



ThriveAlliance

Enhancing lives. Building communities.

Caregiver Connection

November 2022

Helping caregivers through their journey one step at a time.

Recognizing and Supporting Family Caregivers Who Give Selflessly Every Day

I didn't see myself as a caregiver. I was 16 years old, juggling high school and extracurriculars and just trying to help my family. That's when my grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Once I got home from school, I did everything I could to give my grandfather and mother—who were caring for my grandmother—a break. I did whatever was necessary to help, whether it was giving Grandmother her insulin shots, cleaning the house, cooking and doing laundry. I became a caregiver without giving a second thought to how it would impact my life and, eventually, my career. After all, family takes care of family.



Mindi Mauk and her family were caregivers for her grandmother with Alzheimer's disease

Like my own experience, unpaid family caregivers work under the radar every day, and most are overwhelmed. They manage most [long-term services and supports in the U.S.](#), and their work is critical to preventing their loved ones from being placed in a skilled nursing home or other facility.

According to a [2020 report from AARP and the National Alliance for Caregiving](#), more than 53 million people in the United States manage the health and well-being of family members or friends in their homes. In Indiana, there are an estimated 850,000 family caregivers, with 38 percent taking care of individuals who have Alzheimer's disease or other dementias. [One in four of these caregivers are millennials like me](#), just doing what they need to do to help their families.

The burden of caregiving takes its toll. Caregivers have only so many hours in the day to provide for their loved one while also managing their own lives. [Caregivers often suffer their own health crises](#) because they often neglect

to take care of themselves. My grandfather had quadruple-bypass heart surgery while caring for my grandmother, creating other major challenges for our family. We didn't think to reach out for help.

The stigma around having Alzheimer's and other dementias may prevent family caregivers from seeking help and support. For so many, "dementia" is a frightening word associated with negative stereotypes. One common misconception is that dementia is a mental health issue rather than a neurological disease. [The pathway to breaking down stigma about dementia begins with education and support.](#)

Family caregivers may also feel isolated and hopeless, not knowing there are [tremendous resources available in Indiana](#) that can help [coach and support them through their caregiving journey](#) and ease their burden. For example, the Structured Family Caregiving program for Medicaid-eligible older adults living at home provides educational, emotional and financial support to family caregivers.

[Dementia Friends Indiana](#), administered statewide by CICOA Aging & In-Home Solutions, works to educate people about dementia with the goal of breaking down stigmas and implementing practical changes to make life easier to navigate for dementia patients and their loved ones.

My grandmother passed away shortly after I graduated from college, but I am forever grateful for the experience of caring for her. That experience ultimately led me to my [career at CICOA](#) advocating on behalf of other caregivers and people living with dementia. As we approach National Family Caregivers Month and National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month this November, please take time to recognize and support the people you know with dementia and their family caregivers.



Mindi Mauk, formerly a caregiver for her grandmother, is the Dementia Programs Supervisor at CICOA Aging & In-Home Solutions, which oversees Dementia Friends Indiana.

Thanksgiving Leftovers? Here's a great Turkey Pot Pie recipe.



Ingredients

- 2 medium potatoes, peeled & cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 medium carrots, cut into 1-inch slices
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 celery rib, diced
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 6 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 4 cups cubed cooked turkey
- 2/3 cup frozen peas
- 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon heavy whipping cream, divided
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 2 sheets refrigerated pie crust
- 1 large egg

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375°. In a Dutch oven, saute potatoes, carrots, onion and celery in butter and oil until tender. Stir in flour until blended; gradually add broth. Bring to a boil; cook and stir 2 minutes or until thickened. Stir in turkey, peas, 1/2 cup cream, parsley, garlic salt and pepper.

2. Spoon into 2 ungreased 9-in. pie plates. Unroll crusts; place over filling. Trim crusts and seal to edge of pie plates. Cut out a decorative center or cut slits in crusts. In a small bowl, whisk egg and remaining 1 tablespoon cream; brush over crusts.

Bake until golden brown, 40-45 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes before cutting.

Can you freeze Turkey Potpies?

Cover and freeze unbaked potpies up to 3 months. To use, remove from freezer 30 minutes before baking (do not thaw). Preheat oven to 425°. Place pie on a baking sheet; cover edge loosely with foil. Bake 30 minutes. Reduce oven setting to 350°; remove foil. Bake until golden brown and a thermometer inserted in center reads 165°, 55-60 minutes longer.

Can you use other kinds of vegetables in this turkey potpie recipe?

You can easily try different root vegetables such as sweet potatoes or turnips in this turkey pot pie recipe. But if you're short on time or looking for an easy shortcut, you can also opt for your favorite [frozen vegetable mix](#).

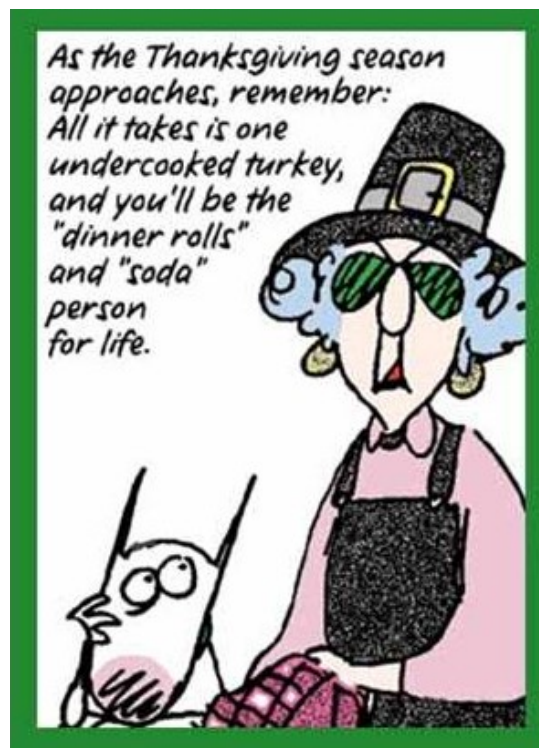
What can you do if the crust is getting too golden before the turkey potpies are done?

If your crust is browning too quickly and you're worried it might burn, simply lay a loose piece of foil over your turkey pot pie for the remainder of the baking time. You can also [make a pie crust shield](#) to prevent burning—and reuse it for baking other pies at home, too!

How long will turkey potpies last?

After your [homemade potpie](#) has baked and cooled, you can wrap leftovers in foil or store them in an airtight container. They will keep for up to 3-4 days in the refrigerator if stored properly.

—Ellie Crowley, Taste of Home Culinary Assistant



THANK YOU CAREGIVERS!



*The health and life of so many
people depend on you.
Thank you, caregiver,
for making a difference!*



Do you have an email address?
Want to receive your newsletters
electronically? Please submit your
email address to me for future
correspondence! You can email me
at jferril@thrive-alliance.org.

Caregivers of Older Adults support
groups are currently held the third
Thursday of each month at 2:30 p.m.
via Zoom. You can also join the first
Thursday of every month at 3:30 p.m.
via Zoom or live at the Decatur
County Hospital. Relative

Caregivers support groups are
currently being held the second
Tuesday of every month at 1:00 p.m.
via Zoom. Listing of other caregiver
support groups are available upon
request. **All support groups are free
but require an R.S.V.P.**

We also have a Thrive Alliance
Caregiver Resources Facebook
group. Email me if you would like to
be a part of the group.

**November is
National Alzheimer's
Awareness Month**



Thanksgiving

R I E S B H W R Z Y S H F U G
S F T S E V R A H C H C Z N G
I E D U T I T A R G A R N N M
T G E C B A R K D N R I O B K
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N C H G Y H Q M S B G I M I Y
K P B U A V L Z S B N S B M P
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N G U L J Y G N I F F U T S R
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BOUNTY
CRANBERRIES
DRESSING
FAMILY
GATHER
GRATITUDE
GRAVY

GREEN BEANS
HAM
HARVEST
NOVEMBER
PARADE
PIE
PUMPKIN

SHARING
STUFFING
THANKSGIVING
THURSDAY
TURKEY

