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## Do "Produce Washes" Clean Fruit Better than Water?

9:30 AM / April 7, 2010

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A growing number of produce washes sold in grocery stores claim to clean contaminants and dirt from raw produce better than water

alone. Usually made from a blend of essential oils and plant extracts, produce washes are applied directly to fruits and vegetables and rinsed under running water. But do these washes make raw produce safer than plain water does?

"For the most part, washes that use all-natural, organic ingredients won't hurt you," says Shelley Feist of the [Partnership for Food Safety Education](#). In other words, avoid washes that are detergent or chemical-based, since any residue affects the flavor of food and can actually cause stomach upset when ingested. However, while natural produce washes may be safer, it hasn't been definitively proven that they clean better than water. The [FDA](#) recommends washing all raw produce with water, using a vegetable scrub brush on firm-skinned produce like cucumbers, and drying with a paper towel.

"Peeling the skin from fruit and removing the outer layers of vegetables can help remove pesticide residues," says Joan Salge Blake of the [American Dietetic Association](#). Other precautions include minimizing contact with other kitchen surfaces to limit cross-contamination and washing your hands between handling unwashed and clean food.

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