

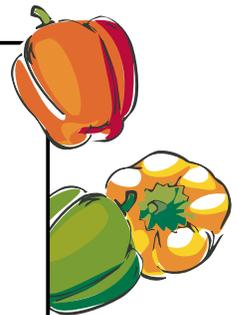
North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
Food & Drug Protection Division

**Food
For
Thought**

When in Doubt, Throw It Out!

Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Safe Handling Tips

- Buy fruits and vegetables that are not bruised or damaged.
- When purchasing fresh cut produce (like half a watermelon or bagged salads) select the items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- Perishable fresh fruits and vegetables (e.g. strawberries, lettuce, and mushrooms) should be refrigerated at 40 degrees or below to maintain quality.
- Wash hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap before and after preparing fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Fresh produce should be cleaned with running water before consumption. The use of soaps or detergents during the cleaning process is not recommended.
- Clean produce with firm skins (e.g. melons, cucumbers) with a vegetable brush to help remove dirt, insects, bacteria and some pesticide residues.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables should be dried with a paper towel or a clean cloth towel. This step may further reduce the number of bacteria that are present.
- Cutting boards, utensils and countertops should be cleaned with soap and hot water between the preparation of raw meat, poultry and seafood and the preparation of fruits and vegetables.
- Cut, peeled or cooked fresh fruits and vegetables should be refrigerated within two hours.
- Separate fresh produce from meat, poultry and seafood in your grocery shopping cart, bags at checkout and in your refrigerator at home.



The Food & Drug Protection Division conducts routine inspections of grocery stores, food manufacturers, and warehouses to ensure a safe food supply for the citizens of North Carolina. For more food safety information, please visit www.ncfoodsafety.com

Steve Troxler, Commissioner