

Clear with little sediment (meat canned raw-pack will have more sediment than a precooked pack)

Layer of fat at top not more than ½ to 1 inch

Pack

Pieces of uniform size, appropriate to serve

Packed to within ½ to 1 inch from top of jar

Full pack, but not too tight to prevent good heat penetration in processing

Liquid preferably covers meat

Container

Clean, standard jar

Vacuum sealed

Free from cracks, rust or other damage

Properly labeled

Common problem/probable reason

Fat layer too thick

Failure to remove enough fat

Evaluating pickles

See [Pickles and Relishes: Problems and Solutions, SP 50-744](#)

Judging score cards

[Pickles and Relishes Check Sheet, 512-03](#)

Appearance

Fruit or cucumber

Uniform in size, color, and shape

Plump, not shriveled or soft

Natural color characteristic of the kind of pickle

No artificial color

Liquid

Clear

Pack

Full without crowding

Sufficient liquid to cover food

Liquid to ½ inch from top of jar

Container

Clean, standard jar

Vacuum sealed

Free from cracks, rusts, or other damage

Properly labeled

Common problems/probable reasons

Shriveling

Too strong brining solution

Soft or slippery

Brine or vinegar too weak

Pickles not kept covered with liquid

Scum not removed daily during brining

Jars not sealed airtight

Pickles stored in warm area

Revised by Elaine Schrupf, Extension 4-H youth development specialist; original information prepared by Carolyn Raab, Extension foods and nutrition specialist, and Barbara Sawyer, former Extension 4-H youth development specialist; all of Oregon State University.

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