

Appetite for Knowledge



NO PRESSURE CANNING IN ELECTRIC PRESSURE AND MULTI-COOKERS!

Electric multi-cookers are a popular appliance. Multi-cookers are safe to use to pressure cook food directly in the inner pot. Some of these appliances are being advertised as having the ability to quickly and easily process low-acid foods. Manufacturers of electric pressure cookers claim their appliances are acceptable for canning and preserving as an alternative to stovetop pressure canning. Even if there are instructions for pressure canning in the manufacturer's directions, the University of Wyoming Extension Nutrition and Food Safety educators do not endorse the use of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) canning processes in the electric, multi-cooker appliances now containing "canning" or "steam canning" buttons on their front panels. There has been no research by the USDA or a university to show that these electric multi-cookers can safely process low-acid food.

CANNING

Canning involves preserving food in sealed, glass jars to extend its shelf life. There are two ways to process jars - you can either use boiling-water canning for acidic foods like fruits, jams, jellies,

pickles, and salsa, or pressure canning for low-acid foods like fresh vegetables and meat.

A common misconception about home canning is that the goal is to get the jar to seal. While having a strong seal is important, the most critical factor is whether the food inside the jar is safe to consume. Pressure canning low-acid foods is a tightly controlled process. Proper processing in a stovetop pressure canner is necessary to ensure that the contents are safe. Processing times are carefully calculated based on the type of food being canned, the elevation, and the equipment being used.



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When food is heated inside the jar during the canning process, factors such as the density of the food, size of the food pieces, and size of the jar are figured into the process calculation. The entire thermal process, including the heat-up to cool-down steps, contributes to the destruction of harmful microorganisms.

WHY MULTI-COOKERS ARE UNSAFE

Electric multi-cookers tend to heat up and cool down quickly. Since heat transfer has not been specifically studied in this environment with this type of appliance, it is not recommended to use the canning feature of electric multi-cookers.

If you have a multi-cookers and you preserved jars of vegetables, meat, grains, and/or tomatoes there is no guarantee that these items were preserved properly. Improperly pressure canned foods offer a hospitable environment for botulism – a toxin that can cause nerve damage, paralyze, and even kill. Botulism is tasteless, odorless, and invisible to the naked eye. We strongly suggest following the Center for Disease Control’s recommendation: When in doubt, throw it out!

SUSPECT JARS

To dispose of suspect jars, wrap them tightly in plastic, tape the bag shut and put them in the garbage (out of reach of humans and animals). Do not open or recycle the jars; do not taste or eat the food in the jars; do not feed the contents of the jars to animals; do



Vicki Hayman
University Extension Educator
Nutrition & Food Safety, NE Area
Newcastle, Wyoming
307-746-3531 • vhayman@uwyo.edu

not put the contents in a compost pile or throw them down the drain.

Opening jars of improperly canned food will contaminate your hands, kitchen, and utensils with these deadly bacteria spores. If any jars break or fall open, clean the entire area with a 10% bleach solution. Dispose of the contents, glass, any sponges and rags used in the clean-up in a bag that is taped and sealed.

THE EXCEPTION

It is important to note that the Ball® FreshTECH Automatic Home Canning System is not an electric multi-cooker. It is specifically designed and has been tested for canning high-acid foods that are included in that appliance’s manual.

The bottom line is that the only safe method for canning low-acid foods is in a pressure canner following a tested recipe from an approved source such as the USDA, National Center for Home Food Preservation, or a university publication. University of Wyoming Extension has two publications of safe recipes titled ‘Preserving Food in Wyoming’ and ‘Preserving Food in Wyoming: Meats’ that are available by contacting your local Extension office or online at <http://www.wyoextension.org/publications/>.

Sources

- National Center for Home Food Preservation, nchfp.uga.edu
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, [USDA.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

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