

Food Safety

HELPFUL HINTS FROM EXPERTS

Tips For Buying, Storing And Preparing Produce

(NAPSA)—The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) would like to remind you that fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet. Like any other food, it is important to handle fresh produce safely to prevent illness. Use these tips:

Buying Tips

- When selecting fresh-cut produce, choose only those items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- Bag fresh fruits and vegetables separately from meat, poultry and seafood when packing them to take home.

Storage Tips

- Store certain perishable fresh fruits and vegetables (like strawberries, lettuce, herbs and mushrooms) in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40 degrees F. or below.
- All produce that is purchased pre-cut or peeled should be refrigerated.

Preparation and Handling Tips

- 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 before preparing or eating. If it looks rotten, it should be discarded.
- All produce should be thoroughly washed before eating.



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Wash fruits and vegetables under running water just before eating, cutting or cooking.

- Even if you plan to peel the produce before eating it, it is still important to wash it first.
- Drying produce with a clean cloth towel or paper towel may further reduce bacteria that may be present.
- Many pre-cut, bagged produce items such as lettuce are pre-washed. If so, it will be stated on the packaging. This pre-washed, bagged produce can be used without further washing.

For more information on handling fresh produce, visit the FDA Food Safety Web site at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/prodsafe.html>.