



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Canned foods can be a healthy and lasting choice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Do you want to create meals that are quick, healthy and convenient? Then canned foods are your best bet. There are several reasons why canned foods should be a large part of everyone's pantry.

One of the best reasons to use commercially canned foods is that they can provide a healthy addition to one's diet. Most canned foods, such as the fruits and vegetables, are fat free, high in fiber and rich in nutrients. This can allow you to receive the recommended five total daily servings of fruits and vegetables that help reduce the risk of cancer and certain other diseases. Also, as a result of consumer requests, many food manufacturers have reduced the amount of sodium in the canned foods and started canning products without salt.

"Canned beans are an excellent canned food to use because they are high in fiber and rich in protein. They can add flavor and color to almost any dish," states Miriam Gaines, director of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit of the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Another reason to utilize canned foods is that they can provide you many meals to come. According to the Canned Food Alliance, most canned foods have a shelf life of about two years. This means if canned foods are stored at the right temperature, 75 degrees Fahrenheit or below, you can have canned foods in your pantry for two years without worrying about their safety or nutritional value becoming diminished.

This shelf life can be attributed to the canning process itself. Canning is a high heat process that allows the food to become commercially sterile. Because of this high heat process, food safety is not a concern and canned goods can remain on your shelf for long periods of time.

About 1,500 food items come in commercially canned goods, giving the consumer a variety of products to choose from in creating dishes or spicing up old favorites. From red beans to red wine vinegar, many ethnic and basic foods can be found in canned goods. And because canned foods are already precooked they can help make quick meals.

For more health information, visit the Alabama Department of Public Health web site at www.adph.org.

SIDEBAR

A University of Massachusetts Nutrition Study gives these tips for cooking with canned goods:

- Avoid overcooking canned goods because they are already precooked and naturally preserved in cans.
- Store canned foods wisely by keeping them in a cool, dry place at about 75 degrees Fahrenheit or below.
- Use the products immediately after opening them to preserve flavor and value.

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