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## SHOULD I WASH MY FRUITS AND VEGETABLES?

YES! Why you may ask...well to prevent contamination. Harmful bacteria maybe in the soil or water where your produce grows.

### Do I need to wash organic fruits and vegetables?

YES! Although they do not use pesticides or growth hormones the soil and water can be contaminated.

### Do I need to wash Pre-Washed Produce?

No, but we recommend washing. Many pre-cut, bagged or packaged produce items are pre-washed and labeled ready to eat. If you do not re-wash a pre-washed product be sure to use safe handling practices to avoid any cross contamination.

### What are the procedures for washing fruits and vegetables?

1. Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after preparation.
2. Wash all produce thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting or cooking. (It is not recommended to wash the produce with soaps or detergents.)
3. Even if you plan on peeling the produce before eating it is still important to wash to prevent dirt or bacteria from being transferred to your hand or knife.
4. Scrub firm produce, such as melons or cucumbers, with a clean produce brush.
5. Dry produce with a paper towel to further reduce bacteria that may be present.

\*Information provide by FDA and King County Washington



## PROPER HAND HYGIENE

Poor hygiene is the most frequently mentioned contributing factor in outbreak reporting. Keeping our hands clean with proper hand washing techniques is the most important step we can take to prevent getting sick or spreading germs.

In a study, 89% of foodborne illness outbreaks can be traced back to food handlers. This is why health departments stress the importance of proper hand washing.

New employees should be educated and tested on hand washing procedures during their training period. Hand washing education and practice should not stop after the employee is no longer new, continue testing your employees.

Food handlers may not know the proper times to wash their hands. This is a problem

for the facility because these are points when they are transmitting pathogens to the food.

**Here are some examples on when you should wash your hands:**

1. Before, during and after preparing food
2. When switching between working with raw food and working with ready-to-eat food;
3. After you use the restroom.
4. After changing a diaper
5. After touching bare human body parts other than clean hands and clean exposed portion of arms
6. Before and after glove use

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## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

# MYTHS & MISUNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT FOOD SAFETY

***I can leave cooked potatoes for my potato salad on the counter over night.***

**\*Wrong.** Cooked starch foods like potatoes, rice, beans or pasta can grow germs if not kept cold, below 41°F in the fridge or hot over 140°F. So put the potatoes in the fridge with no cover to cool quickly. Cool all hot foods this way. Then use cold ingredients to make the potato salad.

***I don't need to wash my hands if I use hand sanitizer.***

**\*Wrong.** Although hand sanitizers can effectively kill some germs on your hands, they do little to reduce the surface tension between your skin and dirt/grease/germs. The sanitizer only has an effect on the outer layer of film on your hands. Some bad germs are still present. When washing hands, first wet your hands with warm water, lather with soap for at least 20 seconds, rinse with warm water, then dry with a clean towel.

***The raw hamburger I bought at the store was red on the outside, but gray on the inside. The retailer is hiding old meat inside fresh ground beef.***

**\*Wrong.** Red meat contains a pigment called oxymyoglobin. When meat is exposed to air this natural pigment combines with oxygen to produce the red color referred to as "bloom." The inside portion of the meat, while just as wholesome, may be darker due to the lack of oxygen. This is not an attempt to camouflage older ground beef.

***After I cut open a watermelon I should refrigerate it.***

**\*Correct.** Fresh fruit, like many other foods can pose a risk if not prepared or stored properly. Here are some guidelines for fresh fruit:

1. When you buy cut melons, be sure they have been buried in ice or displayed in a refrigerated case, not just displayed on top of ice. Uncut melon does not need to be refrigerated.
2. Before cutting, the outer surface of the melon should be washed with drinking water to remove surface dirt.
3. Hands and all equipment and utensils (cutting boards, knives, etc.) need to be washed thoroughly with hot soapy water, and rinsed.
4. Cut melons must be refrigerated at 41°F or below.
5. Cut melons may be served without refrigeration for a maximum of 4 hours (such as at a brunch, picnic, or buffet). At the end of that time, any leftover melon must be thrown away.
6. Other fruits (such as oranges, apples, lemons, and pineapple) are higher in acid and not as potentially dangerous.

\* Information provided by King County Washington

## PROPER HAND HYGIENE CON'T

7. After handling soiled equipment or utensils
8. After caring for or handling service animals;
9. After coughing, sneezing, using tobacco, eating, or drinking
10. After engaging in other activities that contaminate the hands.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code hand washing should take at least 20 seconds and include running warm water, soap, friction between hand for 10 to 15 seconds, rinsing and drying with clean towels or hot air.

Facility owners and managers shall be accountable for their employees to ensure proper hand washing. It is also their responsibility to ensure the facility has an adequate supply of soap and paper towels. It is suggested that owners and/or managers walk

around the facility to insure paper towel and soap dispenser are filled. When paper towels are not in reach, food handlers tend to wipe their hands on aprons or clothing, which can re-contaminate their hands after hand washing.

It is also good to check that all hand sinks are not being blocked. Blocked hand sinks can result in employees not washing their hands.

The best way to prevent foodborne illness outbreaks as facility owners/managers and food handlers is to remain educated and to educate.

For more information on hand washing visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>

Information provided by: Center for Disease Control (CDC), Food Quality: "A Recipe for Hand Hygiene Process Control, October/November 2011, Guzewich, J., and M. Ross. 1999. "Evaluation of Risks Related to Microbiological Contamination of Ready-to-Eat food by Food Preparation Workers and the Effectiveness of Interventions to Minimize those Risks." Illinois Department of Public Health Food Code and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code



## AT HOME FOOD SAFETY



**The most important equipment a person has in their kitchen is the refrigerator, but are we monitoring it?. How many of us have thermometers in our refrigerators? What is the temperature of your refrigerator?**

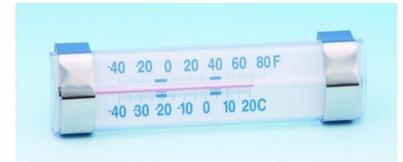
It is recommended that refrigerators air temperature be between 36 –38°F, which will slow bacteria growth. Any warmer and your foods will spoil faster and any colder your food will freeze.

Bacteria grow rapidly in food when they have moisture and favorable temperatures. So it is

recommended that you have a thermometer in each refrigerator you have in your home and place it in the front where it can be monitored regularly.

Monitoring your refrigeration will help prevent foodborne illness in your home and keep you aware that your refrigeration is working properly.

Thermometers are an inexpensive way to protect your family and yourself. Contact your local retail store for availability.



## COTTAGE FOOD ACT

### What is Cottage Operation Law?

The Cottage Food Operation law (P.A.097-0393) became effective in Illinois on January 1, 2012. This new law allows certain foods made in home kitchens to be sold at Illinois farmers' markets with limited regulation. The purpose of the law is to promote and support the Illinois agriculture and cottage food industries.

The products that can be made in a home kitchen and sold at a "farmers' market" include:

- Certain fruit-based jams, jellies and preserves.
- Certain fruit butters.
- Baked goods (i.e. breads, cookies, cakes, pies, and pastries).
- Dried foods (i.e. herbs and teas).

### How do I operate under this new law?

1. Obtain an Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) approved food service sanitation management certificate.

<http://dph.illinois.gov/fssmccourses/>.

2. Register with the Winnebago County Health Department. You will next need to register with us after you have received your Illinois Department of Public Health approved food service sanitation management certificate. A registration form needs to be filled out, completed and signed. Registration form may be returned to us via the following options:

Mail:  
Winnebago County Health Department  
Environmental Health Center  
P.O. Box 4009  
Rockford, IL 61110

Fax: (815) 720-4203  
Email: [lsprecher@wchd.org](mailto:lsprecher@wchd.org)

3. Follow all other requirements in the law. You are responsible for all other provisions in the law including

but not limited to:

- Product packaging,
- Product labeling,
- Displaying a placard with the required language,
- Not exceeding gross receipts of \$25,000 in a calendar year from the sale of food exempted under this law,
- Selling allowed foods only at farmers' markets in Illinois.

### What are the Product labeling requirements?

- The name and address of the cottage food operation
- The common or usual name of the food product
- All ingredients including colors, artificial flavors, preservatives, listed in decreasing order of predominance by weight
- Statement: "This product was produced in a home kitchen not subject to public health inspection that may also process common food allergens."
- The date the product was processed
- Allergen labeling as specified in federal labeling requirements -Click [Here](#) for more information-

### Are there any fees associated with operating under this new law?

The fees are associated with the food service sanitation management certification training, certificate, and related refresher courses.

### Who can I talk to if I have more questions? How can I obtain a paper copy of the registration form?

Please contact one of our Sanitarians in the Environmental Health Center at (815) 720-4100 for more information or to request a paper copy of the registration form be mailed to you.

*"The purpose of the law is to promote and support the Illinois agriculture and cottage food industries."*

