

WSGW RADIO PRESENTATION

HOME CANNING FOOD SAFETY

July 24, 2018

Home canning is an excellent way to preserve garden produce and share it with family and friends. But it can be risky – or even deadly – if not done correctly and safely.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) home-canned foods are a common source of botulism in the United States. From 1996-2008, foods prepared in homes accounted for 48 of 116 foodborne botulism outbreaks. Eighteen of those were linked to home-canned vegetables.

Botulism is a rare but potentially deadly illness caused by a poison most commonly produced by a germ called *Clostridium botulinum*. The germ is found in soil and can survive, grow, and produce a toxin in certain conditions. You cannot see, smell, or taste botulinum toxin – but even a small amount can be toxic.

How can you keep yourself and others safe when it comes to home canned foods?

- Use reliable websites for recipes that have research tested places – avoid bloggers, neighbors, and grandma’s recipe that is 80 years old.
- Some reliable sites include the National Center for Home Food Preservation, Michigan State University Extension and Ball www.freshpreserving.com.
- Any canning recipe book that is more than 10 years old should be avoided because science changes and canning techniques do as well.
- If you have a Ball Blue Book, check the publication date – it should be published within the last 7-8 years as recipes have changed.
- Always use a pressure canner or cooker. Pressure canning is the only recommended method for canning vegetables, meat, poultry, and seafood.
- Boiling water canners will NOT help prevent botulism poisoning.
- Electric multi-cookers are not safe and should not be used.
- Be sure the gauge of the pressure canner or cooker is accurate.
- Vent the pressure canner before pressurizing and follow the recommended cooling steps.
- Look for signs the product could be contaminated like a leaking or swollen container, a damaged or cracked container, or discoloration of the food.

www.saginawpublichealth.org

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention June 2018
Food Safety News, July 16, 2018
Michigan State University Extension