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PUBLIC HEALTH

Dangers of Canned Food Should Not Be Ignored

➤ AS THE canning season progresses in the United States, 75% more women are freeze-canning than were heat-canning foods 10 years ago, home demonstration agents told SCIENCE SERVICE.

But the U.S. Department of Agriculture advises those who are still using the heat-canning method to use a pressure cooker, rather than the open kettle method or the oven.

This is especially important if meats and such nonacid vegetables as green beans, corn and asparagus are being canned because insufficient heat can allow the deadly spores of *Clostridium botulinum*, causing botulism, to remain inside the can.

Improper canning of foods, green beans especially, have sometimes caused deaths from botulism. *Clostridium botulinum* is so deadly that about 14 ounces of it would kill the entire population of the world.

Housewives should be on the lookout for defective cans. C. Wallace Bohrer of the National Canners Association says if the end of cans bulge, the contents may possibly be spoiled.

When two women in Detroit died as a result of eating a can of tuna fish in 1963, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration suspected that can defects were responsible, but no definite decision was ever reached.

Two cases of nonfatal botulism in the United States that same year were traced to Canadian-canned liver paste. In Canada a boy died after eating a sandwich made of the same brand product, and his brother became ill. The Canadian Medical Association Journal, 93:244, 1965, reviewed the liver paste incidents, pointing out that accidents in the canning industry, although rare, can happen.

Antitoxin also should be given to all persons suspected of eating food contaminated by botulism organisms. Rapid laboratory diagnosis is essential if specific antitoxin treatment is to be given.

Home canners in this country can avoid the dangers of botulism from their own canning by ordering and using bulletins from the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

• Science News Letter, 88:164 September 11, 1965

PUBLIC HEALTH

Pasteurization of Egg Products Necessary

➤ ALL EGG PRODUCTS, including those in the frozen and other ready-to-eat foods housewives use, may have to be pasteurized to free them of Salmonella bacteria if proposed Government regulations are adopted.

The Food and Drug Administration of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare plans to require pasteurization or other treatment of commercial egg products to eliminate hazards to consumers from Salmonella which can cause sickness or death.

• Science News Letter, 88:164 September 11, 1965

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