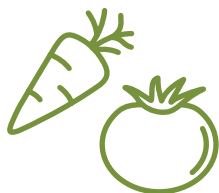


TIPS FOR FRESH PRODUCE SAFETY



One in six Americans will get sick from food poisoning every year. The food industry is responsible for producing safe food, and government agencies are responsible for setting food safety standards, conducting inspections, and monitoring food products, including imports. The following suggestions were developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help prevent foodborne illness from fresh produce:

BUYING TIPS

- Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged.
- When selecting fresh cut produce, such as a half a watermelon or bagged salad greens, choose items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- Bag fresh fruits and vegetables separately from meat, poultry and seafood products.

STORAGE TIPS

- Store perishable fresh fruits and vegetables (like strawberries, lettuce, herbs, and mushrooms) in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40°F (4.4°C) or below.
- Refrigerate all produce that is purchased precut or peeled.

PREPARATION TIPS

- 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. Produce that looks rotten should be discarded.
- All produce should be thoroughly washed before eating. Wash fruits and vegetables under running water just before eating, cutting or cooking.
- Many precut, bagged produce items like lettuce are prewashed. If the package indicates that the contents have been prewashed, you can use the produce without further washing.
- Even if you plan to peel the produce before eating, it is 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.



STEPS THAT RESTAURANTS AND RETAILERS SHOULD FOLLOW:

Restaurants and retailers should not serve or sell any recalled fresh produce and should ask their suppliers what company supplied their fresh produce.

- Wash and sanitize display cases and refrigerators where potentially contaminated products were stored.
- Wash and sanitize cutting boards, surfaces, and utensils used to prepare or serve potentially contaminated products.
- Wash hands with warm water and soap following the cleaning and sanitation process.
- Retailers, restaurants, and other food service operators who have processed and packaged any potentially contaminated products need to be concerned about cross-contamination of cutting surfaces and utensils through contact with the potentially contaminated products.
- Frequent cleaning and sanitizing of food contact surfaces and utensils used in food preparation may help to minimize the likelihood of cross-contamination.

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