

FRENCH ONION POTATO GEM BAKE

INGREDIENTS

- 600g frozen potato gems
- 375ml (1 1/2 cups) milk
- 1 tbsp. French onion soup mix
- 30g butter
- 2 tbsp. plain flour
- 130g (1/2 cup) sour cream
- 100g (1 cup) pre-grated 3-cheese blend
- chopped chives, to sprinkle



METHOD

- Preheat the oven to 200C/180C fan forced. Place the potato gems in a single layer on a baking tray. Bake for 20 minutes or until golden (alternatively, air fry the potato gems for 10 minutes at 180C in the air fryer).
- Meanwhile, combine the milk and soup mix in a jug. Heat the butter in a saucepan over

medium heat until foaming. Add the flour and stir to combine. Cook, stirring, for 2 minutes or until bubbling. Remove from heat. Slowly whisk in the milk mixture and sour cream. Return to medium heat and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes or until mixture thickens. Pour over the base of an 18 x 28cm baking dish.

- Sprinkle the cheese over the sauce. Arrange potato gems on top. Bake for 15 minutes or until cheese has melted. Sprinkle with chives to serve.



DO NOT FORGET TO KEEP UP WITH GOOD COVID-19 HYGIENE PRACTICES

- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitisers when you cannot use soap and water
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces you use often such as benchtops and doorknobs



Do you have a mobile phone?

Most people own a mobile phone now. It is very important for us to be able to contact you if you are not home for a service or we need to change a time. We have had quite a few times that we have needed to contact a client and the home phone has been disconnected. If we are unable to contact you and a staff member shows up to your home you may have to pay a fee for the missed service. Please contact the office to update your file. In addition, if family member or contact has changed their phone number it applies.



EMAIL NEWSLETTER

Would you like a copy of the OPASS newsletter emailed to you instead of coming via snail mail? It's easy, just give the office a ring and ask to be put on the list. Phone 5232 9420.

PRIVACY STATEMENT: The right to dignity and privacy, to voice concerns and to advocate. For further information please refer to your Client Handbook or discuss with an Older Persons and Ability Support Service Officer on 5232 9420.



Welcome to Issue 47 of our Quarterly Older Persons & Ability Support Service Newsletter.

Christmas has come and gone and Easter is nearly upon us. I hope that you had a fulfilling Christmas and wonderful catch up with family and friends. The last two years has been a challenge for many of us due to COVID. I hope that this coming year is brighter for all of us.

If you were involved in social clubs, doing volunteering work, going to bowls or just catching up with friends and this has stopped due to restrictions this would be a great time to re-engage with these activities and friends.

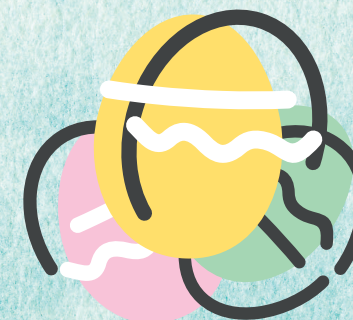
Our community care workers have been busy. Over the year of 2021, they managed to visit homes to support you with home care, personal care and respite care some 38,964 times. The community care workers also did this with extreme care and adhered to the personal protect regime that was required, all with a smile. (This was a hard to see behind the mask)

If you live alone and feel insecure in that if you fell ill or had a fall, have you considered a personal alarm to regain being secure and regaining your confidence. There are retailers who specialise in this service. Personal alarms can come in the form of watches and pendants. Shop around on the Internet for what would suite you.

Autumn is a beautiful time of the year, leaves turning all sorts of rich colours and pleasant to the eyes. The leaves also fall from the trees, into your gutters and spouts and slippery on your walkways. Please consider having your gutters cleaned before the winter months and take care outside.

Our OPASS team would like to wish you a very safe and happy Easter break, please stay safe.

Terry Maisey, Coordinator OPASS



COLAC OTWAY SHIRE IS NOW ON FACEBOOK

Operating hours over Easter period.

The office will be closed on Friday 15th April and reopen on Tuesday 19th April. Please remember to call the office if you will be away over this time. There will be NO Home Care completed on the Good Friday and Easter Monday. All meals will be delivered on Thursday 14th April and back to normal on Tuesday 19th April. All Personal Care will continue with altered times, you will be notified. Respite Care will be on request only.

ANZAC DAY 2022

Please note that there will be NO Home Care on Monday 25th April. All meals will be delivered on Friday 22nd April. All Personal Care will continue with altered times. Respite care will be by request only.

NURSE ON CALL

If you are unable to make a Dr's appointment but need to ask a question regarding a medical problem please remember that, Nurse on Call have someone who may be able help. You will speak to a registered nurse 24 hours a day.

Call 1300 60 60 24

- NURSE-ON-CALL puts you directly in touch with a registered nurse for caring, professional health advice around the clock.
- Call 1300 60 60 24 from anywhere in Victoria for free health advice, 24 hours a day.
- If you think your situation is an emergency, you should always call 000 or go to an emergency department at a hospital

NO SMOKING

Please remember that there is no smoking when the Community Care Workers are in your home, as while they are there, this is their workplace. This also includes vaping. Consider opening a door and windows before they come to get some fresh air inside. Thank you for your understanding on this matter.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS FOR 2021/22

NO HOME CARE AVAILABLE ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS!

If your Home Care falls on a public Holiday as dates below, you will not receive Home Care on that day.

MOW'S will be delivered prior to the Public Holiday.

On public Holidays Personal Care will continue with altered times. Respite care is available on request.

Date	Day	Holiday
15 Apr	Fri	Good Friday
16 Apr	Sat	Easter Saturday
17 Apr	Sun	Easter Sunday
18 Apr	Mon	Easter Monday
25 Apr	Mon	Anzac Day
13 Jun	Wed	Queens Birthday
TBC		AFL Grand Final Day

MEALS ON WHEELS

Meals on Wheels aims to assist the elderly and those with disabilities to live independently. Meals can be provided short term or long term for people who for various reasons are unable to prepare fresh nutritionally balanced food for themselves. For more information, call the OPASS office on 5232 9420. If you are new to this service, please register with My Aged Care by calling 1800 200 422 or online www.myagedcare.gov.au

HEATER SERVICE

Pre Winter is a good time to have your electric/gas heater serviced by a reputable plumber. Over time the pipes can become brittle, carbon monoxide could be entering your home without your knowledge. There may be a build-up of dust around the heater, that could also be a fire hazard. The flame sensor may need to be cleaned or the igniter maybe faulty.

TRIPS AND FALLS

Remember with winter on its way, we need to start thinking about slips, trips and falls. To help prevent falls and injuries this winter be on the lookout for slippery conditions and keep these simple tips in mind when walking outdoors.

- Wear footwear with heavy tread for increased traction.
 - Plan and do not rush on wet/icy footpaths.
 - Pay attention while walking and avoid distractions.
 - Enter buildings slowly and watch for slippery floors and puddles that may not have a floor mat in that area.
 - Don't take short cuts, use well-lit pathways
 - Proceed carefully when getting in and out of vehicles
 - Avoid carrying items in your hands and use a bag, so you can keep your arms free for stabilization.
- Just a few steps to keep you safe when out this winter.

VOLUNTEERS WEEK 2022

In May we will celebrate National Volunteers Week and recognise the vital role of our Volunteers and their contribution to the care that we are able to offer to the Colac Otway Shire residents. Whether it is delivering Meals on Wheels to clients or transporting clients to medical appointments in Geelong. We would like to say a big "Thank You" for all your work though out the year.

WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A COMMUNITY CARE WORKER

Our Community care workers are a very talented group of employees, that have had over 9 months of intense training to become a Carer.

They learn about dementia, different disabilities, assisting with medication, recognising a healthy body, diversity and supporting independence and wellbeing. They have completed training in how to use certain equipment like hoists with slings and other specialised training to care for people with specific needs.

Our Community Care Workers complete a wide range of jobs in a days work. These include working with the aged and people of many different abilities. Their day may start out with personal care that involves showering assistance and supervision, monitoring of medication and safety checks to make sure you are well and ready for the day.

Their day then moves on to home care, shopping assistance and getting clients to and from appointments and social activities. Lunch preparation, safety and medication checks at midday, followed by more Home Care and shopping. The evening arrives with safety checks, medication monitoring, meal preparation and preparing people for bed.

Our Carers visit over 700 clients a week. Clients are funded through My Aged Care, Commonwealth Home Support Program(CHSP) Home Care Packages(HCP) Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA) and National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

Community Care work is largely independent and workers are making "decisions on the hop". They have to be flexible with their hours. Most weeks they have to take on extra work to cover when staff are on leave or additional work is rostered. They take a lot of pride in their work and uphold professional responsibilities at all times.

Over the last 2 years and the challenges of COVID 19, our Community Care Workers have adapted to the new Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) rules and continued with their work without complaint, to keep you safely living independently in the comfort of your own home.

Please remember to show respect to our valued Community Care Workers, without them we would not be able to provide a service to you. Thank you.

TRANSPORT DRIVERS NEEDED

Do you have a family member that is looking to give back to the community and volunteer their time as a transport driver? OPASS are looking for drivers to assist clients to medical appointments in Geelong, Ballarat and Warrnambool. They will need to complete a Police Check and have their vaccinations up to date. If this sounds like something that they would like to do, ask them to come into the Shire office in Rae St or Call the office on 5232 9420 to book a time for a chat.

SMOKE ALARM BATTERIES

Daylight Savings has just finished on the 3rd of April, we may have lost an hour of sleep but it is a good time to remember to have your smoke alarm batteries changed. Best to ask a family member to assist with this and if they are unable to Colac Otway Shire can provide this service through the Commonwealth Home Support Program(fee for service). Smoke Detector maintenance is key to protecting you and your loved ones from a potential house fire.

NAVIGATOR TRIAL PROGRAM

The aged care system can be complex and difficult to understand. Elder Rights Advocacy has specialist Aged Care Navigators who can assist you or someone you know understand and navigate the aged care system.

We can get you connected with aged care services including:

- Understanding aged care options
- Registering with My Aged Care
- Choosing providers
- Questions about Home Care Packages
- Understanding fees and out of pocket costs
- Completing Aged Care Fee Assessment forms
- Finding solutions

The service is free, confidential and independent of any aged care provider. Your choice of provider is exactly that: your choice. The Navigators simply help you to understand the system and connect you with aged care support.

How Aged Care Navigators work:

- We can speak with you over the phone or meet with you face-to-face (subject to current COVID requirements).
- We can work with a family member or representative of your choice if you prefer.
- We can work with you until your services begin – so you are speaking with the same person who understands your situation.

Who is eligible for government-funded aged care services?

Anyone who is over 65 (over 50 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons) and has a current need for support.

What type of support is available through aged care services?

- Assistance around the house (e.g. cleaning, showering, meal preparation)
- Support to access the community (e.g. shopping, transport, social groups)
- Support to maintain your health (e.g. nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, dietician, etc.)

Services available, who provides them and out of pocket, costs can depend on your needs and location. Contact us on 1800 700 600 for personalised advice.

Information Sessions

We run regular free group sessions about Understanding Your Aged Care Options and Home Care Packages. Check our website for upcoming session details.

Contact us at agedcarenavigator@era.asn.au if you would like to organise a free personalised session for your community group.

MORNING MUSIC MELODIES

A salute to the ANZACS & Vietnam Veterans.

Date 27th April @ 11.00am

Morning Music Melodies is back at COPACC for 2022, the new production dedicated to the 60th Anniversary of Australia's first involvement in the Vietnam War. The morning will contain many hit songs & stories. Songs like White Cliffs of Dover, Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy & Blowin' in the Wind – the hit song that was written by Johnny Young. Tickets available at www.copacc.com.au or call the Box Office on 5232 2077

THE USE OF BLEACH AND OTHER CHEMICALS

Our Community Care workers will work in partnership with you to support you with tasks that you may be finding difficult to manage. The aim is for you to maintain your independence whilst living in the comfort and security of your own home and community. Please remember that NO cleaning products containing bleach, chlorine or ammonia are to be used by the Community Care Worker when completing tasks in your home. All cleaning products are to be used strictly in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Community Care Workers are not permitted to use products that are in unmarked containers or are homemade concoctions. Some of the cheaper cleaning products do not use very clear labels. If they smell very strong, it may not be the right choice. The Community Care Workers can clean up to four houses a day and it can be very toxic breathing these chemicals all day. Please assist us in looking after your helpers.

NEW STAFF

We have welcomed new staff members over the Christmas break, Raelene, Rosemary, Geraldine and Fiona. We thank them for joining our team of Community Care Workers. We hope to have more new staff starting soon.

GOODSORT APP

In November the Colac Otway Shire Council launched a new app named "The GoodSort" app, which can be downloaded from the App Store or Google Play. Once downloaded it can be set up for helpful bin night reminders, calendar notification, service changes or delay alerts, as well as an easy A-Z waste materials guide. Implementing the four bin system now will help us reach the State Government target of reducing the waste going into landfill by 80% in 2030. Council can also provide a waste collection calendar in a hard copy version if required, please call 5232 9400. For more information, please visit www.colacotway.vic.gov.au

SAVING AMBULANCES FOR EMERGENCIES

If you are unsure whether to call for an ambulance or if you need just some advice, there are other options available.

To help paramedics save lives, save triple zero (000) calls for emergencies.

Your local GP can help if you have a minor injury and illness, need examination, or need advice or referral to a specialist.

A local pharmacist can provide health advice and medicines for minor illnesses.

Contact the Nurse-On-Call hotline (1300 60 60 24) for immediate, expert advice, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In addition, check out the Better Health Channel (BHC) website that promotes health literacy and healthy living by providing health consumers with trusted, reliable and easy to understand information, quality assured by the Department of Health, Victoria. www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

VICTORIA POLICE

When you have a non-emergency matter for the Police, did you know there is another phone number you can call for non – urgent crimes or events? You can call 131 44 or make a report on their web site www.police.vic.gov.au Always remember to call Triple 000 when an immediate response is required, when a crime is happening or if someone is in immediate danger. Remember to save triple zero (000) calls for emergencies only.