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# homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

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## QUESTION BOX

How care for vacuum cleaner?  
How glaze meat for freezing?  
Peanut butter in salad?

ANSWERS FROM home economists and meat specialists of U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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The mail today brings questions from homemakers on three widely different subjects: home equipment....meat freezing....and peanut butter. Let's start right off with a letter from a homemaker who recently had trouble finding a repair man to fix her vacuum cleaner. She goes on to say, "Now that the cleaner is repaired, what can I do to keep it in good condition? I've never paid much attention to it up to now--I just use it, empty it, and put it away every time I clean. Does a vaccuum cleaner need special care, such as oiling?"

Since this writer doesn't say what type of vacuum cleaner she has, the home equipment specialists can't give a specific answer as to her particular cleaner. But they do say that for general care of either a cylinder type or an upright cleaner, it's well to know how the cleaner works in order to get the best use and the longest wear.

If you still have the directions that came with your cleaner, or if you can get a copy from your dealer or the manufacturer, you'll probably find that these directions tell how to care for the cleaner, including whether or not to oil it. Some cleaners don't have to be oiled....others should be oiled by a service man... and still others you can oil at home, if you know how to proceed.

To keep your vacuum in good condition, here are a few general tips: First, keep the dirt container emptied and clean. Empty the bag by shaking it gently upside down into a paper sack. Every 2 or 3 weeks, turn the bag inside out and brush it carefully, but thoroughly, using a stiff brush. Never wash the bag. If



your cleaner uses paper dirt containers, change them often.

Keep the brushes on your cleaner free from hair and threads. If the brush is the kind that turns round inside the nozzle, make sure the bristles are long enough to sweep the rug. These bristles eventually wear down, and then you need to lower the brush, or the roll on which it operates. Here's how to tell if the bristles are low enough to work efficiently: Lay a cardboard across the nozzle... the bristles should come just past the edge of the card, about  $1/32$  of an inch.

Follow the manufacturer's advice on lowering the brushes. Usually you have to adjust a pin or screw or lever at each end of the brush roll. You can lower most brushes two to five times before they have to be replaced.

If your cleaner has a rotating roll with a rubber belt, the manufacturer's directions probably recommend taking this belt off the fan shaft each time you put the cleaner away. This helps keep the elasticity of the belt. Sharp objects such as pins and hairpins can injure the belt and the fan, so pick them up by hand rather than running the cleaner over them.

Take good care of the cord on your vacuum--disconnect it by holding the plug, instead of yanking on the cord. And always connect it to a wall outlet, not a light socket. Be sure the cleaner's switched off when you connect or disconnect the cord. Never step on the cord, or run the cleaner over it. If it gets frayed or worn, it's a fire hazard--repair it promptly. When you put the cleaner away, wind the cord loosely around the clips that hold it, and straighten out kinks or twisted places.

It's handy to keep your cleaner attachments in a basket or bag. Store the attachments and the cleaner in a cool dry place. To keep the hose from bending sharply, hang it over two or more round pegs.

Well, so much for the care of vacuum cleaners. Now for our letter about meat. "I've heard that, instead of wrapping meat for storage in the freezer





locker, I can glaze it. Do you recommend glazing? How is it done?"

The freezing specialists say you can glaze meat and other foods safely for freezer locker storage. The glazing process puts a coating of ice around the frozen meat, and this coating acts as a wrapper. The ice will evaporate in the freezer, so you may have to renew it every 2 or 3 months if you keep the meat over a long period of time. The glaze may also crack or chip off if you handle it roughly, but you can protect it by wrapping the glazed meat in paper.

To glaze meat, freeze it first in portions of the size you prefer. Then dip it briefly into a pail of clean water that's chilled to just above the freezing point. The zero temperature of the meat will set a thin film of ice all over the outside. Repeat the dipping process every few minutes until you have the desired thickness of glaze.

You can glaze fruits and vegetables the same way as meat. First freeze them in a smooth-lipped can or carton....then warm just enough to slip the food from the container. Re-freeze the food and glaze it by dipping in water.

And now for our last letter in today's mail. This homemaker writes, "My family likes the flavor of peanut butter, but I'm wondering if there isn't some way to use it besides putting it in sandwiches, cookies, and cakes. Can you suggest other ways to serve peanut butter?"

The food specialists say peanut butter gives good flavor to soups, stuffings, and sauces for creamed and scalloped dishes, and also to omelets and salads. Here's one of their suggestions: a tasty salad that also gives an impressive line-up of food values, and from foods that, luckily, are very plentiful right now.

It's an egg and peanut butter salad, served on shredded cabbage. Here's how to make it: Hard cook the eggs..., then cut them in half, and mash the yolks with peanut butter and mayonnaise, plus a little salt and lemon juice, and a dash of tabasco sauce. Stuff the egg whites with this mixture, and serve on a bed of shredded cabbage with either French or mayonnaise dressing.

