

# Facts About Dented Cans in Your Emergency Kit

## 1. Why Dented Cans Need Careful Inspection

A compromised can seal eliminates the airtight barrier that keeps bacteria out, and the biggest risk is *Clostridium botulinum*, which produces a colorless, odorless, tasteless toxin that can be fatal. Physical inspection is your only reliable checkpoint, because "it smells fine" is not a safety clearance.



## 2. Dents That Are Usually Safe to Keep

Minor, shallow dents in the body of a can, away from seams and rims, with no sharp ridges, rust, bulging, or hollow sound when tapped, generally don't compromise the seal. If the metal feels firm and the seam looks clean, the can is likely still structurally sound.



## 3. Dents That Should Be Dumped

Dents on seams, rims, or the bottom of a can, deep creases with sharp ridges, rust, bulging, swelling, or any can that spurts liquid or fizzes when opened are all non-negotiable discard situations. No amount of utility justifies the risk of botulism, which can appear within 12 to 36 hours of exposure.



## 4. Expiration Dates and Dented Cans

Expiration dates and dent damage are separate concerns that interact when both are present. An intact can past its best-by date may still be safe, but a seam-dented can is a problem regardless of date. When a can is both old and structurally damaged, the combined risk tips the decision firmly toward discarding.



## 5. How to Store Cans Properly

Keep cans off the floor, away from moisture and heat fluctuations, and stacked carefully on wire shelving. Rotate stock by hand and check grab-and-go bags at every periodic review; shifting and temperature swings during transport accelerate damage.



## 6. Know What You've Got

Regular inspection habits, checking seams, watching for swelling, and rotating stock consistently, keep an emergency supply trustworthy. A well-maintained kit isn't just about quantity; it's about knowing every item is ready when it actually matters.

