

## Care Of Pressure Cooker Gaskets

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### How Do I Care For New Gaskets?



Most new gaskets are made of silicon or other polymers and not rubber. This makes for a better seal, the material does not retain food odors and is less subject to becoming cracked and brittle with age like rubber products. There is no need to do anything special to a new gasket other than give it a quick wash. The old wives tales about soaking in water are a fallacy, neither silicon or rubber absorbs water so this does nothing to improve the gasket. Don't pull or stretch the gasket because you'll weaken it and it could tear

or not seat properly in the lid.

### How Do I Clean The Gasket?

The gasket must be removed from the lid after every use and washed in warm soapy water. While cleaning the gasket always examine it closely for any signs of wear, cracking or tears. Do not put the gasket in a dishwasher. Do not use harsh cleaners or bleach. Dry with a towel and store it loose in the bottom of the cooker until ready to cook.

Some gaskets have a right side and a wrong side and must be installed with the right side up. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions where available. Look for any kind of printing on your gasket. Install the gasket in the lid so the words are facing up towards you when you look down at the lid. This may make it easier to open and close the lid.

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#### Miss Vickie Says:

If you use your pressure cooker frequently then its a good idea to keep a extra gasket on hand. Gasket material will keep well, and if you have a handy spare you will not be inconvenienced with waiting for a new one to arrive. Always keep a record of the address of where you can purchase replacement parts for your pressure cooker.

### When Should I Replace The Gasket?

Gaskets vary in their life-expectancy. This in part depends on the gasket material, the frequency of use, the care, and even the foods cooked. See your owner's manual, or use the [Parts Listing](#) page to find replacement parts.

Some pressure cooker users may be lucky in having their gasket last many years, while others may have to replace their's in less than a year. The rubber, silicon or plastic ring that is placed around the lid to seal the cooker is subject to the usual wear and tear of frequent use, and abuse caused by the user.

Heat and misuse, not age, will eventually weaken the gasket material. Sometimes there is no advance warning when a gasket fails. The first indication you may notice is steam escaping from a certain spots beneath the lid. Depressurize the pot and carefully remove the lid. Look at the gasket at the point where you noticed the escaping steam and you will find a tear or crack in the gasket. Sometimes this is a very tiny tear, but it is enough to prevent the cooker from coming to pressure.

Gaskets that feel tacky or sticky should be replaced. If the gasket is either too shrunken to fit to the lid, or too stretched to lie smoothly, then it must be replaced. An old-fashioned thumbnail test is a good way to check - if pressure with thumbnail leaves a permanent dent in rubber, it is too brittle and should be replaced.

Replace the gasket if it becomes too hard, cracked, or too soft and sticky to make a good fit. If the cooker will not come to pressure it's a good indication that the seal is bad. If there is steam leaking out from round the lid the seal needs to be replaced. If it is difficult to settle the gasket in the lid, or if the lid is hard to open and close its probably a good time to replace the gasket. It's a good idea to replace all the soft sealing part at the same time and some will manufacturers package replacement gaskets with other parts as a set with the blow-out plug.

#### Miss Vickie Says:

**Help! My gasket has melted and stuck to the metal.**

This may happen to old gaskets that needed to be replaced, or when they have been exposure to prolonged or too high a heat source. If the gasket is stuck to the lid, soak the gasket in very hot water, vinegar and liquid dish soap, then use a plastic scouring pad to loosen and remove as much of it as possible.

If the gasket has melted or bonded to the metal, try a spray of WD-40 or products like "Goo-Gone", Gum Out" or similar solvents (found in the housewares and automotive sections of stores like Walmart). Take care to read the instructions and do not use these products on any surfaces that might be harmed, not coated finishes. Do not use abrasives, sandpaper, scrapers or anything that may damage the metal sealing surfaces of the pressure cooker or the lid.

## Looking For A New Gasket?

### I Can't Locate A Replacement, What Can I Do?

If you have the misfortune of owning an orphan pressure cooker/canner, or otherwise find that you can no longer obtain parts your pressure cooker is useless.

- **Never** attempt to resurrect a pressure pot by attempting use any type of homemade gasket.
- **Never** try to substitute or use a gasket intended for a different make or model. All too often I get mail from readers who thought to save money by buying an off brand only to find that there are no parts available in the US markets.

If you try to use any alternate gasket you risk serious burns. Don't place yourself, or anyone else in your family at risk by attempting to use any sealing gasket or part that is not recommended by the manufacturer. Unfortunately the only thing you can do is buy a new cooker/canner from a well known company with a proven track record and good customer support. Find out what to look for in [choosing](#) a new pressure cooker and see what brand I recommend.

### How Can I Prolong The Life Of My Gasket?



Always wash the gasket after every use. Keep the gasket clean and dry between use.

Wipe the rim of the pot with a clean, damp cloth to remove any grains of salt or other spices, fats, oils or other bits of food and drips before locking the lid in place. This will prevent the gasket from sticking to the food and tearing when you try to open the lid. Always use sufficient water or other cooking liquids. If you let your cooker run dry the heat increases and heat shortens the life of the gasket material.

Do not twist, knot, fold or stretch the gasket and don't let the kids (or the puppy, yes that happens too) play with the gasket. If your rubber or silicone gasket is old, or if it becomes dry and brittle, a 10-15 minute soak in hot water immediately before using may help. This is only a temporary fix, but it may help to extend the life of your old gasket until you can get a replacement.

### How Do I Store The Gasket?



During normal and regular use just store the clean and dry gasket inside the lid which should be inverted and place atop the base. Do not store the cooker with the lid closed because odors may build up and the gasket may become compressed.

Spare gaskets can be stored in their original plastic package, or use a resealable plastic bag if it was shipped to you without one. In humid climates, add a spoon of baking soda to control moisture and prevent odors.

If you must store your pressure cooker for a long time, put it in a packing box and keep it in a cool dry place. Excessive or prolonged heat (like in a garage or outdoor shed) will cause the gasket and other soft parts to deteriorate faster. Place the inverted lid and gasket on top of the cooker and sprinkle with a spoonful of baking soda. Add another spoon of baking soda on the inside of the pot to absorb moisture and odors. Wash everything in warm soapy water before using again.

#### Miss Vickie Says:

✓ Looking for a new gasket? See the [Replacement Parts](#) Page and search for your brand.

### To Oil Or Not To Oil?

Many pressure cooker users still have the outdated idea that using mineral or vegetable oil will prolong the life of a gasket. It doesn't really, but it does make it easier for a failing gasket to slide over the metal rim of the cooker so the lid can be closed and it will still pressurize. This is a stopgap measure that will work for a few times until you can get a replacement. For the same reason, some manufacturers suggest coating their gaskets with vegetable oil before use; to minimize the chance of tearing due to friction against the metal as you rotate the pressure lid into position. Check your cooker's instructions if there is doubt about the use of oil on the gasket.

Remember oils will get much hotter than water, and a gasket that is designed to work well at 250°F, may be affected by hot oil and have a shorter useful life than otherwise, so use sparingly. Cooking oils also retain strong odors like onions, garlic and spices. Just like other foods, when it turns rancid, cooking oil will develop an objectionable smell. After exposure to heat, cooking oils can turn into a sticky shellac-like residue that may cause the gasket to adhere to metal and then tear when the lid is turned. Oils can also create an impossible to remove, dark varnish-like coating that

attracts dust and dirt.

The gaskets found on today's modern pressure cookers are usually made of silicon or plastic, a much more slippery material than rubber, and that allows them to easily glide over the metal rim of the cooker, making it very easy to close the lid. Silicon or plastic gaskets do not absorb or require oil. Gaskets may even "pre-lubricated" and added oils may damage that property.

If your rubber or silicone gasket is getting too soft or if it feels spongy and its making the pressure cooker lid hard to turn when closing, try a **light** film of cooking oil or petroleum jelly (Vaseline - just like you the stuff you put on chapped lips) along the rim of the cooker -- NOT on the gasket itself and not on the inside. Vaseline is recommended by the manufacturer, All-American because it will not absorb odors and will not turn into a sticky varnish like cooking oils. This is only another temporary fix, but it may help to extend the life of your old gasket until you get a replacement.

### Related Articles

Try the [Troubleshooting Chart](#) to identify problems and find solutions.

Find out how to [clean the spring valve assembly](#) on a modern pressure cooker.

Find out how to clean and care for the [pressure cooker lid](#).

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Find out how to clean and care for the [pressure cooker valves](#).

Find out how to clean and care for the [gasket](#).

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