

## Keeping Food Safe & Healthy: Consumer Guide for Enjoying Local Produce

*Spring is a time when we prepare gardens for new seedlings, clear pots for new flowers, and enjoy fresh, locally produced fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, eggs and much more. **While there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be transmitted by food, take some commonsense precautions and help keep everyone safe and healthy this summer.***



### At the Market

Local growers take pride in delivering food that is fresh, locally sourced *and* safe to eat. Help local businesses *and your neighbors* as you take precautions while shopping at the Market this summer.

- **Do not go to a market or farm if you are experiencing signs of illness** or if someone in your family is sick.
- **Wear a face mask** if you are able. The Centers for Disease Control continues to recommend cloth face coverings as a precaution in public spaces.
- **Practice physical distancing.** Do not crowd others in line while shopping and consider shopping at non-peak times. A 6-foot distance between shoppers is considered a safe distance.
- At the Market, try to **handle only items that you are purchasing.** Choose with your eyes, not with your hands! Market vendors will be happy to help you choose items that you will enjoy.
- **Wash your hands often:**
  - Before visiting the market or picking up / taking delivery of any order.
  - Once you reach home and before putting food items away in the pantry or refrigerator, and again, after storing your purchases.
  - If the market offers hand sanitizer, clean hands after touching items for sale or handling bags.

It seems like a lot, but hand washing is seen as an important public health measure, now and always.

**And, above all, follow vendor requests.** Local growers are doing their best to provide you with safe and healthy items. Vendors may have local rules that they need to follow. You can do your part to keep both you, and your vendors, safe and healthy this season.

### Safety of Fresh Produce

Fresh fruits and vegetables are healthy and, with a few simple steps, so delicious and safe. **Food safety practices have always recommended rinsing fresh fruits and vegetables** before eating, peeling or cooking. Whether you buy at the grocery or market, follow these easy steps to fresh produce safety.

1. **Wash your hands.** Before you handle fresh produce, wash your hands with soap and water for **20 seconds**, rinse with clean water and dry on a clean towel.
2. **Rinse fresh produce with clean, running water\***. Use your hands to scrub the hard, outer rind of melons or to gently rub firm surfaces of items like squashes and tomatoes. Place delicate berries in a strainer and rinse with clean water. You do **not need** to add any chemicals to the water; **do not** use soap or bleach on fresh fruits and vegetables.
3. **Pat or gently rub dry** with a clean towel.
4. **Eat, peel or chop** into your favorite dish.

\***Wait** to rinse produce until just before eating or preparing. Store unrinsed items in the refrigerator or on the counter. The water from rinsing can cause spoilage; rinse only what you intend to eat or prepare. Rinse produce even if you will peel the items. Once you prepare cut fruits or vegetables, always store these in the refrigerator.

Barbara Ingham. Food Safety Specialist. 26 May 2020. [bhingham@wisc.edu](mailto:bhingham@wisc.edu)



Extension  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON