

News Column for use week of June 24, 2024
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Canning Season is Upon Us!

If you plan to pressure can veggies, meats, and other low-acid foods this canning season, bring in your pressure canner dial gauge for FREE testing. We test Presto, National, Maid of Honor and Magic Seal dial gauges. We do NOT test All American dial gauges. You are welcome to bring in the gauge by itself or leave the gauge attached to the lid and bring in the entire lid. You can drop off your gauge and/or lid at any of the River Valley Extension District offices (Clay Center, Concordia, Belleville, Washington). We recommend you test your dial gauges before the start of every canning season or anytime you might have accidentally dropped the gauge.

Questions can be directed to Kaitlin Moore, Nutrition, Food Safety & Health Agent, at 785-243-8185.

I also encourage those interested in canning and other forms of home food preservation to check out Karen Blakeslee's e-newsletter titled You Asked It! Karen is K-State Extension's Food Preservation Specialist and also works closely with the North Central Food Safety Extension Network, another home food preservation resource worth checking out.

The following article on canning previously frozen food is from the July 2024 edition of the You Asked It! e-newsletter.

Canning Previously Frozen Food

Sometimes, freezing is the quickest way to preserve fresh food from the garden or farmers market. But can that frozen food be used in canning? In many cases, it depends on the food itself. Freezing will change the texture and soften the food upon thawing. This will cause the food to pack into jars differently compared to fresh food.

For example, frozen tomatoes could pack into jars differently than freshly prepared tomatoes and cause overfilling of jars. Overfilling can result in under-processing (and therefore possible spoilage on the shelf) and possibly under-acidification with more tomatoes in the jar than expected.

Process times are dependent on food being prepared as described in the preparation steps.

Continuing with our tomato example, the best recommendation is to use these tomatoes in something that is well cooked like stewed or crushed tomatoes or make tomato juice or sauce. For example, freeze the tomatoes for a very short time of just a few weeks at most, without any other added liquid or ingredients. Then when you have enough, thaw them completely and use all the tomatoes and their juices to make crushed tomatoes with the hot pack method.

Unsweetened frozen and thawed fruit can be used in place of fresh fruit in jams and jellies. For best results, measure frozen fruit before thawing.

Learn more tips about safe changes to tested canning recipes here:
<https://www.ndsu.edu/agriculture/sites/default/files/2024-03/fn2102.pdf>

You are welcome to swing by your local Extension Office for a hard copy of this food preservation publication!

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