

MEDICAL MINUTE

CANNED FOOD



There seems to be a general belief that canned fruit, vegetables, and fish are unhealthy *and* taste terrible. Rude—and also not true.

OK, fine, *some* of them are questionable.

Sardines? Hard pass. Garbanzo beans? Nope, never. And Spaghetti-o's? Gag. But that might

be a **me** problem, not a canned-food problem.

The truth is, canned foods are handy, affordable, and surprisingly nutritious—and they may actually be *fresher* than what's lounging around in the produce section at Publix. How is that possible, you ask, while clutching a tomato? Produce headed for a can is usually picked and preserved within hours of peak ripeness. Meanwhile, that tomato you're eyeing may have traveled more than you did last year and was picked before it even knew what ripe felt like—just so it would survive the journey and still look decent under fluorescent lights.

Yes, the canning process does slightly reduce some water-soluble vitamins like B and C. But for most vitamins and minerals, canning actually helps *lock them in*, meaning the nutritional value stays stable for the entire shelf life of the can. And some foods—like tomatoes, carrots, and pumpkin—become antioxidant overachievers once canned, delivering an even stronger nutritional punch. Pumpkin pie anyone? Yes, please! One caveat: canned foods can come with extra salt or sugar. But a quick drain and rinse of canned vegetables can significantly cut down the sodium—no fancy equipment required.

Bottom line? Canned foods are hard to beat when it comes to convenience, shelf life, price, accessibility, and versatility. Whether you're cracking open a can for a solo meal or using it as the backbone of a "homemade-from-a-can" masterpiece, canned food can absolutely be delicious. And it will never judge you for eating it straight out of the can, saving on dishwashing. Win Win!