

HELP EVERYONE FIGHT BAC!® LIKE A producepro

Reach consumers using the information in this smart guide, which outlines simple, science-based tips for reducing the risk of food poisoning at home.



IF IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!



For more information, visit fightbac.org.



6 SMART ProducePro TIPS



CHECK For Bruising or Damage

- Check that the fresh fruits and vegetables you buy are not bruised or damaged.
- When choosing pre-cut fruits and vegetables like packaged salads and sliced melons, check that the product is refrigerated or on ice.



CLEAN Hands, Surfaces and Utensils

- Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Clean all surfaces and utensils with hot water and soap, including cutting boards and knives, before and after preparing fresh fruits and vegetables.



RINSE Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

- Just before use, rinse under running water only the fruits and vegetables you plan to eat, including those with skins or rinds that are not eaten.
- Firm-skinned fruits and vegetables should be rubbed by hand or scrubbed with a clean brush while rinsing under running tap water.
- Packaged fruits and vegetables labeled “ready-to-eat,” “washed” or “triple washed” should not be washed.
- Dry fruits and vegetables with a clean cloth or paper towel.
- Do not use soap or bleach to wash fresh fruits or vegetables. These products are not intended for consumption.

Fresh Fruits and
Vegetables



SEPARATE From Contaminants

- In your shopping cart and in bags at checkout, separate fresh fruits and vegetables from household chemicals and raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs.
- In your refrigerator, keep fresh fruits and vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs.
- When preparing food, keep fresh fruits and vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs. Do not use the same cutting board or utensils without cleaning with hot water and soap before and after preparing fresh fruits and vegetables.



CHILL Cut Produce Below 40°F

- Keep your refrigerator at or below 40°F.
- Refrigerate all cut, peeled or cooked fresh fruits and vegetables within two hours of preparing.



THROW AWAY If in Doubt, Throw It Out

- Throw away any fresh fruit and vegetables that have not been refrigerated within two hours of cutting, peeling or cooking.
- Remove and throw away bruised or damaged portions of fruits and vegetables when preparing to cook them or before eating them raw.
- Throw away any fruit or vegetables that have touched raw meat, poultry, seafood or eggs.
- If in doubt, throw it out!

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE SAFETY

- Bruising or cuts make a piece of fruit more susceptible to growth of microbes that can cause illness. But remember, you cannot see, smell or taste the microbes that can cause food poisoning.
- Bacteria grow most rapidly in the range 40°F-140°F*, doubling in number in as little as 20 minutes. This range of temperatures is often called the “Danger Zone.”

- Pathogens from unwashed hands can get into foods and drinks while people prepare or consume them. Pathogens can multiply rapidly under certain conditions and make people sick. The CDC recommends this hand-washing practice to reduce illnesses and the spread of infections to others.
- Researchers found that cleaning cutting boards and utensils will help prevent cross-contamination.

- Evidence shows that washing vegetables and fruit by running water over them is associated with reduced microbial loads.
- Researchers found that when cantaloupe and honeydew melons were scrubbed with a clean brush under running water, optimal microbial removal was achieved. It is also recommended that consumers clean and sanitize brushes to prevent possible cross-contamination.
- A panel of scientists with expertise in microbial safety of fresh produce concluded that additional washing of ready-to-eat green salads is not likely to enhance safety and may increase the potential for cross-contamination.
- Research shows that patting dry with a clean paper or cloth towel will further help reduce microbial loads.
- Researchers found that running water was just as effective as any veggie washes, vinegar solutions or detergents in getting rid of microbial loads.

- Food can become contaminated if it touches other raw foods or drippings from raw foods that contain pathogens.
- Researchers found that cleaning cutting boards and utensils will help prevent cross-contamination.

- A USDA/FDA risk assessment found that keeping a constant refrigerator temperature of 40°F or below is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of food poisoning at home.
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- Bacteria grow most rapidly in the range 40°F-140°F*, doubling in number in as little as 20 minutes. This range of temperatures is often called the “Danger Zone.”
- The bruised or damaged portions of fruits and vegetables are more susceptible to the growth of bacteria that may cause illness.
- Food can become contaminated if it touches other raw foods or drippings from raw foods that contain pathogens.
- You cannot see, smell or taste the bacteria that can cause food poisoning.