

## UNH Cooperative Extension Info Line Question of the Week

### Food Safety



**Q:** We left a casement window open in the basement during the recent cold snap, and I found some of my home-canned foods had partially frozen. Are they safe to eat?

**A:** Freezing alone doesn't cause food spoilage, though it may change the texture of the food, making it less palatable. Your frozen home-canned food is safe to eat as long as the jar remains sealed. As food freezes, it expands and puts pressure on the lid and jar. An unsealed lid or a cracked jar may allow mold and bacteria to enter and contaminate the food, causing it to spoil. Before using canned food that has frozen, examine the lid for a proper vacuum seal. Press the middle of the lid with your finger. If the lid springs up when you release your finger, the lid isn't properly sealed. Don't taste food from a jar with an unsealed lid, or from a cracked or broken jar. If the lid is sealed and the jar has no cracks, place the frozen food in the refrigerator to thaw and cook it immediately.

To prevent accidental freezing during a long power outage, wrap jars in newspapers, place in heavy cartons, and cover with blankets. Remember the rule of thumb for food safety: When in doubt, throw it out.

**Got questions?** UNH Cooperative Extension Education Center's Info Line offers practical help finding answers for your lawn and garden questions. Call toll free at 1-877-398-4769, M-F, 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., or e-mail us at [answers@unh.edu](mailto:answers@unh.edu).