

Bad Bugs and Where to Find Them

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE REALLY BAD

Bacteria and other microorganisms (such as parasites and viruses) are everywhere. They're in the soil and water, they float through the air, they're on plants and are in and around animals, and they're even on people.

Some microorganisms are beneficial, such as bacterial cultures used in fermenting. Others, such as molds, can cause food spoilage, but not necessarily make you sick. And there are those that can definitely make you sick (or worse).

There are currently 31 pathogenic microorganisms that are known to cause foodborne illness. The top five are Norovirus, Salmonella, Clostridium perfringens, Campylobacter, and Staphylococcus. Other illness-causing pathogens include E. coli, Listeria, Shigella, Hepatitis A – and that bacteria we're most concerned about when home canning: Clostridium botulinum.

Because these “bugs” are everywhere, it's important to follow safe food handling procedures, and when preserving food, to choose recipes from reputable resources and follow the instructions carefully.

For further information, please see our food safety and preserving publications, available for free on our website https://ucanr.edu/sites/mfp_of_cs/Food_Safety/. You can also access the site by scanning this QR code with your smartphone or tablet.



Detailed information on pathogens and toxins can be found in the downloadable Bad Bug Book at [https://www.fda.gov/files/food/published/Bad-Bug-Book-2nd-Edition-\(PDF\).pdf](https://www.fda.gov/files/food/published/Bad-Bug-Book-2nd-Edition-(PDF).pdf).

For further information on preserving visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP) at <https://nchfp.uga.edu> or contact your local Cooperative Extension office.

Brought to you by the UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County
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