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Food Canning-Major Canning Sins

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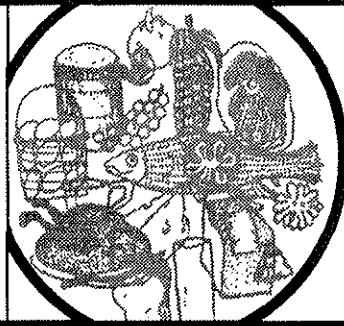
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Food Safety Fact Sheet

Food Canning

by Charlotte Brennand,
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Major Canning Sins - Potentially Deadly

What	Why it is unsafe
Making up own canning recipe	Without scientific testing, you will not know how long the product needs to be processed to be safe.
Adding extra starch, flour or other thickener to recipe	This will change the rate of heat penetration into the product and can result in undercooking.
Adding extra onions, chili, bell peppers, or other vegetables to salsas	The extra vegetable dilute the acidity and can result in botulism poisoning.
Using oven instead of water bath for processing	The product will be underprocessed since air is not as good a conductor of heat as water or steam. The jars also may blow up.
Not making altitude adjustments	Since boiling temperatures are lower at higher altitudes, the products will be undercooked.
Not venting pressure cooker first	Lack of venting can result in air pockets which will not reach as high a temperature
Not having gauge pressure canners tested annually	If the gauges is inaccurate, the food may be underprocessed.
Failure to acidify canned tomatoes	Not all tomatoes have an adequate acid level, especially if the vine is dead. This can result in botulism poisoning.
Cooling pressure canner under running water.	Calculations as to cooking time includes the residual heat during the normal cool-down period as part of the heat process. Hurrying this process will result in under processed food.
Letting food cool before processing in the recipes that call for "hot pack".	The heat curves are based on the food being hot at the beginning of the processing. Product could be underprocessed.

Note: Canned meat, vegetable or salsa which was underprocessed can cause botulism.

Minor Sins - Economic Loss but Hazard not Deadly

What	Why it is unsafe
Use of mayonnaise jars	The jar may blow-up, especially if used in a pressure canner, and it may be more difficult to obtain a good seal. However, if it seals, it is safe to use.
Use of paraffin on jams & preserves	Small air holes in the paraffin may allow mold to grow. Also paraffin can catch on fire if overheated. If it has mold growth, throw out the product.
Cooling too slowly after removing from canner. (Example: stacked jars close together)	There is a group of harmless organisms called thermophiles that can survive canning. If bottles are held hot for long periods, they can produce acid. This results in the defect known as "flat-sour". Harmless, but very undesirable flavor.
Storing food longer than recommended	Lengthy or overly hot storage will decrease quality and some nutrients but the product will still be safe to eat.

General Rules:

1. Always exactly follow a scientifically tested recipe. (Exceptions listed below.)
2. Make altitude adjustments by adding more time to water bath canning or increasing pressure for pressure canned products.
3. Unless you are sure that everything was perfect in the processing, boil the product for 10 minutes before eating it.

Exceptions to the rule of never change anything in a canning recipe.

Feel free to:

- Change salt level in anything except pickles.
- Change sugar level in syrup used for canned fruit.
- Add extra vinegar or lemon juice.
- Decrease any vegetable except tomatoes in salsas.
- Substitute bell peppers, long green peppers or jalapeno peppers for each other in salsa recipes as long as you do not increase the total amount.