



# Master Food Preservers of Humboldt and Del Norte Counties Top 10 Canning Mistakes

Make sure your canned food is safe and delicious. Follow these tips.

## Resist Using Mom's Favorite Recipes



Stick to current, professionally tested recipes and instructions from the **National Center for Home Preservation** or a **State Cooperative Extension Service**. Don't can anything unless the recipe is in an approved guide that was published in the past 10 years.

## Don't Tweak Canning Recipes



Tweaking canning recipes may change how fast the food heats during processing, possibly leaving areas where *Clostridium botulinum* spores may lurk. Exceptions: you can add small amounts of seasonings and adjust salt in anything but fermented products. Never reduce the amount of vinegar or lemon juice in a canning recipe.

## Don't Double Jam or Jelly Recipes



Products that need to jell can be temperamental. Doubling a recipe can cause the batch not to set up. (Exception: *Pomona Pectin* recipes). Make two batches for best results.

## Wipe the Rims Clean



No matter how careful you may be, a bit of food may get on the top edge of the jar. Even an itty-bitty speck can prevent the lid from making a good seal. Wipe each rim with a clean, moistened towel just before placing the lid on.

## Remove Air Bubbles



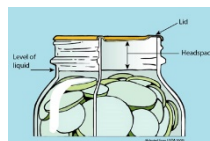
Excess air trapped under or in the food can cause poor seals. Release it before placing lids on. Get the right canning tools. You may even use a chopstick for this.

## Don't Use Iodized Table Salt



Most table salt has a de-caking ingredient and added iodine which can cause discoloration and limp final products. This is especially true for pickles. Use kosher or pickling salt.

## Don't Over- or Under-Fill Jars



Too much or too little headspace (the space between the food and rim of the jar) can cause lids not to seal properly. Follow the recipe for the correct headspace of the product.

## Don't Use a Water Bath Canner for Low Acid Foods



*C. botulinum* spores are very, very heat resistant. Hours in a boiling water canner will not kill them unless a food is very acidic (pickles) or has loads of added sugar (jam, jelly). Food containing botulism looks and smells fine. Use only current approved recipes and follow the instructions exactly.

## Don't Allow Canning Pressure to Fluctuate



Fluctuating pressure during the pressure canning process can flow liquid out of your jars. This makes a mess, wastes food and causes the jars to not seal properly. If the pressure falls below the recommended number, you must bring it back up to the correct pressure and restart the timing from the beginning.

## Avoid Storing Canned Foods in Hot, Sunny Places



Yes, canned food is really pretty, but it will fade and soften if exposed to light or heat for extended periods of time. They may be still safe to eat, but won't taste as good. Heat may also cause expansion of the food and break the seal. Keep your canned goods in a cool place without direct sunlight or fluctuating temperatures. Under a bed is good place.



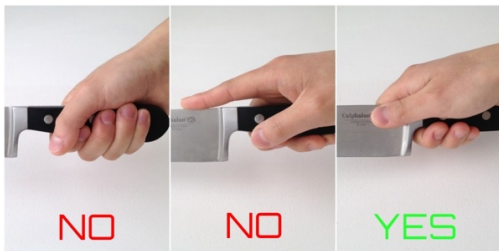
# Master Food Preservers of Humboldt and Del Norte Counties

## Cutting Boards and Food Safety

Tips for safety and avoiding cross-contamination.

### Cutting Boards and Food Safety

*Always keep fingers tucked back.*



#### Avoid Cross-Contamination

Use one cutting board for fresh produce and bread and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.



#### Cleaning Cutting Boards

Nonporous surfaces are easier to clean than wood. To keep all cutting boards clean, wash them with hot, soapy water after each use, rinse with clear water and air dry or pat dry with clean paper towels. Nonporous acrylic, plastic, or glass boards



and *solid* wood boards can be washed in a dishwasher. **Water must be 180° or hotter to kill germs.**

Both wooden and plastic cutting boards can be sanitized with a solution of 1 tablespoon of liquid

chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Flood the surface with the bleach solution and allow it to stand for several minutes. Rinse with clear water, and air dry or pat dry with clean paper towels.

**Replace cutting boards if they become excessively worn or develop hard-to-clean grooves.**



#### Bamboo Cutting Boards

Bamboo cutting boards are harder and less porous than hardwoods. Bamboo absorbs very little moisture and resists scarring from knives, so they are more resistant to bacteria than other woods. Clean bamboo cutting boards with hot soapy water; sanitize if desired. Rub with mineral oil to help retain moisture

#### Measuring Liquids

Place the measuring cup on a *level* surface and bend down or lift to eye level so you can see the cup markings properly. Pour in liquid until it reaches the desired amount.



#### Measuring Dry Foods

Scoop it with a dry measuring cup and sweep off any excess with a flat utensil. Make sure ingredients are evenly dispersed in the measuring cup.