

Summer Produce

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO KEEP FRUITS AND VEGETABLES SAFE!



Fruits and vegetables are an important part of every diet. However, harmful bacteria may contaminate fruits and vegetables, which can lead to food poisoning, even if the food is labeled organic. As you enjoy raw produce and fresh-squeezed fruit and vegetable juices, follow these safe handling tips to help protect yourself and your family.

BUYING

When possible, buy in-season produce. Summer is the perfect time to enjoy in-season fruits (berries, peaches and watermelon) and vegetables (corn, cucumbers and squash).

- ✓ Buy only the amount of produce you will use within one week.
- ✓ Avoid produce with mold, bruises or cuts.
- ✓ Buy loose produce rather than packaged for better control of your selection.
- ✓ If you go to a farmers' market, get an early start and avoid produce that has been sitting out for hours.
- ✓ Not satisfied with your grocer's selection? Ask a produce manager if more options are available.



STORING

Some items like bananas and potatoes do not require refrigeration. Produce that needs refrigeration should be stored below 40°F within two hours of purchase.

- ✓ If peeling or cutting produce, refrigerate within two hours.
- ✓ Throw away leftover, cut produce that has been sitting at room temperature for more than two hours, or one hour if in weather above 90°F.
- ✓ Discard cooked vegetables after three to four days.

PREPARING

Make it a habit to wash all fruits and vegetables with cool tap water before eating and dry with a clean cloth or paper towel to eliminate bacteria.



- ✓ Wash produce before you peel to make sure dirt and bacteria aren't transferred from the knife to your fruits or vegetables.
- ✓ Using soap or produce wash is not necessary; for firm produce such as melons or cucumbers, scrub with a clean produce brush.
- ✓ Cut away damaged or bruised areas before preparing or eating. Remove outer leaves of lettuce.
- ✓ Use two separate cutting boards to avoid cross-contamination: one for raw meats and one for fruits, vegetables and other ready-to-eat foods. Color-coded cutting boards can help you remember which is which.
- ✓ Cook raw sprouts (alfalfa, clover, etc.) to significantly reduce the risk of food poisoning.

