

Washing

- **Produce that looks mouldy or smells “off” should be discarded.**
- **Discard outer leaves** of leafy vegetables before washing.
- **All fresh produce should be thoroughly washed** under cool, running tap water, making sure all dirt has been removed before preparing or eating.
- Even if you are going to **peel the produce** before eating, it is still important to **wash it first** as bacteria on the outer surface can be transferred to the inner flesh.
- **Scrub firm whole produce** such as melons, carrots and cucumbers with a clean vegetable scrub brush.



Preparing

- **Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds** before and after preparing fresh fruit and vegetables.
- **Clean all surfaces and utensils, such as cutting boards, counter tops, knives and peelers** that come into contact with fresh produce with hot water and soap. A mild bleach solution can be applied to cutting boards and bench tops every now and again.
- **Cut away any damaged or bruised areas on fresh produce** as bacteria can grow in these areas, then clean your knife to prevent contaminating the rest of the produce.
- **The bruised or damaged portions** should be removed and thrown away.
- **Once prepared, immediately place peeled or cut produce into a separate container** or onto a clean plate.



Some people may be allergic to certain fresh fruit and vegetables, particularly nuts and seeds. Many nuts are processed on the same machinery, so traces may contaminate other varieties. If in doubt, read the label or ask the retailer.



your guide to:

FRESH FOOD SAFETY



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Food safety for fresh produce

In Australia we enjoy one of the safest supplies of fresh produce in the world. Nevertheless it is still very important for consumers to maintain good hygiene practices in the selection, storage and preparation of all fruit and vegetables.

Although raw, whole fruit and vegetables are categorised as low food safety risks,

there is an increased risk of contamination once produce is damaged, cut or processed, or when unwashed raw produce is mixed with other foods.

To reduce the risk of contamination and ensure safe handling at home we suggest following these guidelines:



In Victoria, all retailers of fresh produce are required by law to be registered with their local council, to have a Food Safety Program in place, and to train staff in food hygiene.

Buying

- **Choose fresh fruit and vegetables** that are not damaged or bruised.
- **Do not handle cut produce on display** as this can spread germs onto the surface of the products. Use serving utensils where provided.
- Fresh fruit and vegetables should never be consumed without being **washed** so don't eat loose grapes or cherries directly from the display shelves.
- If produce should drop on the floor in the store, don't replace it on the display shelf.
- Fresh cut produce, like packaged salads, should be properly **refrigerated**.
- **Separate fresh produce** by placing each type in individual plastic or paper bags before putting them together into a carton or shopping bag.
- **Bag fresh produce separately from raw foods** such as meat, seafood, and dairy products and also keep separate from household chemicals.
- **During summer use an esky or cooler-bag** to carry fresh produce if you are not going to get them home immediately or may leave them in the car for long periods.
- Only buy your fresh fruit and vegetables from a **reputable retail source** and especially avoid the temptation to buy field or wild mushrooms from road side sellers as some types, which may look appetizing, contain naturally occurring poisons.



Storing

- **Correct storage is important to the safety of fresh produce. It also assists in maintaining flavour and texture.**
- Perishable fresh produce (e.g. strawberries, lettuce, herbs and mushrooms) should be stored in a clean refrigerator at below 4°C, preferably in a separate salad compartment.
- Refrigerate all cut, peeled or cooked fresh fruit and vegetables within two hours.
- Prepared salads should not be left in the refrigerator for more than 3 days.
- Leftover cut fruit and vegetables should be thrown away if left at room temperature for more than two hours. Putting it back in the refrigerator may create a safety risk.

Remember the 6 C's of fresh food safety:

Choose a reputable retailer

Check for damage or bruising

Carry produce in separate bags

Chill perishable and cut produce

Clean all fruit and vegetables before use

Consign old leftover cut produce to the bin

Need more information?

For more detailed information on Fresh Food Safety go to the Recipes Section of the Melbourne Markets website:

www.marketfresh.com.au

