

HEADSPACE

Headspace is the empty space between the food in a jar and its lid. It is important to maintain proper headspace because it can affect safety as well as quality of the food.

Issue too little: if adequate headspace is not allowed, food can expand enough during processing to be squeezed out between the jar and lid. The appearance of a sealed lid in these jars may actually be the result of sticky or dried food holding the lid in place. Also, when very acid foods remain in contact with the underside of the lid, pinholing or corrosion might result.

Issue too much: if there is excess headspace excess air (oxygen) may be in the jar. This can lead to excessive darkening during storage. It can also lead to a reduced vacuum level in the jar, which means a weaker seal. It is at least a waste of jar space and contributes to a loss of quality.

Recommended headspace allowances are as follows:

- ✓ ¼ inch for jams and jellies
- ✓ ¼ inch for apple juice, grape juice and fruit purees
- ✓ ½ inch for other fruit products, pickles, and tomatoes and tomato juice processed in a water bath canner
- ✓ 1 inch for USDA fruit pie fillings with Clear Jel®; ½ inch for green tomato pie filling
- ✓ 1 inch for vegetables processed in a pressure canner (except: 1, 1 ¼ to 1½ inches for quart jars of starchy beans and peas; see individual directions)
- ✓ 1 inch for meats including game processed in a pressure canner
- ✓ 1 inch for other products processed in a pressure canner
- ✓ 1 ¼ inches for poultry processed in a pressure canner

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