

## **SAFE HANDLING OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES**

Keeping food safe is a shared responsibility among the government, industry and consumers. By taking the simple steps outlined below, consumers will greatly reduce the risk of contamination that can occur after produce is purchased.

- Wash hands thoroughly after using the bathroom or changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food.
- Handle raw meat and poultry with care. Raw meat and poultry juices should never come in contact with foods to be eaten raw such as salad items and fruit.
- Surfaces that contact raw meat such as hands, gloves, knives, or cutting boards should never directly contact foods to be eaten raw such as salad or fruit. Gloves should be changed and hands washed after handling raw meat or poultry.
- Cutting boards, knives, plates and other utensils that come in contact with raw meat should be cleaned thoroughly before being used for another purpose.
- Always wash fresh fruits and vegetables under cool running tap water before eating. This removes any lingering dirt while also removing and reducing any bacteria or other substances.
- Certain hearty vegetables, such as potatoes and carrots, can be scrubbed with a produce brush if you plan to eat the fiber and nutrient-rich skin.
- Properly store all fresh fruits and vegetables and make sure to refrigerate fresh-cut items immediately.
- Depending on the commodity, hold produce at 45 degrees F or below and keep refrigerated until just before serving.
- When preparing fruits and vegetables, cut away bruised or damaged areas.
- Cut or cooked produce items, such as baked potatoes or vegetable casseroles, should never be left out or held at room temperature for an extended time period.

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