



August 28, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Inquiries: 330-812-3727

The Importance of Safe Home Canning As We Approach Harvest Season

(Summit County), Ohio – Summit County Public Health would like to remind residents of the risk foodborne botulism associated with improper canning techniques and consuming raw honey. A variety of foods can be associated with foodborne botulism, including homemade foods that were improperly canned or preserved. The most common source of home-canning related botulism cases come from foods with a low acid content, such as chilies, green beans, potatoes, beets, corn, and asparagus.

To prevent botulism, it is important to follow proper canning and food preservation procedures. The USDA's "Complete Guide to Home Canning" is an invaluable resource for both novice and experienced canners. This guide, based on research from the National Center for Home Food Preservation in cooperation with the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), provides comprehensive information on canning techniques, equipment, and safety procedures. You can find the Guide at: <https://www.healthycanning.com/usda-complete-guide-home-canning/>.

Below are some important tips for safe home canning:

1. **Use proper equipment:** Make sure you have the correct equipment including a boiling water bath canner for high-acid foods and a pressure canner for low-acid foods. Using the correct equipment is crucial to achieving the temperatures necessary to destroy harmful microorganisms.
2. **Follow tested recipes:** Only use recipes from reliable sources, such as the USDA's Complete Guide to Home Canning. These recipes have been tested to ensure they meet safety standards.
3. **Inspect jars and lids:** Before canning, inspect jars for nicks or cracks and use new lids to ensure a proper seal. Reusing old lids can lead to seal failures, increasing the risk of contamination.
4. **Process correctly:** Follow the recommended processing times and temperatures for each type of food.





5. **Check seals:** After processing, make sure all jars have been sealed properly. If a jar hasn't sealed, refrigerate the contents and use them promptly or reprocess the jar within 24 hours.
6. **Store safely:** Store canned goods in a cool, dark place and use them within a year for the best quality and safety. Never consume home-canned food if the jar is leaking, bulging, or swollen, if the container is damaged, or if the food is discolored, moldy, or smells bad. Additionally, if the container spurts liquid or foam when opened, discard the food immediately.

While some individuals believe that raw honey is more nutritious than pasteurized honey, raw honey may contain the spores of *Clostridium botulinum* or botulism. Botulism especially poses a threat to babies or infants under one year of age and individual with compromised immune systems.

Remember as we head into the fall harvest season take precautions to ensure that food safety measures are followed to keep you and your family safe.

For more information on Botulism and its health effects please visit the CDC's site at: <https://www.cdc.gov/botulism/about/index.html>.

###

