



## Safe Handling of Fresh Vegetables: Best Practices

### Check

- Check the printed shelf life on the packaging/label
- When choosing pre-cut vegetables, like packaged salads, check that the product is refrigerated at 38°F
- Check that the fresh vegetables you buy are not bruised or damaged
- Check the seals on the packaging to ensure they have not been tampered with

### Clean: Hands, Surfaces, and Utensils

- Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling fresh vegetables
- Clean all surfaces and utensils with hot water and soap, including cutting boards and knives, before and after preparing fresh vegetables

### Rinse

- Just before use, rinse under running water only the vegetables you plan to eat, including those with skins or rinds that are not eaten
- Vegetables should be rubbed by hand or scrubbed with a clean brush while rinsing under running tap water
- Packaged vegetables labeled “ready-to-eat”, “washed”, or “triple washed” should not be washed
- Dry vegetables with a clean cloth or paper towel
- Do not use soap or bleach to wash fresh vegetables. These products are not intended for consumption

### Separate

- In your fridge or shopping cart and in bags at checkout, separate vegetables from household chemicals and raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs
- When preparing food, keep fresh vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs. Do not use the same cutting board or utensils without cleaning with hot water and soap before and after preparing fresh vegetables
- Remove and throw away bruised or damaged portions of vegetables when preparing to cook them or before eating them raw

### Chill/Storage

- Keep your refrigerator at or below 38°F
- Refrigerate all cut, peeled, or cooked fresh vegetables within two hours of preparing

### Disposal

- Dispose of any fresh vegetables that have not been refrigerated within two hours of cutting, peeling, or cooking
- Dispose of any vegetables that have touched raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs
- Dispose of vegetables that have visible decay or have an off-odor that is bitter and strong
- If in doubt, throw it out!