

# Safe Food Preservation & Botulism



Few things can match the rewarding feeling and security of preserving nutritious traditional foods for the year ahead. Whether it's freezing whitefish fillets or canning fiddlehead ferns, there are some important considerations to help preserve the harvest safely.

*Clostridium botulinum* is a very common bacteria found in soil and water, which under the right conditions, can produce a lethal toxin. The toxin causes the illness Botulism with symptoms first appearing as double vision, slurred speech, and muscle weakness. It quickly progresses to shutting down the body's ability to breathe for itself and ultimately leads to death without medical intervention.

Botulism today is uncommon, but generally associated with improperly prepared canned foods. Additionally concerning are improperly thawed vacuum packed frozen fish and improperly prepared sausages. There are some small things you can do to help make and serve safely preserved foods.



## Before Preserving



**Choose the right tools and know how to use them.** Canning jams and canning meat require very different tools to create a safe product. Meats should **ONLY** be canned in a pressure canner.

**Select and use only research tested recipes.** Technology developed in the last 30 years helps researchers test recipes to make sure the foods will reach the correct temperature or acidity when you preserve at home.



## While Preserving

**Can fish in pint jars.** Quart size jars do not consistently get hot enough to can fish safely. Pint or smaller sizes are recommended to safely can fish.



## After Preserving



**Open before thawing.** Before thawing your VACUUMED packed fish, cut open the bag and thaw under refrigeration or cool running water. Fish frozen in zipper locking bags with air pressed out by hand or completely surrounded by water have enough oxygen to neutralize *Clostridium botulinum*.

