

HOME CANNING BASICS

Using Acceptable Jars and Lids

MASON JARS

Regular Mason-type, threaded, home-canning glass jars with self-sealing lids are the best choice. With careful use and handling, Mason jars may be reused many times with a life expectancy of 13 years. Lids, on the other hand, can only be used once.

COMMERCIAL MAYONNAISE JARS

Commercial mayonnaise jars should only be used for canning high acid foods in a boiling water canner. **NEVER USE THEM FOR PRESSURE CANNING.**

ALL jars must be free of cracks and chips. They must be a size that can be sealed with a 2-piece metal canning lid and ring.

CLEANING JARS

Before every use, wash the empty jars in hot water with detergent and rinse well or wash in the dishwasher. **CAUTION:** Remaining 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 for several hours in water containing one cup of 5% vinegar per gallon.

When jars are processed less than 10 minutes in boiling water they must be sterilized before filling. Jars to be processed in a pressure canner need not be sterilized.

TO STERILIZE: Place empty jars right side up on the rack in the boiling water canner. Fill the canner and the jars with hot (not boiling) water to 1 inch above the top of the jars. Boil 10 minutes. Remove and drain jars.

LIDS: The recommended self-sealing lid consists of a round, flat metal disk held in place during processing by a metal screw-band. The outer edge of the lid is filled with a colored sealing compound. This compound should be effective if the lid is used within 3 to 5 years of purchase when stored in a cool, dry place.

To insure a good seal, carefully follow the manufacturer's directions in preparing lids for use. Examine the lids. Do not use dented, deformed lids or lids with defects in the sealing compound.

Other types of lids that are not recommended are:

- Clear glass lids with replaceable rubber rings
- One-piece porcelain-lined metal lid with a rubber ring

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FOR SAFE PRODUCTS

- Use only the size jar specifically called for in the recipe. Follow the most recent processing times exactly.
- Remove air bubbles before sealing jars. Run a flat plastic or wooden spatula between the food and the jar. Do not use metal knives or spatulas because they could damage the jar.
- Wipe the upper rim with a clean paper towel before the lid is placed on the jar.
- Do not tighten the screw band after processing.
- Once the product has cooled, remove the screw band so the jar can be thoroughly cleaned. This also prevents the band from rusting to the jar.

For more information call WSU Skagit County Extension:

360-428-4270

Or visit:

<http://skagit.wsu.edu/FAM/MFP.htm>

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