

Bottling tips

- Paraffin or wax seals should not be used, as they may allow mould to grow. Instead, use self-sealing lids.
- Only use bottles that are designed for home bottling. Bottles that once held store-bought foods should not be used as they may not create an air-tight seal.
- Bottles with chips or cracks should not be used.
- Only the screwband from two-piece lids may be used more than once.
- Test your bottle seal within 12 to 24 hours by examining the center of the lid. A well sealed lid will be pulled in at the center. If the food is not well sealed, it should be bottled again with a new seal, or kept in a refrigerator.

Storage

Home bottled foods can be stored safely for up to one year. Be sure to label and date them, and keep them in a cool, dry place. Do not store bottled foods in warm and/or damp places such as near pipes, ovens, furnaces, insulated attics, or in direct sunlight.

For more information

For more information about food safety, contact an Environmental Health Officer at the Government Service Centre, or your Regional Health Authority.

Government Service Centre Locations:

Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Corner Brook
Grand Falls-Windsor
Gander
Clarenville
Harbour Grace
St. John's

Department of Health and Community Services
Department of Government Services
Regional Health Authorities

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HOME BOTTLED FOODS



FOOD SAFETY AWARENESS

Newfoundland
Labrador

Bottling foods is a good way to keep fruits, vegetables, and meats for longer periods of time with little loss of nutritional value. However, bottled foods that are not prepared properly, or become damaged, can make people sick.

This pamphlet provides some tips on how to avoid foodborne illness from bottled foods.

What foods can be bottled?

There are two types of foods which are commonly bottled: low acid foods and high acid foods. Some examples of these are listed below:

Low Acid Foods	High Acid Foods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meats / Poultry • Seafood • Vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruits • Berries • Vegetables



The difference in these foods is the acid content and the possible survival and growth of bacteria. Bacteria are less likely to grow in high acid foods. However, mould can survive and grow in these foods. The growth of mould can also create conditions that would allow bacteria to grow and possibly cause illness. Bacteria can readily grow in low acid foods, if they are not properly preserved.



What are the risks?

One type of bacteria, *C. botulinum*, can grow in bottled food and can cause a serious, possibly fatal, illness, called "botulism".

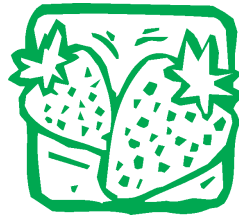
C. botulinum can be found naturally on many raw foods, and produces spores that can resist heat. Boiling temperatures are not enough to kill off these bacteria and their spores, thus extra effort is needed to protect and process low acid foods during bottling.

Certain moulds that may grow in bottled preserves can produce toxic chemicals called mycotoxins, which, when ingested, may lead to illness.

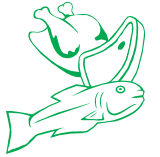
How can I bottle food safely?

All fruits and vegetables should be washed in clean water before being bottled. Bottles must be sterilized in boiling water for 1 minute before use.

High-acid foods may be bottled safely in boiling water. Look for bottling instructions when buying bottling supplies.



Low-acid foods need very high temperatures (above boiling) for safe bottling. The use of a pressure cooker is needed to reach these temperatures. Always follow the instructions provided with your pressure cooker. Cooking times will vary depending on the type and amount of food being bottled.



Because of the high risk of botulism, and the complex process for bottling, extra care is needed if you bottle low acid foods at home!

If you decide to bottle low acid foods, be sure to follow the instructions given in a tested recipe that provides cooking times and temperatures for the food you are using. The US National Center for Home Food Preservation is a good source of information about bottling various types of foods. Their website address is:

www.uga.edu/nchfp/

