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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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When in doubt, throw it out!

**Health Officials remind Magic Valley improper canning methods
can lead to foodborne illness**

TWIN FALLS - Summer is winding down and with it local vegetable and fruit crops are ripening. As residents pull in their handiwork, the South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) reminds them to be careful to follow canning guidelines to avoid getting sick.

“Many home canners don’t realize that improperly canned foods can cause botulism, an extremely serious form of food poisoning that can lead to paralysis or even death,” said Jarryd Samples, Environmental Health Specialist with the SCPHD, “It’s also important to keep Magic Valley’s elevation in mind. Processing times may need adjustment because of our altitude.”

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends:

- Choosing the right canner, if you use a pressure cooker make sure it is designed specifically for canning. Check the size, smaller canners can lead to undercooking.
- Follow the latest canning instructions and up-to-date recipes. Make sure to allow at least ¼ inch of headspace for jams and jellies, more for fruits and pickles.
- When in doubt, throw it out. If the container is leaking, if it looks damaged, or if the food ends up discolored or moldy, throw it away. **It is not worth getting sick.**
- If a family members shows any symptoms of botulism (slurred speech, double vision, difficulty swallowing, drooping eyelids, etc) see your doctor or go to the emergency room immediately.

Acidity is also important in canning. A low acid food, like tomatoes, requires more heat to destroy microorganisms that can grow into botulism.

“Whether you’ve been canning all your life or you are a first-timer it’s essential to follow up-to-date and research-tested recipes. Doing this can protect you and your family from getting sick,” Samples said.

For more information about safe canning check out our website at <https://phd5.idaho.gov/Docs/Food%20Protection/Ins-Outs-of-canning.pdf>

More information from the University of Idaho http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/foodsafety/docs/Food_Preservation.pdf

For other health concerns, please visit phd5.idaho.gov or call the Public Health Hotline 866-450-3594.