



SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Affiliated with
National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World
and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service

LEADER TRAINING GUIDE

Washing Fresh Fruits & Vegetables for Safety & Quality

Objectives

1. Participant will understand the importance of washing fruits and vegetables.
2. Participants will recognize the proper procedure for washing and storing fruits and vegetables.

Major Teaching Points

1. All produce should be rinsed under cold running water.
2. Some produce should be scrubbed.
3. Detergent or soap should not be used to wash produce, and commercial preparations are not necessary.

Before the Meeting

1. Make a copy of the *Safe Produce Quiz* for each club member. Have some extra pencils or pens available.
2. Optional: Purchase 3 produce scrub brushes at a local dollar store to use for prizes.

Say: *It's not often that a fruit or a vegetable makes the news, but it has happened a few times in the last couple of years. Do any of you remember that happening? (Help your members recall the incidents of foodborne illness related to spinach, green onions, sprouts, etc.).*

Say: *It's estimated that as many as 4 people handle every apple before you buy it and as many as 10 people handle each tomato. And then there's the possibility of pesticide residue and environmental contamination.*

In order to keep produce safe, there are a few basic guidelines to follow when handling fresh fruits and vegetables. Together, let's take a little quiz to help us remember the importance and guidelines for washing produce. Fill in the blanks using the correct letter. (Optional: The person or persons with the most correct answers will win a prize!).

Handout—Safe Produce Quiz

1. Purchase produce that is not _____ or _____.
2. When selecting fresh cut produce—such as a half a watermelon or bagged mixed salad greens—choose only those items that are _____ or surrounded by ice.
3. Bag fresh fruits and vegetables _____ from meat, poultry and seafood when packing them to take home from the market.
4. Most perishable fresh fruits and vegetables can be best maintained by storing in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of _____ or below.
5. All produce that is purchased _____ or _____ should be refrigerated within two hours to maintain both quality and safety.
6. Wash & sanitize all countertops, cutting boards and utensils (including fruit/vegetable brushes) with a mixture of _____ in 1 quart of water.
7. When washing fresh produce, it is also important to have a clean _____. Wash it with hot, soapy water, then rinse it. Then sanitize it with the chlorine/water mixture.
8. Begin preparing produce with _____. Wash hands for _____ with warm water and soap before and after preparing fresh produce.
9. If a bag of pre-cut, bagged produce like lettuce states that the produce is prewashed, it _____ be used without further washing. As an extra measure of caution, you may choose to wash the produce again just before you use it. Pre-cut or pre-washed produce in open bags should be washed before using.
10. _____ any damaged or bruised areas on fresh fruits and vegetables before preparing and/or eating. Produce that looks rotten should be _____.
11. All unpackaged fruits and vegetables, as well as those packaged and not marked pre-washed, should be thoroughly _____ before eating. This includes produce grown conventionally or organically at home, or produce from a grocery store or farmers market.
12. Wash fruits and vegetables under _____ just before eating, cutting or cooking. The exception is leafy greens, which should be washed and drained before refrigerating to preserve quality.
13. Even if the produce will be peeled or _____ before eating, it is important to wash it first.
14. Washing fruits and vegetables with soap or detergent or using commercial produce washes is _____.
15. Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean _____ under running water.
16. Drying produce with a clean cloth towel or _____ may further reduce bacteria that may be present.

A. 1 tsp chlorine bleach
B. 20 seconds
C. 40°F
D. bruised
E. can

F. clean hands
G. produce brush
H. cooked
I. Cut away
J. damaged

K. discarded
L. not recommended
M. paper towel
N. peeled
O. pre-cut

P. refrigerated
Q. running water
R. separately
S. sink
T. washed

Answers—Safe Produce Quiz

1. Purchase produce that is not ___D___ or ___J___.
2. When selecting fresh cut produce—such as a half a watermelon or bagged mixed salad greens—choose only those items that are ___P___ or surrounded by ice.
3. Bag fresh fruits and vegetables ___R___ from meat, poultry and seafood when packing them to take home from the market.
4. Most perishable fresh fruits and vegetables can be best maintained by storing in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of ___C___ or below.
5. All produce that is purchased ___O___ or ___N___ should be refrigerated within two hours to maintain both quality and safety.
6. Wash & sanitize all countertops, cutting boards and utensils (including fruit/vegetable brushes) with a mixture of ___A___ in 1 quart of water.
7. When washing fresh produce, it is also important to have a clean ___S___. Wash it with hot, soapy water and rinse it. Then sanitize it with the chlorine/water mixture.
8. Begin preparing produce with ___F___. Wash hands for ___B___ with warm water and soap before and after preparing fresh produce.
9. If a bag of pre-cut, bagged produce like lettuce states that the produce is prewashed, it ___E___ be used without further washing. As an extra measure of caution, you can wash the produce again just before you use it. Pre-cut or pre-washed produce in open bags should be washed before using.
10. ___I___ any damaged or bruised areas on fresh fruits and vegetables before preparing and/or eating. Produce that looks rotten should be ___K___.
11. All unpackaged fruits and vegetables, as well as those packaged and not marked pre-washed, should be thoroughly ___T___ before eating. This includes produce grown conventionally or organically at home, or produce from a grocery store or farmer's market.
12. Wash fruits and vegetables under ___Q___ just before eating, cutting or cooking. The exception is leafy greens, which should be washed before refrigerating to preserve quality.
13. Even if the produce will be peeled or ___H___ before eating, it is important to wash it first.
14. Washing fruits and vegetables with soap or detergent or using commercial produce washes is ___L___.
15. Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean ___G___ under running water.
16. Drying produce with a clean cloth towel or ___M___ may further reduce bacteria that may be present.

Prepared by Marilyn Peters, Food Safety & Nutrition Agent, Colleton County