

University of Georgia Home Canning Expert says...

# ⊘ Don't Do This at Home!

Several popular food-preserving trends and products may put you and your family at risk of serious food-borne illnesses. Take a look at the following list so you can avoid problems!

The fad...	What it is:	Not a good idea because...	The expert recommends:
<b>Home "Canning" In Flexible Pouches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many commercial shelf-stable foods are packed in shiny, flexible "retort" pouches—think tuna fish and juice pouches. Now several websites are suggesting that home food preservers can use these pouches for long-term food storage just by swapping the pouches for mason jars and using existing canning recipes and methods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home canning recipes developed for glass jars cannot be used with other shapes and types of containers. Improperly canned food is susceptible to the dangerous pathogen <i>Clostridium Botulinum</i>. The medical consequences of its toxicity are life-threatening.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skip this one entirely!! Tested recipes for home canning—followed carefully and to the letter—are the only way to ensure a safe final product.</li> </ul>
<b>Salad-in-a-Jar</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This Internet fad has you putting chopped romaine lettuce into a week's worth of quart-sized canning jars, then vacuum sealing each jar. The sealed jars are stored in the refrigerator until you carry the jar to work for lunch.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certain food-borne pathogens thrive in the oxygen-free environment of a vacuum sealed package. Even in the chill of a refrigerator, dangerous—and completely undetectable—toxins can develop in the jar of salad.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forget the idea of vacuum-packing in jars and carrying the salad for lunch. You'll be protecting yourself from potential food poisoning while also saving the trouble of carrying a bulky, breakable glass jar to work and back each day!</li> </ul>
<b>Atmospheric Steam Canning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes referred to as "upside-down boiling water bath" canning, this method has the home canner placing filled canning jars on a rack sitting above hot water in a shallow pan. A dome is placed over the jars and the water is heated to boiling, filling the dome with steamy vapor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safe canning depends upon complete heating of the product inside the jar. Atmospheric steam canners have not been properly tested for either high or low acid foods and there are no risk-free recipes available for this method of home canning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stick with the tried-and-true Boiling Water Bath and Pressure Canning methods.</li> </ul>
<b>Let's Go Retro!</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publishers market reprints of old canning recipe books, bloggers promote old-fashioned canning methods, and home canners use their grandparent's recipes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unfortunately, older is not necessarily better. Even if the recipes originally came from a reputable source—and who could be more reputable than your grandma?—many older methods and recipes have been proven to be unsafe.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When it comes to home food preservation, modern, safety-tested recommendations are the only ones to use! Look at old canning recipes for a fun glimpse into history, but choose the recipes you actually prepare from the latest editions of <i>So Easy to Preserve</i> or <i>Ball Blue Book</i>.</li> </ul>

Tested recipes and clear directions for home food preservation are found in the book *So Easy to Preserve, 5th edition*. *So Easy* can be purchased for \$18 at the Gwinnett Extension office.



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