



Energy Connections Editor Erin Madison, right, and her mom Alice and dog Willow at Rowe Dam at Mystic Lake.

Happy New Year!

As the editor of Energy Connections, I frequently get letters and emails from readers letting us know how much they appreciate our monthly recipes. I also get questions about where the recipes come from.

Each recipe is submitted by a NorthWestern Energy employee. I ask them to share their favorite recipe, which means the recipes that wind up in Energy Connections are all pretty darn good!

There's also usually a personal story attached to the recipes our employees share. Sometimes they are family recipes tied to childhood memories. Our graphic designer Cassie or I make each recipe to test it and take photos.

Many recipes from past editions of Energy Connections have turned into staples at my house, and I hope the same is true for many of you. I make Buffalo Chicken Stuffed Sweet Potatoes (from the May 2020 issue) at least a couple times a month. Miranda's Delicious Pork Tenderloin with Veggies (from the February 2023 issue) is my favorite dish to cook for company.

You can find all the recipes from past Energy Connections on our website at [NorthWesternEnergy.com/recipes](http://NorthWesternEnergy.com/recipes).

This month's recipe comes from my mom. These enchiladas have long been a family favorite and are the meal I request anytime I'm home. I hope you enjoy them!

Wishing all our readers a happy 2024, full of good food and all that is merry and bright!

*Erin*



## Mom's Enchiladas

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups chicken broth
- 1/3 cup flour
- 12-ounce jar salsa
- 4-ounce can diced green chilies
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon basil
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- 12 corn tortillas
- 2-3 chicken breasts cooked and shredded
- 8-ounces pepper jack cheese, cut into strips
- 1 cup shredded pepper jack cheese

### DIRECTIONS

- In a sauce pan, blend chicken broth and flour. Cook, stirring, over medium heat until broth begins to thicken.
- Add salsa, chilies, onion, garlic, sugar and spices, mix well.
- Preheat the oven to 400 degrees and grease a 9x13-inch baking dish.
- Soften tortillas by dipping them in the hot mixture. Place a spoonful of chicken and a slice of cheese in each tortilla.
- Roll tortilla around filling and place in the greased dish.
- Once all tortillas are rolled, pour the remaining sauce over the top, and top with grated cheese.
- Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes.

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We are proud of the diversity in the communities we serve. To better serve the needs of some of our customers, we translate important customer information into two languages: Spanish and Karenic.

Estamos orgullosos de la diversidad en las comunidades que servimos. Para satisfacer mejor las necesidades de algunos de nuestros clientes, traducimos información importante del cliente a dos idiomas: español y karenic.

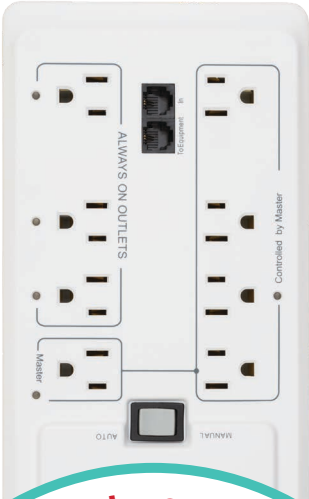
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# Energy Connections

Customer Bill Insert  
**January 2024**

In this issue: Energy efficiency tips | Keep gas meter clear | Stay safe during a power outage | Enchilada Recipe



**Bright ideas to save**

## Resolve to save energy!

Save up to \$200 a year by using smart power strips. Many electronics continue to draw power even when they are switched off. Use a smart power strip and save!

# Energy efficiency tips

Cold weather can make a major impact on your energy bill. You can save money on your monthly bill with these energy efficiency tips:

- 1. Know what impacts your energy use:** Start by comparing your energy usage from month to month, or year to year, on your billing statement. Montana customers may be eligible for a Home EnergyCheck. Learn more at [NorthWesternEnergy.com/EnergyCheck](http://NorthWesternEnergy.com/EnergyCheck) or call 800-823-5995.
- 2. Evaluate your insulation levels:** Adding insulation will help keep your home warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Note: In the winter, cold floors and walls are signs more insulation is needed.
- 3. Find and seal air leaks:** Do you see daylight peeking around your door or window frame or feel drafts around plumbing, ducting, recessed lighting, outlets and light switches? If so, you have air leaks. Seal the air leak by using insulating foam, caulk, weather strips, door sweeps or foam gaskets.
- 4. Utilize a programmable or smart thermostat:** Install a programmable thermostat that automatically adjusts your heat. Change your thermostat setting during the heating season to the lowest comfortable setting, which is 68°F for most people during the day. At night, turn your thermostat back 7-10 degrees.
- 5. Install an outdoor-rated timer for your engine block heater:** Almost all engines need to be warmed for only about an hour.
- 6. Use your window treatments:** Close your curtains at night to reduce heat loss, but open the curtains on south-facing windows during the day, so the sun's warmth can help heat your house.
- 7. Look for rebates and tax credits:** NorthWestern Energy offers a variety of electric and natural gas energy efficiency rebates to Montana customers. Energy efficiency projects may also qualify for tax credits.

Learn more and get more energy-saving tips at [NorthWesternEnergy.com/waystosave](http://NorthWesternEnergy.com/waystosave).



## Keep your gas meter clear of snow and ice

Just like scraping off your car or shoveling your sidewalks, it's important to take care of your gas meter after it snows.

Allowing snow and ice to build up on your natural gas meter, or fall from the roof above your meter, can lead to dangerous damages. Your natural gas meter's regulator vent must always be clear so the flow of natural gas into the home can be regulated properly. If this vent becomes plugged, the pressure of gas flowing into the home could either increase to a dangerous level, resulting in a fire, explosion or the buildup of deadly carbon monoxide, or decrease, preventing natural gas from flowing to your gas appliances.

Allowing a large amount of snow to pile up on a meter can lead to pipes breaking, causing dangerous gas leaks. After every snow, be sure to clear off your gas meter gently using your hands or a broom. Never use a shovel on the meter. If you rely on a snow removal company to clear your property, be sure they are also safely clearing snow and ice from your meter, and a path to your meter. If you have a seasonal property or are away on vacation, ask someone to check your natural

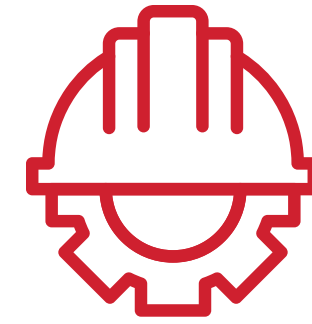
gas meter and vents, especially after a significant storm.

Snow should also be cleared from the roof above the meter to prevent falling snow or ice from damaging the meter or associated piping.

After major snow storms, take a walk around your property and ensure all vents are clear of snow or ice and that there is a path to your gas and electric meter in case we need to access them in an emergency. Also, be sure all appliance exhaust vents are clear from snow – especially after a winter storm.

## Plow with caution

Be careful while plowing to steer clear of utility equipment. Be sure to avoid meters and transformers (the large green boxes often located near walkways). Even minor contact with the transformer's metal enclosure could cause damage to the conductors inside. If you hit the equipment, please report it to NorthWestern Energy right away.



## Stay safe during a power outage

Winter storms, ice and wind can cause unexpected outages. Here are some important tips to help you and your family during an outage:

- **Check fuses or circuit breakers** to rule out problems with electricity inside your home. If a fuse is blown, replace it with the appropriate fuse. If a breaker has tripped, reset it from off to on. If you are unsure about fixing a fuse or circuit breaker, call an electrician.
- **If you see a downed or damaged power line**, keep your distance and call 911 immediately. Never touch a power line or any object, including trees, that is in contact with a line.
- **Check social media and our online outage map.** If an outage is widespread, NorthWestern Energy will post updates on our Facebook page. You can also get up-to-date outage information from our online outage map at [NorthWesternEnergy.com/outages](http://NorthWesternEnergy.com/outages).
- **Do not open freezers or refrigerators** more than necessary. A refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened. A full freezer will keep the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full) if the door remains closed.
- **Unplug computers, chargers, TVs and other sensitive appliances** to avoid possible damage when electricity is restored.
- **Turn off all but one light**, so you will notice when we have restored your electricity.
- **When power resumes, reset clocks and check automatic alarms and timers.** Plug in only essential items. Wait 10 minutes before connecting the remainder of your items to allow the electrical system to stabilize.

For more information about safety during outages, please visit [NorthWesternEnergy.com/outagesafety](http://NorthWesternEnergy.com/outagesafety)