



HOME CANNING



During the summer months there is an abundant harvest of fresh fruits and vegetables from California's orchards, farmlands, and backyards. For many people, home canning is a popular activity. If performed properly, home canning allows people to enjoy produce from the summer harvests all throughout the year. However, home canning and other food preparation, if performed incorrectly, can be deadly.

Improperly processed canned low-acid foods, such as olives, green beans, or corn, offer a perfect environment for *Clostridium botulinum*, the organism that causes botulism, to produce toxins. You can learn more about botulism from the flyer "[What is Foodborne Botulism](#)".

When canning at home, only high-acid foods such as fruits and tomatoes should be canned by using a boiling water bath. Other foods such as meat, poultry, green beans and corn should be canned only with the use of a pressure cooker. Carefully follow the instructions of a recognized authority in home canning. Some potential sources of information are:

- University of California, Davis – Home Food Preservation
http://ucfoodsafety.ucdavis.edu/Home_Food_Preservation
- University of Georgia – National Center for Home Preservation
<http://nchfp.uga.edu/>
- USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning -
http://www.csrees.usda.gov/newsroom/news/2011news/home_canning_guide.html
- "Ball® Complete Book of Home Canning", Kingry and Devine, 2006

It is important to note that microwave ovens are not recommended for home canning. If using an electronic pressure cooker, make sure it is designated for use in canning.

To destroy the botulinum toxin, heat all home-canned meat and vegetable foods for at least 15 minutes at 212°F before each serving. *This simple precaution could virtually eliminate deaths caused by botulism from home-canned foods.*

The California Department of Public Health, Food and Drug Branch regulates commercial food processing in order to ensure food safety. However, only you, the consumer, can ensure the safety of your own home-prepared foods. Home canned foods may not be distributed and sold in commerce.