

About new lids

# Experts issue warning

The well-publicized and 'age of metal lids for home canning has Michigan consumers beating the bushes for alternatives to those hard-to-find jar lids.

For concerned consumers, Mich-

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igan State University food scientists have one word of advice: caution.

"There are a variety of new lids appearing on the market, many of them for the first time," says Clifford Bedford, professor of food science. "No information is available on how these new lids perform in normal home use and whether they will maintain a permanent seal during long-term storage. Tests may show these new lids to be safe and effective. But until the results of such tests are in, using these substitutes for standard Ball or Kerr canning lids is likely to be a risky proposition."

New lids available in part of Michigan fall into several types:

- Two-piece lids similar to those products are being manufactured by two companies. One is being test marketed in Lansing and Grand Rapids. The other kind is available only as part of a set of

jars, lids and rings.

"To our knowledge," says Anita Dean, extension foods and nutrition specialist, "no complaints have been received from users of these new products."

- One-piece lids developed for commercial use have appeared on the retail market this year. The home canner cannot attain the strictly controlled conditions maintained by the commercial food processor, so Dr. Bedford advises caution in using one-piece lids.

"If you use these lids in water bath processing, loosen the screw cap a quarter-inch before processing to allow air to escape during processing," he advises. "Then tighten the cap as you take the jar from the canner."

**THE LABELS** on some one-piece lids appear to be inadequate, Dr. Bedford points out, because they fail to warn that tightening the lids before processing causes a build-up of pressure with a jar that may result in its exploding. The labels also fail to point out that the one-piece lids may not seal tightly to the rim or lip of the glass jar after being removed from the water bath.

"If you're using the one-piece

lids, follow the directions for zinc lids given in the USDA home canning bulletin or other reliable canning guide," Mrs. Dean says. "The hot pack method seems to yield the best results."

It is not advisable to use the one-piece lids for canning low-acid produce or products processed in a pressure canner, she says, unless some provision is provided for venting air pressure during processing. Labels on many one-piece lids do not clearly warn of the danger of breakage, she states.

- Three-piece lids are designed to be used with Ball or Kerr rings. Dr. Bedford advises consumers not to remove the ring after processing to improve their chances of a tight seal.

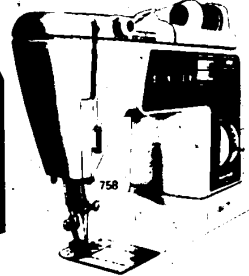
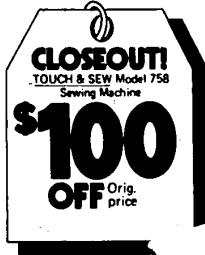
In addition to these new types of lids, a flexible plastic film manufactured in England, has been promoted widely in the Detroit area as a replacement for conventional canning lids. Instructions that come with the material say it should be used for cold pack and water bath processing only and that it should not be used for low-acid foods and processing under pressure.

**"LIMITED TESTS** at MSU indicate that the typical consumer will probably have trouble getting a tight seal, following manufacturer's directions," Dr. Bedford reports. He suggests canners might get better results by using the hot pack method and following normal directions for water bath processing.

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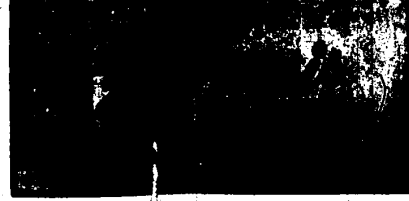
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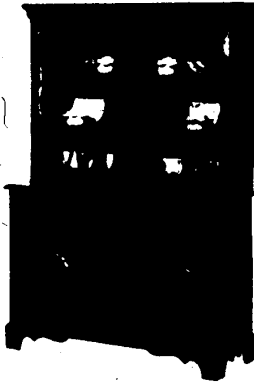
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