

Throw old canning recipes away if you want to avoid food-borne illnesses

CORVALLIS, Ore. - Throw away Grandma's old canning recipes if you want to avoid food-borne illnesses, Oregon State University food safety experts advise. In fact, any pre-1988 canning or food preservation recipes are considered unsafe, they point out.

If you are going to preserve your own foods this summer it is important to use up-to-date food preservation methods and processing times, explained Carolyn Raab and Nellie Oehler, family and community development faculty with the OSU Extension Service.

"Food preservation is a science, and it is always changing to assure safety with new varieties of produce, new strains of microorganisms and new products emerging on the market," Raab said.

Over the years there have been many changes in canning methods. Some processing times have increased. Also, "open-kettle" canning (where food, jars, lids are all hot and food is not processed) and oven canning are no longer considered safe. Some ingredients have changed and additional bacteria are causing concern in foods that aren't preserved.

"Just because the food is in a jar and the jar seals, it does not mean that it is safe," said Oehler. "This actually could make the product lethal."

If low-acid foods (meats, fish, vegetables, poultry) aren't processed properly, Clostridium botulinum bacteria can grow in the sealed jar and produce a deadly toxin. Recent cases of botulism have been linked with under-processed soup and stew in Oregon.

Volunteers and staff in the Lane county office of the OSU Extension Service in Eugene have been operating a statewide Food Safety/Preservation hotline for several years. They receive calls from people who are still using outdated canning books, says Oehler.

"There are a lot of old canning books on kitchen and library shelves, where they will continue to pose a threat to health," she said.

Use references with copyright dates after 1988, recommend food safety experts with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. OSU Extension Service offers more than a dozen preservation publications on line at: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/details.php?sortnum=908&name=Food+Preservation+and+Storage>

Or, to request a printed catalog, call 1-800-561-6719. Home canners can get answers to questions by calling the OSU Extension Food Safety/Preservation hotline from July 17 to Oct. 13 at 1-800-354-7319, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (except holidays).

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Source: [Nellie Oehler](#), [Carolyn Raab](#)



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