





Be a PRO when it comes to produce!


As you enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables at home, follow these safe handling tips to help protect yourself and your family from food poisoning. It is important to be consistent in practicing safe food handling at home.

 **CHECK** fresh produce for signs of cuts or bruising, where harmful bacteria can breed


- 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.

 **RINSE** fresh fruits and veggies just before eating


- 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.

 **CHILL** cut fresh produce within two hours to prevent bacteria growth


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

 **CLEAN** hands, surfaces and utensils to prevent contamination

- 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.

 **SEPARATE** produce from raw meat, seafood, poultry, eggs and household chemicals

- 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.

 **THROW AWAY** bruised, damaged or potentially cross-contaminated produce

- 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!

Source: Partnership for Food Safety Education, www.fightbac.org

www.commonhealth.virginia.gov