



# CANNING TIPS

Home canning is an excellent way to store and preserve produce and other foods. But it can be risky—and even deadly—if it's not done correctly.

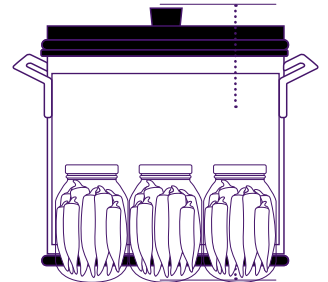
Many home canners are not aware that improperly canned food can cause botulism, a rare but extremely serious form of food poisoning that can lead to paralysis and even death.

The following are tips on how to safely and properly can your produce, so you can protect yourself and your family.

## 1. SELECT THE RIGHT CANNER

Selecting the right canner is an important step in safe home canning.

- Use a pressure canner made for canning and not just pressure cooking.
- Make sure your canner is the right size. Canners that are too small can lead to under cooking.

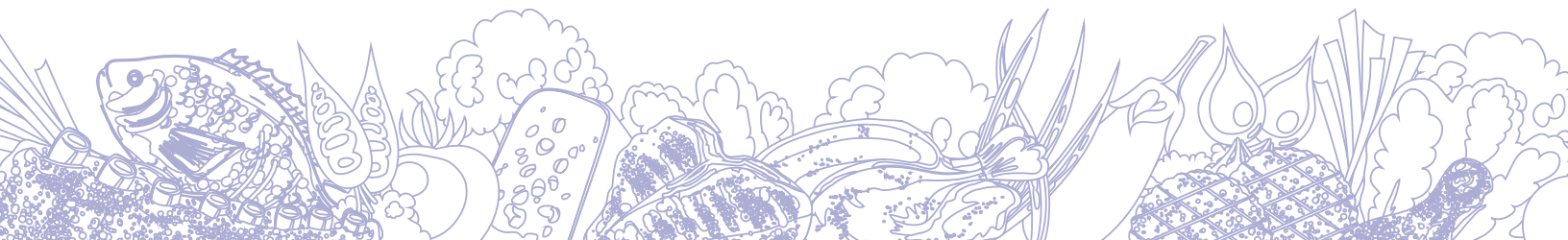


When you make your selection, be sure that all parts of your pressure canner are in good condition.

- If your canner has a rubber gasket, make sure it is flexible and soft—not brittle, sticky, or cracked.
- Clean and remove any debris from the openings on small pipes or vents.
- If you live at a high altitude, check with your pressure canner manufacturer to adjust your canning process for safety.
- Vent the air from your canner for 10 minutes before you pressurize the canner.

Canning low-acid vegetables (like green beans and corn), meats, fish and poultry requires the use of a pressure canner.

Avoid using boiling water canners for low-acid foods because they will not protect against botulism poisoning.



## 2. FOLLOW UP-TO-DATE CANNING INSTRUCTIONS

Canning instructions and equipment have changed over the years. Make sure your food preservation information contains up-to-date, scientifically-tested guidelines.

Avoid canning instructions in outdated cookbooks, even if they were handed down to you from trustworthy family cooks.

If there are any questions or doubts in your mind, consult the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Complete Guide to Home Canning](#).

## 3. WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT

Home-canned foods could be contaminated even if they look, smell, and taste normal.

If you have any doubt about the safety of a home-canned food, do not eat it.

Never taste home-canned food to determine if it is safe.

When you open a jar of home-canned food, be sure to inspect it thoroughly.

Home-canned food might be contaminated if:

- The container is leaking, bulging, or swollen
- The container looks damaged, cracked, or abnormal
- The container spurts liquid or foam when opened
- The food is discolored, moldy, or smells bad



## TAKE ACTION

Keeping the family safe is a priority in any household. Botulism is a medical emergency and its symptoms are different from other kinds of foodborne illness, so if you or a family member shows any of the symptoms listed below, see your doctor or go to the emergency room immediately. Symptoms may include the following:

- Double vision
- Slurred speech
- Dry mouth
- Blurred vision
- Difficulty swallowing
- Muscle weakness
- Drooping eyelids

## LEARN MORE

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\): Home Canning and Botulism](#)

[Foodsafety.gov: Home Canning: Keep Your Family Safe!](#)

[USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning](#)

