

Enjoying Produce Safely

Author: Laurie Messing, MSU Extension Food Safety Educator

To enjoy safe fresh fruits and vegetables at home, follow the tips below to reduce the risk of harmful bacteria contaminating your delicious produce:

- Inspect your produce when shopping or once you arrive home, looking for bruises or visible damage. If produce does have bruising or damage, throw it away.
- Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Before and after preparing fresh fruits and vegetables, clean all surfaces and utensils, including cutting boards and knives, with hot water and soap.
- Michigan State University Extension does not recommend washing all of your produce after purchase. Just before use, rinse under running water only the fruits and vegetables you plan to eat, including those with skins or rinds that are not eaten, such as watermelon and squash.
- While rinsing under running tap water, rub firm-skinned fruits and vegetables by hand or scrub with a clean brush.
- Do not wash packaged fruits and vegetables labeled “ready-to-eat,” “washed” or “triple washed.” This could cause contamination of the clean produce.
- Dry fruits and vegetables with a clean paper towel.



FIGHT BAC! LIKE A
producepro



Source: Partnership for Food Safety Education
Fight Bac! Like a ProducePro

Enjoying Produce Safely

- Never use soap or bleach to wash fresh fruits or vegetables, since these products are not meant to be eaten.
- Refrigerate at or below 40 °F all cut or peeled fresh fruits and vegetables within two hours of preparing.
- Separate your produce from raw eggs, poultry, meat, seafood and household chemicals that may contaminate it. Raw protein foods contain harmful bacteria that can contaminate ready-to-eat foods such as produce and can lead to foodborne illness.

Reference

Partnership for Food Safety Education. (n.d.). *Fight bac! Like a producepro*. Retrieved from www.fightbac.org/storage/Refreshed_Produce_Campaign/ConsumerFact_Sheet.pdf

Find out more about Michigan Food Safety at www.msue.msu.edu/safefood.