

Preparedness Hints

Jars and Lids



Food may be canned in glass jars or metal containers. Metal containers can be used only once. They require special sealing equipment and are much more costly than jars.

Regular and wide-mouth Mason-type, threaded, home-canning jars with self-sealing lids are the best choice. They are available in 1/2 pint, pint, 1-1/2 pint, quart, and 1/2 gallon sizes. The standard jar mouth opening is about 2-3/8 inches. Wide-mouth jars have openings of about 3 inches, making them more easily filled and emptied. Half-gallon jars may be used for canning very acid juices. Regular-mouth decorator jelly jars are available in 8 and 12 ounce sizes. With careful use and handling, Mason jars may be reused many times, requiring only new lids each time.

Lids are only to be used one time. Many people have been tempted to reuse lids but they have found that this is always a bad idea. Not only do they seldom seal, but even if they should seal during processing, there's no sure way of knowing they will stay that way during storage.

With the health of your family at stake, it's just not worth the risk. You can use them for a thousand things. Just don't use them for canning!

When jars and lids are used properly, jar seals and vacuums are excellent and jar breakage is rare.

Most commercial pint- and quart-size mayonnaise or salad dressing jars may be used with new two-piece lids for canning acid foods. However, you should expect more seal failures and jar breakage. These jars have a narrower sealing surface and are tempered less than Mason jars, and may be weakened by repeated contact with metal spoons or knives used in dispensing mayonnaise or salad dressing. Seemingly insignificant scratches in glass may cause cracking and breakage while processing jars in a canner. Mayonnaise-type jars are not recommended for use with foods to be processed in a pressure canner because of excessive jar breakage. Other commercial jars with mouths that cannot be sealed with two-piece canning lids are not recommended for use in canning any food at home.

Jar Cleaning:

Before every use, wash empty jars in hot water with detergent and rinse well by hand, or wash in a dishwasher. Un-rinsed detergents may cause unnatural flavors and colors. These washing methods do not sterilize jars. Scale or hard-water films on jars are easily removed by soaking jars several hours in a solution containing 1 cup of vinegar (5 percent acidity) per gallon of water.



Sterilization of Empty Jars

All jams, jellies, and pickled products processed less than 10 minutes should be filled into sterile empty jars. To sterilize empty jars, put them right side up on the rack in a boiling-water canner. Fill the canner and jars with hot (not boiling) water to 1 inch above the tops of the jars. Boil 10 minutes at altitudes of less than 1,000 ft.

Personal and Family Preparedness

Vision: Each family uses principles of provident living in their daily lives.

Mission: "Increase awareness and practice of home production and storage."