



Holiday Cooking Staying Healthy... Staying Safe



Fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet. Your local markets carry an amazing variety of fresh fruits and vegetables that are both nutritious and delicious.

The Holiday Season is a great time to celebrate with fruits and vegetables. Stay healthy and save money by buying fruits and vegetables that are in season. California is the greatest producer of agriculture products in the US. Fresno, Monterrey, Salinas, San Benito, and Imperial counties are the largest producers of fruits and vegetables.

Avoiding Foodborne Risk is Easy

It's important to handle fresh produce safely in order to reduce the risks of foodborne illness. Fresh produce may become contaminated with bacteria from the soil or water where it was grown. It may also become contaminated after harvest; such as during preparation or storage. Eating contaminated produce can lead to foodborne illness, which can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections. Protect yourself and your family by following the tips included in this flyer.



Buying Tips for Fresh Produce

- + **Buy produce** that is **not bruised or damaged**.
- + When selecting **fresh cut produce** such as a half a watermelon or bagged mixed salad greens choose items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- + **Bag fresh fruits and vegetables separately** from meat, poultry and seafood products when packing them to take home from the market.

Storage Tips for Fresh Produce

Proper storage of fresh produce can affect both quality and safety.

- + **Perishable fresh fruits and vegetables** (like strawberries, lettuce, herbs, and mushrooms) can maintain their quality best by storing in a refrigerator at a temperature of **40° F** or below. Ask your grocer if you are not sure about the best way to store your produce.
- + **Keep purchased pre-cut or peeled produce** in the refrigerator to maintain quality and safety.



Keep your refrigerator set at 40° F or below. Use a fridge thermometer to check!

Sources: U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/prodsafe.html>

Partnership for Food Safety and Education <http://www.fightbac.org>

Harvest of the Month <http://www.harvestofthemonth.com/>



Preparation Tips for Fresh Produce



Begin with clean hands. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap before and after preparing fresh produce.

- **Cut away any damaged or bruised areas** on fresh fruits and vegetables before preparing and/or eating. Produce that looks rotten should be discarded.
- All produce should be **thoroughly washed before eating**. This includes produce that is grown at home or purchased from a grocery store or farmer's market. Wash fruits and vegetables under running water just before eating, cutting or cooking.
- **Even if you plan to peel** the produce before eating, it is still important to wash it first.
- Washing fruits and vegetables with soap, detergent or commercial produce washes is not recommended.
- **Scrub firm produce**, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush.
- **Dry produce** with a clean cloth towel or paper towel to further reduce bacteria.

What about Pre-washed produce?

- ✚ Many precut, bagged produce items will state that they are pre-washed on the packaging. These items can be used without further washing.
- ✚ Precut, pre-washed produce in open bags should be washed before using.

Health Risk with Raw Sprouts

Raw sprouts that are served on salads, wraps, and sandwiches may contain bacteria that can cause foodborne illness. Rinsing sprouts first will **not** remove bacteria.

Caution: To reduce the risk of illness, DO NOT EAT RAW SPROUTS. All sprouts should be cooked thoroughly before eating.

Separate for Safety

- ✚ **Separate fruits and vegetables from other foods** such as raw meat, poultry or seafood and from kitchen utensils used for these foods.

Other Safety Tips

- ✚ **Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils and counter tops** with hot soapy water before using to prepare produce that will not be cooked.
- ✚ If you **use plastic or other non-porous cutting boards**, run them through the dishwasher after use.

Have a Safe, Active, and Joyful Season



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