



You Can Keep Your Food Safe!

There have been many food recalls due to possible contamination recently and reports of food borne illnesses. The Health and Human Services and the Agriculture Departments have just released steps to address prevention of contamination of our food supply and efforts to safeguard the food Americans eat every day. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offer these tips on how we can keep our food safe:

- Buy wisely. Don't buy produce that is bruised or damaged. When buying fresh cut produce, choose only items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- Refrigerate promptly. Certain perishable fresh fruits and vegetables (e.g., strawberries, lettuce, herbs, and mushrooms) should be stored in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40°F or below. If you aren't sure whether an item should be refrigerated, ask your grocer. Produce that is purchased pre-cut or peeled should be refrigerated within two hours.
- Prepare produce with clean hands. Wash hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap before and after preparing fresh produce.
- Wash produce thoroughly. Rinse fruits and vegetables under running water. Scrub firm produce such as melons and cucumbers with a clean produce brush. All unpackaged fruits and vegetables, as well as those packaged and not marked pre-washed, should be thoroughly rinsed before eating. This includes produce grown conventionally or organically at home, or produce from a grocery store or farmer's market.
- Do not cross contaminate. Don't give bacteria the opportunity to spread from one food to another. Consider using one cutting board only for foods that will be cooked such as raw meat, and another one for ready-to-eat foods such as raw fruits and vegetables.