Feifei
Hello and welcome to The English We Speak. I'm Feifei.

Neil
And hello, I'm Neil. Phwa! What is that smell?

Feifei
Rob's homemade cooking.

Neil
Rob cooks?!

Feifei
Yes, he does. But it doesn't taste very nice.

Neil
So why do you have to eat it – and why do have to make the studio stink of it?

Feifei
Well, I don't want to offend him. He keeps giving me his homemade food and asking me for some honest feedback. And I just tell him 'it's interesting, unique, special'.

Neil
Oh Feifei, you need to keep a lid on it.

Feifei
Well, if you think that'll stop the smell, I will.

Neil
That's not what I meant, although it's a good idea. If you 'keep a lid on something' it means to keep something under control – to stop the situation getting worse.

Feifei
OK, Neil!

Examples
Here are some examples of this phrase in action.

Examples
I couldn't keep a lid on my feelings about the rota so I shouted at the boss!
With rising food prices, it's hard to keep a lid on how much I spend at the supermarket.

**Feifei**
This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English and we're looking at the phrase 'to keep a lid on something' which means to keep something under control and to stop the situation from getting worse. But this isn't the only meaning, is it?

**Neil**
No. If you keep a lid on something, it can also mean you keep something secret. Like this…

**Example**
I've heard that Daisy is expecting a baby – but keep a lid on it until it's official!

**Feifei**
OK Neil, you're telling me to keep a lid on things by telling Rob to stop giving me his homemade food?

**Neil**
Yes – unless his cooking is amazing.

**Feifei**
It's not.

**Neil**
Right, well tell him you're on a diet or you've become vegan and that should stop him. And I will keep your little lie a secret.

**Feifei**
You mean, you'll keep a lid on it?

**Neil**
Exactly. But in the meantime, could you actually keep a lid on that box of food please? It stinks!

**Feifei**
OK. Right, I'm off to speak to Rob. Bye.

**Neil**
Remember to be firm and say what you mean.

**Rob**
Hi, Neil. Feifei doesn't seem to want this delicious food I made. Would you like it?

**Neil**
Err... go on then. Looks lovely. Bye.