

Produce Safety Tips

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 (strawberries, apples, lettuce, carrots, herbs, and mushrooms) in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40° F or below.
- Refrigerate all produce that is purchased pre-cut or peeled.
- Never store produce below raw meat, poultry or seafood.

Preparation Tips

- Begin with clean hands. Wash your hands for 10-20 seconds with warm water and soap before preparing fresh produce.

Cut away any damaged or bruised areas on fresh fruits and vegetables. Produce that looks rotten or dark should be discarded.

All produce should be thoroughly washed before eating. Wash fruits and vegetables under running water just before eating, cutting or cooking.

- Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush.
- Using soap or detergent is not recommended as it may leave a residue that could be harmful if eaten.
- Many pre-cut, bagged produce items like lettuce are pre-washed. If the package indicates that the contents have been pre-washed, 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 before cutting or peeling.
- Drying produce with a clean cloth towel or paper towel may further reduce bacteria that may be present.



Resources

- Additional produce safety information is available at :
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm114299>.
- A video on produce safety is available at:
<http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/types/fruits/tipsfreshprodsafety.html>.