



Washing Produce

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Eating a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables is healthy and adds color, texture and flavor to our diet. Recent illnesses have been traced to eating raw fruits and vegetables containing harmful disease-causing microorganisms. Thorough washing of all fruits and vegetables and everything they come into contact with is essential to prevent foodborne illness.

Steps to preparing fruits and vegetables.

1. Wash your hands with hot soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling fresh fruits and vegetables. Dry with disposable towel.
2. Clean the sink and cutting boards with hot soapy water before and after washing and preparing fresh produce. For additional safety, wash then sanitize sinks, food preparation areas, cutting boards, and utensils such as knives using one of the following methods:
 - Pour boiling water over clean surface for 20 seconds.
 - Rinse clean surface with a solution of 1 teaspoon chlorine bleach in a quart (4 cups) cold water.
3. Wash ALL fresh fruits and vegetables, including organically grown, farmer's market, and homegrown produce.
 - Place plastic cutting boards and utensils in dishwasher and run using normal cleaning cycle.
 - Wash produce just before cooking or eating.
 - Wash under cold running water.
 - When possible, scrub fruits and vegetables with a clean brush or hands under running water. To sanitize brush, clean in dishwasher, place in boiling water for 20 seconds, or rinse in sanitizing in a bleach solution as described above.
 - Drain or dry produce with disposable paper towels.
 - If you choose to soak your fresh produce to remove excessive soil, be sure to rinse it under running water afterwards and dry with disposable paper towel.
 - Remove hulls or cut greens after washing, not before.
 - Do not use dish detergent or antibacterial soaps to wash fresh fruits and vegetables because soap and detergent residues can remain on the product. FDA has not tested the safety of these residues.
 - Ready-to-eat, prewashed and bagged produce can be used without further washing if kept refrigerated and eaten by the "use-by" date. Precut or prewashed produce in open bags or

containers should be washed before eating.

4. Refrigerate all leftovers. Once produce has been cut, it should either be consumed within two hours or stored in clean containers in the refrigerator.

References

Portions adapted from Safe-Handling of Fruits and Vegetables, University of California-Davis.

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