

## SHORT-TERM STORAGE METHODS FOR DRY FOODS

### (Storage for less than 5 years)

Short-term storage methods for dry foods (10% or less moisture) limit oxygen exposure and protect from moisture and insects. There are three kinds of containers that can be used:

1. Glass canning jars
2. PETE bottles
3. HDPE plastic buckets

All three kinds of containers should be stored in a cool, dry and dark environment for the longest shelf life.

**Glass canning jars** are filled with dry food and placed in a warm oven for a specified time according to the size. New, clean canning lids and rings are screwed onto the hot jars and they are allowed to cool. The lid seals to the hot jar, thus keeping out insects and additional air and moisture. This method can be used to store foods not recommended for dry packing (packing with oxygen absorbing packets) such as brown rice, seeds, nuts, cocoa powder and dried fruit. If there is concern for heating the food to be stored, lids can be heated in hot water, dried and placed on a room temperature jar and the ring screwed on.

Clean, dry **plastic PETE (polyethylene terephthalate) bottles** are filled with dry food, an oxygen absorbing packet is added, the edge wiped clean and the lid screwed on tightly and taped down with masking or packing tape. PETE bottles that have previously held liquids are the best to use because they have the correct kind of lid. The inside of the lid must feel rubbery and not hard so that an airtight seal can be obtained. PETE bottles can be identified by the embossed recycling symbol on the bottom of the bottle. There will be a "1" inside a triangle and either "PET" or "PETE" next to it. PETE is virtually oxygen impermeable and will protect from moisture and insects. PETE bottles should be stored away from light and protected from rodents. They can often be stored in a small amount of space and are convenient to keep in the pantry or cupboard because the contents can be easily seen.

**Food grade HDPE plastic buckets** are a convenient way to store dry food in its original wrapping and to store dry food that is used often. The atmosphere of the bucket does not need to be changed for short-term storage.

Foods that are used within 5 years can be kept in their original packaging and stored in HDPE buckets with an airtight lid. Storing this way affords additional protection to the food, makes it easier to assess how much is in the bucket and allows for easier removal of usable amounts. If insect infestation from the purchase source is a possible problem, packages can be placed inside additional zipper lock bags to keep possible insects from spreading to all the packages in the bucket. Examples of kinds of food that can be stored this way are pastas, beans, flour and sugars in 1 to 5 pound packages.

Bulk foods that are used often can also be stored in HDPE buckets without special treatment. A good gasketed lid or gamma seal lid (a 2-piece lid with a removable inner portion) is advisable, though. Examples of kinds of food that can be stored this way are flour, powdered milk, oatmeal and other foods that are used at least once a week.