

# FIGHTBAC!

## SIX STEPS TO SAFER FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Safe Handling of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

PROVIDED BY THE PARTNERSHIP FOR FOOD SAFETY EDUCATION

### Check

- Check to be sure that the fresh fruits and vegetables you buy are not bruised or damaged.
- Check that fresh cut fruits and vegetables like packaged salads and precut melons are refrigerated at the store before buying. Do not buy fresh cut items that are not refrigerated.

### Clean

- Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Clean all surfaces and utensils with hot water and soap, including cutting boards, counter tops, peelers and knives that will touch fresh fruits or vegetables before and after food-preparation.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Packaged fruits and vegetables labeled “ready-to-eat”, “washed” or “triple washed” need not be washed.
- Rub firm-skin fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water.
- Dry fruits and vegetables with a clean cloth towel or paper towel.
- Never use detergent or bleach to wash fresh fruits or vegetables. These products are not intended for consumption.



### Separate

- When shopping, be sure fresh fruits and vegetables are separated from household chemicals and raw foods such as meat, poultry and seafood in your cart and in bags at checkout.
- Keep fresh fruits and vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry or seafood in your refrigerator.

- Separate fresh fruits and vegetables from raw meat, poultry and seafood. Do not use the same cutting board without cleaning with hot water and soap before and after preparing fresh fruits and vegetables.

### Cook

- Cook or throw away fruits or vegetables that have touched raw meat, poultry, seafood or their juices.

### Chill

- Refrigerate all cut, peeled or cooked fresh fruits and vegetables within two hours.

### Throw Away

- Throw away fresh fruits and vegetables that have not been refrigerated within two hours of cutting, peeling or cooking.
- Remove and throw away bruised or damaged portions of fruits and vegetables when preparing to cook them or before eating them raw.
- Throw away any fruit or vegetable that will not be cooked if it has touched raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- If in doubt, throw it out!



**MAKE FOOD SAFETY  
A PRIORITY**

Food safety is a top priority for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The agencies are working together to ensure that the food we eat is safe, healthy, and of high quality. This includes working to prevent foodborne illness outbreaks and ensuring that food is properly labeled and inspected.

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For more information, visit [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov) or [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).