



Reducing Your Risk of Foodborne Illness from Fresh Produce

Buying Tips for Fresh Produce

- Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged.
- When selecting fresh cut produce choose only those items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- Bag fresh fruits and vegetables separately from meat products when packing them to take home.

Storage Tips for Fresh Produce

- Certain perishable fresh fruits and vegetables can be best maintained by storing in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40° F or below.
- All produce that is purchased pre-cut or peeled should be refrigerated within two hours to maintain both quality and safety.

Preparation Tips for Fresh Produce

- Many precut, bagged produce items like lettuce are pre-washed. If so, it will be stated on the packaging.
- All unpackaged fruits and vegetables should be thoroughly washed before eating.
- Begin with clean hands. Wash your hands with warm water and soap before and after preparing fresh produce.
- Cut away damaged/bruised areas before preparing or eating. Produce that looks rotten should be discarded.
- Even if you plan to peel the produce before eating, it's still important to wash it first.
- Washing fruits and vegetables with soap or detergent or using commercial produce washes is not recommended.
- Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush.
- Drying produce with a clean cloth towel or paper towel may further reduce bacteria that may be present.

Separate for Safety

Keep fruits and vegetables that will be eaten raw separate from other foods such as raw meat, poultry or seafood - and from kitchen utensils used for those products. In addition, be sure to wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils and counter tops with hot water and soap between the preparation of raw meat and the preparation of produce.

For added protection, kitchen sanitizers can be used on cutting boards and counter tops periodically. Try a solution of one teaspoon of chlorine bleach to one quart of water.

