

# Fresh Produce Safety

Tips from [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)

# Avoiding Foodborne Risk is Easy

- Harmful bacteria that may be in the soil or water where produce grows may come in contact with the fruits and vegetables and contaminate them.
- Fresh produce may become contaminated after it is harvested, such as during preparation or storage.
- Eating contaminated produce or fresh juices can lead to foodborne illness, which can cause serious - and sometimes fatal - infections.
- It's easy to help protect yourself and your family from illness by following these safe handling tips!

# Microbial Pathogens of Concern in Fresh Produce

## *Bacteria*

- *E. coli* O157:H7
- *Salmonella*
- *Listeria*
- *Shigella*
- *Vibrio cholera*
- *Bacillus cereus*

## *Viruses*

- *Hepatitis A virus*
- *Cyclospora*
- *Cryptosporidium*

# Outbreaks

- *Listeria* – cabbage
- *Salmonella* – sliced tomatoes, sliced cantaloupe, sprouts, sliced watermelon, unpasteurized orange juice
- *Shigella* – lettuce, green onions
- *Bacillus cereus* – sprouts
- *E. coli* 0157:H7 - unpasteurized apple cider/juice, lettuce, alfalfa sprouts, radishes
- Hepatitis A – Iceberg lettuce, raspberries, strawberries
- *Cylcospora* – raspberries
- *Cryptosporidium* – apple cider

# Buying Tips

- Purchase produce from an approved source.
- Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged.
- Ask your producer questions
  - ✓ What do you do for food safety?
  - ✓ Do you or your suppliers test wash water for bacteria?
  - ✓ Do you or your suppliers train your staff on hand washing and hygiene?

# Storage Tips

- Store produce away from raw meat, chicken, pork or seafood to prevent cross contamination.
- Cut watermelon, cantaloupe and honeydew are potentially hazardous and require refrigeration at a temperature of 41° F or below.
- The new Wisconsin Food Code will also define cut tomatoes and leafy greens as potentially hazardous food.
- Store perishable fresh fruits and vegetables (like strawberries, lettuce, herbs, and mushrooms) in a clean refrigerator.
- Keep a calibrated thermometer in the refrigerator. Check temperatures frequently.

# Preparation Tips

- Begin with clean hands. 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 and vegetables. Produce that looks rotten should be discarded.
- All produce should be thoroughly washed before eating. Wash fruits and vegetables under running water just before eating, cutting or cooking. Use an approved food preparation sink.
- Many precut, bagged produce items like lettuce are pre-washed. If the package indicates that the contents have been pre-washed, you can use the produce without further washing.
- Washing fruits and vegetables with soap or detergent or using commercial produce washes is not recommended.
- Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush.

# Employee Health

- Provide training regarding when not to work when ill with symptoms of foodborne illness or diagnosis.
- Require that employees wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat produce.



# Food Safety Info Sheets

- <http://bites.ksu.edu/infosheets>



Peppers were prime cause of 2008 *Salmonella* outbreak linked to over 1,500 illnesses

FOOD SAFETY INFOSHEET  
MARCH 28, 2011

## Temperature abuse a factor in 2008 *Salmonella* outbreak




What you can do:

- Refrigerate tomato dishes below 41 °F.
- Avoid cross-contamination from potentially contaminated foods to tomato dishes that will be served at room temperature.
- Ask suppliers to follow good agricultural practices.

Pepper and tomato-containing dishes sitting at room temperature may have made the outbreak larger.

After investigation into the 2008 *Salmonella* outbreak that sickened over 1500 people throughout North America, the U.S. CDC determined that Serrano peppers were the primary source of the illnesses. *Salmonella* matching the outbreak strain was found in water samples taken from the farm where the peppers were grown. Investigators believe that tomato-based dishes such as salsa, which

also contained peppers, held above 41 °F for more than 4 hours increased the risk of people becoming ill. Diced, sliced or pureed tomatoes can provide a great environment for bacteria such as *Salmonella* to multiply. It is a common, but risky, practice to hold salsa and guacamole at room temperatures for more than 4 hours.

PROPER STORAGE OF TOMATO-BASED PRODUCTS CAN REDUCE RISKS







for more information contact Ben Chapman, [benjamin\\_chapman@ncsu.edu](mailto:benjamin_chapman@ncsu.edu) or Doug Powell, [dpowell@ksu.edu](mailto:dpowell@ksu.edu)  
[www.foodsafetyinfosheets.com](http://www.foodsafetyinfosheets.com)

MAY 6, 2010  
FOOD SAFETY INFOSHEET

## Romaine lettuce linked to *E. coli* O145 outbreak



**CLUSTERS OF ILLNESSES IN THE NORTH EAST AND MIDWEST**  
60 ILL IN MICHIGAN, NEW YORK AND OHIO  
**LEAFY GREENS HAVE A HISTORY**  
LETTUCE, SPINACH, GREENS LINKED TO AT LEAST 30 OUTBREAKS OF PATHOGENIC *E. COLI* SINCE 1993




[www.foodsafetyinfosheets.com](http://www.foodsafetyinfosheets.com)

Freshway Foods of Sydney, Ohio is voluntarily recalling products containing romaine lettuce with a use by date of May 12 or earlier because they may be contaminated with *E. coli* O145. The products were sold under the Freshway brand and Imperial Sysco brand.

*E. coli* O145 causes a diarrheal illness often with bloody stools. Illnesses associated with this outbreak have been centered in the North East and Midwest U.S. To date 60 individuals have been confirmed ill.


This recall includes romaine lettuce products sold by Freshway Foods for food service outlets, wholesale, and in-store retail salad bars and delis. These products are sold under the **Freshway** and **Imperial Sysco** brands.

A full list of the 72 recalled products lines can be found at: [www.freshwayfoods.com/recall/](http://www.freshwayfoods.com/recall/)




Fresh produce is not cooked, so any poop that comes in contact with it from farm-to-fork can be passed to diners.

The recalled romaine products were also sold for distribution to in-store salad bars and delis for Kroger, Giant Eagle, Ingles Markets, and Marsh stores.  
States where the products were distributed include: AL, CT, DC, FL, GA, IL, IN, KS, KY, MD, MA, MI, MS, NJ, NY, NC, OH, PA, RI, SC, TN, VA, WV, WI.



For more information: Ben Chapman [benjamin\\_chapman@ncsu.edu](mailto:benjamin_chapman@ncsu.edu) or Doug Powell, [dpowell@ksu.edu](mailto:dpowell@ksu.edu)



# Food Safety Training and Information

- PHMDC Safe Food Crew - [www.safefoodcrew.org](http://www.safefoodcrew.org)
- [UW Madison Extension](http://www.foodsafety.wisc.edu/gardening.html) - [www.foodsafety.wisc.edu/gardening.html](http://www.foodsafety.wisc.edu/gardening.html)
- [FDA Food Produce Safety Handout](http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/UCM174142.pdf) - [www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/UCM174142.pdf](http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/UCM174142.pdf)
- Fight Bac Food Safety website - [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org)