior Services of Wichita

November 2026

Published monthly for the clients of Community Meals.

HOLIDAY CLOSURE

Community Meals will not deliver meals on: **Thursday, November 26th AND Friday, November 27th in Observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday**

There will be a 2-day shelf stable meal delivered to you prior to the holiday, this will be utilized for those days we are not delivering.

Operation Holiday Program

Each year since 1960 organizations in partnership with HumanKind Ministries have been able to run Wichita's largest holiday assistance program, Operation Holiday. More than providing basic needs to Sedgwick County's most vulnerable residents, Operation Holiday brings our community together in a spirit of human kindness to spread hope – showing neighbors that their community cares.

Operation Holiday 2025 took place in December and served 16,251 people, which included a record of 5,929 children. Over just five days, the generosity of donors, volunteers, and sponsors touched thousands of lives and made holiday dreams come true.

Operation Holiday provides food, pet food, and grocery gift cards to those that qualify for their services. If you choose to participate in Operation Holiday, you cannot apply for services from any other program during the 2026 season.

Applications will be accepted November 1st through November 30th. The Meals on Wheels Social Services office can assist you with your application again this year. Call into the office at (316) 267-0122 and let them know you are calling to apply for Operation Holiday.

- Applications will be made for current Meals on Wheels clients, who are unable to attend an application site.
- You will need to provide income information so we can ensure guidelines are met, below are the Household Income Eligibility Guidelines:

Household Size	Maximum two-month gross income (most recent)
One	$5,059
Two	$6,844
Three	$8,958
Four	$10,410

- Our pickup of items is scheduled for December 15th. We will make every attempt to get items delivered to you before December 23rd. Contact will be made to set up a delivery time; there is no need for you to call and ask for items.

Fall and Winter Energy-Saving Tips *– from Evergy*

When the temperature drops, there are ways to increase your savings. The following tips will save you money and energy while making sure you stay warm throughout the fall and winter months.

Utilize Your Windows

- South-facing windows let in a lot of light. Make sure to open the curtains during the day to allow sunlight to heat the home and close them at night to lessen the chill from cold windows.
- Tape clear plastic film to the inside of your window frames during the winter. To minimize the cold from getting inside, make sure the plastic is sealed tightly to the frame.
- Install tight-fitting, insulating drapes or shades on windows that feel drafty.

Adjust the Temperature

- Set the thermostat as low as you are comfortable with while you are home and awake.
- Turn the thermostat back when you are asleep or out of the house; it can save you up to 10% per year on your heating and cooling bills!
- Do you own a smart thermostat? This makes it easy for you to schedule your temperature while you're out and about.
- If you're on a time-based plan, you can take advantage of lower off-peak prices by adjusting your thermostat and pre-heating your home.

Continued on Pg 2

Produce Spotlight: Pears

By Isabelle Meyer, M.S., R.D

Nutrition Notes

Pears are in season during the fall and winter months. They can be enjoyed sliced into salads, added to oatmeal, or baked with cinnamon for a warm treat.

Pears are a good source of fiber, which helps keep your digestion regular and supports gut health. One medium pear has about 20% of the fiber you need in a day. Pears provide vitamin C, which helps support your immune system. They also contain potassium, a mineral that helps your muscles work and supports healthy blood pressure.

Recipe: Baked Pears with Walnuts and Honey

Ingredients:

- 1 large ripe pear
- 1/8 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp honey
- 2 T chopped walnuts
- Optional yogurt

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Cut the pears in half and scoop out the seeds with a spoon. Place the pears on a baking sheet. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Top with walnuts. Drizzle with honey. Bake in the oven for 30 minutes. Remove, let cool, and enjoy! Serve with yogurt for a more filling snack.

Recipe from Skinny Taste.

Energy-Saving Tips – Continued

- Three hours before peak hours begin, schedule your thermostat to three degrees above your preferred temperature. For example, according to EPA recommendations, if your usual temperature is 70, turn it to 73.
- When peak hours begin, adjust your thermostat to three degrees below your preferred temperature (such as 67) to keep the unit from running too much.
- When peak hours end, schedule your thermostat back to your preferred setting.

Find and Seal Leaks

- Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows.
- Caulk is best for sealing air leaks through cracks or gaps throughout the home, like door and window frames. Weatherstripping is used to seal components that move, such as doors and operable windows.

Maintain Your Heating Systems

- Schedule routine service for your home heating systems.
- Replace your furnace and heat pump filters once a month or as needed.
- If you have a wood or pellet burning heater, regularly clean the flue vent as well as the inside of the appliance with a wire brush periodically to make sure it is heating efficiently.

Take Advantage of Your Ceiling Fan

- Many ceiling fans come with a reversible motor. To make your fan the most efficient, switch its rotation when the seasons change.
- In the summer, fans should rotate counterclockwise to lift warm air up and out of the room.
- In the winter, fans should rotate clockwise to push the rising warm air back down into the room.

Be Mindful of Your Appliances

- Wait to run your dishwasher until it's full.
- Set your washing machine to the appropriate water level and wash all but the dirtiest of loads in cold water.
- Set your refrigerator temperature between 35 to 38 degrees Fahrenheit and your freezer at 0 and make sure both are sealed tightly.
- When using your clothes dryer, make sure to clean the lint filter after each use and use the auto-dry or moisture-sensor setting.

Use Smart Bulbs

- Use light-emitting diode (LED) holiday light strings. LED light bulbs use at least 75% less energy, and last up to 25 times longer, than incandescent.

Enjoying The Holidays Without Food Guilt

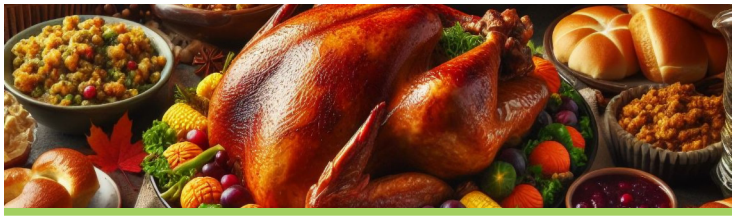
By Isabelle Meyer, M.S., R.D

With so much focus on food during the holidays, it can be easy to feel guilty about what or how much you eat. If you have struggled with food guilt, the good news is that it is never too late to build a more positive relationship with food. You can work toward more relaxed meals that allow you to focus on spending time with loved ones.

Holiday meals often include special dishes we only enjoy a few times a year. With so many favorites on the table, you may find yourself eating past the point of comfortable fullness. Here are a few tips to help you enjoy your holiday meal:

- **Eat regular meals and snacks throughout the day.** Skipping meals to save room for a holiday meal can leave you overly hungry and make it harder to notice when you feel full. Eating regularly helps support your energy, mood, and appetite throughout the day.
- **Choose the foods you enjoy most.** You do not have to eat every dish just because it is available. Make room for the foods you look forward to most.
- **Give yourself permission to have seconds.** Start with a portion that feels right for you, knowing you can always get more if you are still hungry.
- **Take your time.** Enjoy the flavors, talk with loved ones, and give yourself time to notice how you feel as you eat.
- **Listen to your hunger and fullness cues.** Check in with how your body feels throughout the meal. It is okay to eat more if you are still hungry, and it is okay to stop when you feel satisfied. You can always save leftovers for later.
- **Ask family members to share their recipes.** If a favorite dish is only served during the holidays, ask for the recipe so you can enjoy it again at home. Knowing you can have these foods another time may help you feel less pressure to eat them all at once.

Food is about more than nutrition. It brings people together, connects us to our traditions, and helps us create lasting memories. Remember, all foods can fit into a balanced eating pattern. One meal or day of eating does not define your overall diet or health. You deserve to enjoy your favorite foods without guilt.



Food Safety Tips for Holiday Meals

By Isabelle Meyer, M.S., R.D

Holiday meals are a time to gather with family and friends and enjoy favorite foods. With so much cooking, serving, and sharing, it is important to keep food safe. A few simple steps can help prevent foodborne illness and keep everyone healthy.

Wash, Separate, and Cook

- **Wash your hands.** Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before preparing food and after handling raw meat, poultry, or eggs.
- **Keep foods separate.** Use separate cutting boards and utensils for raw meat and foods that are ready to eat. This helps prevent germs from spreading.
- **Cook foods to the right temperature.** Use a food thermometer to check that meat is fully cooked. Turkey and chicken should reach 165°F. Casseroles and leftover dishes should also reach 165°F when reheated.

Store Leftovers Safely

Refrigerate leftovers within two hours of serving. Storing leftovers in shallow containers helps them cool to a safe temperature quickly. Most cooked leftovers can be kept in the refrigerator for three to four days. You can also freeze leftovers to enjoy later.

With these tips in mind, you can keep your holiday meals safe and keep those you love healthy.

NOVEMBER 2026 MENU

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
2 Salisbury Steak Garlic Mash Potatoes w/ Mushroom Gravy Green Beans Whole Grain Roll Pears	3 Chili w/ Cheese Cinnamon Roll Capri Blend Vegetables Whole Grain Roll Mango Papaya Fruit Cup	4 Breaded Pork Mac and Cheese Zucchini and Tomatoes Whole Wheat Roll Peach Crisp	5 Tuna Salad Sandwich on Whole Wheat Bun Pasta Salad Carrot Raisin Salad Mixed Fruit	6 Chicken Alfredo over Pasta Winter Blend Vegetables Whole Grain Roll Apricots
9 Beef Hot Dog on Bun Buttered Carrots Corn on Cob Pickle Relish pkg, Ketchup & Mustard Cottage Cheese	10 Meatball Sub w/ Cheese on Hoagie Bun Waffle Fries Normandy Veggies Mandarins in Cherry Jello	11 Turkey & Swiss Cheese Slider on Whole Wheat Bun Green Beans Corn Nuggets Tropical Fruit	12 Sliced Ham Scalloped Potatoes Chopped Broccoli Wheat Roll Peach Parfait	13 Lemon Pepper Cod Loin Wild Rice Mixed Vegetables Whole Grain Roll Apple Crisp
16 Pulled Pork Nacho Sauce Tortilla Chips Mexican Rice Bussel Sprouts Tossed Salad Cup Nutri-Grain Bar	17 Mushroom Swiss Burger on Whole Wheat Bun French Fries Broccoli Raisin Salad Blueberry Cobbler	18 Chicken Parm w/ Marinara Sauce Italian Bowtie Pasta Italian Blend Vegetables Whole Wheat Roll Pineapples	19 Turkey Salad Sandwich on Whole Wheat Bun Potato Salad Cole Slaw Blueberry Muffins	20 Tuna Noodle Casserole Sweet Peas Whole Grain Roll Diced Peaches
23 Beef and Bean Burritos w/ Picante Mexican Beans Roasted Bell Peppers & Onions Butterscotch Pudding	24 Chicken Fried Chicken Mashed Potatoes w/ Country Gravy Beets Whole Wheat Roll Chex Mix & Yogurt	25 Beef Hobo Stew with Vegetables Buttermilk Biscuit Spiced Pears	26 **Closed For Thanksgiving Holiday**	27 **Closed For Thanksgiving Holiday**
30 Chicken Potato Casserole w/ Cheese, Onion Turkey Bacon Bits Mix Vegetables Whole Grain Roll Mandarin Oranges				Milk is Served with Every Meal

Published monthly by: Senior Services, Inc. of Wichita | 200 S. Walnut St, Wichita, KS 67213