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Food Safety Education Month: Every Month!



Always use soap to wash your hands, the bubbles help remove dirt and germs to wash them away!

For several years, September has been designated as Food Safety Education Month. But, in reality, food safety is important every day of every month! What are you doing to keep food safe?

Many resources for safe food handling can be found at www.ksre.k-state.edu/foodsafety/topics/index.html. **One in particular is teaching high speed handwashing! Learn how at www.youtube.com/embed/n-Iyf5eqqik.**

This year has brought challenges for everyone's health. For Food Safety Education Month, emphasizing the importance of handwashing is key for overall health, and for food safety. When should you wash your hands? Here's some key times to remember to wash your hands.

- Before, during, and after handling food
- Before eating at home or at a restaurant
- Before and after caring for someone who is ill or touching an open wound
- After using the restroom or changing a diaper
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After handling animals, animal waste or animal food
- After taking out the garbage

Onion Recall due to *Salmonella*

A nationwide recall is ongoing due to *Salmonella* in onions, including red, white and yellow varieties.

Ask your grocer or search their website for recalls. This will help specifically

identify products included in the recall. With any food recall, do not consume the food. Throw it away or return it to the store for a refund.

For current information on this recall, see <https://bit.ly/30qYvkK>.

Symptoms of *Salmonella* infection include fever, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In rare cases, it can get into the bloodstream and cause more severe illnesses.

Pressure Canning Done Right

During this pandemic, more gardens were planted and now they are producing some great crops! So when those tomatoes all ripen at the same time, what can you do? Preserve them!

Pressure canning is used to preserve vegetables and meat, including many tomato products. Vegetables and meat are low acid foods and re-

quire pressure canning to destroy *C. botulinum*, the pathogen that causes botulism.

It is critical to follow the directions in using pressure canners. Always read the instruction manual for your canner. Do a practice run with water in the canner to learn how to use it and how it works with your stove. Check your stove manufacturer to be sure

canning is recommended. Some glass top stoves are not suitable for canners as they can crack under the weight of a heavy canner.

Learn more about safe pressure canning in the [How-to Guide to Pressure Canning](#). It is also available in [Spanish](#).



Contact your local Extension office for dial gauge testing.

Consumer Food Safety Education Conference

In light of the current COVID-19 outbreak, the Partnership for Food Safety Education has announced that the 2021 Consumer Food Safety Education Conference will be an all virtual event March 9-12, 2021.

This conference brings together health and food safety educators with federal agencies and food businesses to help build education and programming for consumer food safety education.

More details about the conference will be announced soon.



Take Time to Vent!

When using a pressure canner, it is very important to vent the air out of the canner before pressurizing. Air trapped in a pressure canner lowers the temperature obtained for a given pressure (for example, 10 or 15 pounds pressure) and results in underprocessing. To be safe, USDA recommends that **ALL pressure canners must be vented 10 minutes before they are pressurized.**

To vent a canner, leave the vent pipe (steam vent) uncovered (or manually open the petcock on some older models) after you fill the canner and lock the canner lid in place. Heat the canner on high until the water boils and generates steam that can be seen escaping through the open vent pipe or petcock. When a visible funnel-shape of steam is continuously escaping the canner, set a timer for 10 minutes. After 10 minutes of continuous steam, you can close the petcock or place the counterweight or weighted gauge over the vent pipe to begin pressurizing the canner.



Source: https://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/uga/using_press_canners.html

The Importance of Headspace in Canning



Source: https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/general/ensuring_HQ_canned_foods.html

Photo: Newell Brands, Inc.,

Leaving the specified amount of headspace in a jar is important to assure a vacuum seal. If too little headspace is allowed, the food may expand and bubble out when air is forced out from under the lid during processing. The bubbling food may leave a deposit on the rim of the jar or the seal of the lid and prevent the jar from sealing properly. If too much headspace is allowed, the food at the top is likely to discolor. Also, the jar may not seal properly because there will not be enough processing time to drive all the air out of the jar.

The amount of headspace depends on how much the food moves or swells inside the jar during the canning process. In the case of spaghetti sauce, there is a lot of food material and more viscosity or thickness compared to a tomato juice. So the food pulp/pieces are going to shift or swell more than a juice, therefore they need more room. Also, how the heat moves through the jar, by convection or conduction, can influence the amount of headspace needed.



Reliable recipes will specify the amount of headspace needed for that product. In general, jams and jellies are 1/4 inch; pickles, fruits, some tomato products are 1/2 inch; and plain vegetables and meats are at least one inch.

Urban Food Systems Symposium

The 2020 Urban Food Systems Symposium will be held virtually. Our goal is to bring together a national and international audience of academic and research-oriented professionals to share and gain

knowledge on urban food systems and the role they play in global food security. This symposium includes knowledge on: urban agricultural production, local food systems distribution, climate change, nutrition, urban

farmer education, urban ag policy, planning and development, food access and justice, and food sovereignty.

[Symposium information and registration.](#)

[The UFSS will be on Wednesdays in October.](#)



Sources: <https://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/nchfp/factsheets/acidifying.html> and www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF1185.PDF

Canning Tomatoes and Added Acid

In short, it is not a suggestion, but a requirement to add acid to home canned tomatoes. This is for water bath AND pressure canned tomatoes. Why you ask?

Tomatoes that are acidified for canning are done so to prevent botulism poisoning and other bacterial concerns by a combination of acid and heat. The prevention control in vegetables, meat and other naturally low-acid foods is by heat alone.

Tomatoes can have a natural pH above 4.6 (at least up to 4.8). But rather than develop a pressure-only process as if they were all low-acid, since they are so close to 4.6, USDA decided instead to recommend adding a small amount of acid so they can be treated as a food with a pH less than 4.6 for home canning. Therefore, they are suitable for boiling water canning when the acid is added. (The commercial industry often also adds citric acid to tomatoes to be able to give them a less severe heat treatment than would be needed for botulism and other bacterial controls.)

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Understanding "May Contain" Labeling Risks



According to an [IFIC survey](#), 45% of consumers manage food allergies by reading labels. Photo: USDA Flickr

It is estimated that 32 million Americans have a food allergy. You probably know someone who has a food allergy. There are many theories as to the rise in food allergies. The bottom line is, self-management and reading labels are key in preventing food allergy reactions.

Food manufacturers are required by the FDA to label products containing any of the eight major food allergens either as an ingredients or from potential cross-contamination. They may also use precautionary labeling such as "may contain," "manufactured in a facility that uses," or "processed in a facility that uses" statements. So the food may or may not have a food allergen which leads to confusion.

Consumers must educate themselves by learning alternative names for food allergens, avoid products with no precautionary labeling, imported foods without specific labeling, and learning from others who have food allergies.

Learn more at <https://bit.ly/31x1yHN>.

ask
an EXPERT



Karen Blakeslee, M.S.



On the Web at
www.rrc.ksu.edu



The Search for Canning Supplies

Gardens popped up in a lot of new locations this year since everyone had more time at home and many garden supply stores sold out of plants and seeds. Now that gardens are producing, food preservation supplies are disappearing off store shelves.



Source: https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/general/recomm_jars_lids.html

Canning lids are few and far between. But remember, **do not reuse canning lids!** Do not use old, dented, or deformed lids, or lids with gaps or other defects in the sealing gasket. When jars are processed, the lid gasket softens and flows slightly to cover the jar-sealing surface, yet allows air to escape from the jar. The gasket then forms an airtight seal as the jar cools. Gaskets in unused lids work well for at least 5 years from date of manufacture. The gasket compound in older unused lids may fail to seal on jars.