



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH County of Riverside

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN NO. 37-06-DES

DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIVISION

SAFE HANDLING OF WATERMELONS, CANTALOUPE, AND OTHER PRODUCE

Fresh fruit should be an important part of our daily diets. Our markets carry a wide array of fruits all year long. But there are some important steps you should be taking to ensure that your health is not jeopardized. Fresh produce can cause food borne illnesses if not handled properly. Many fruits and vegetables are grown on the ground where they can come in contact with animal or human waste. They can also be contaminated by food workers with poor personal hygiene or improperly cleaned containers.

Following the steps outlined in this bulletin will greatly reduce your chances of becoming ill from fruits and vegetables.

1. Wash outer surfaces of all produce in clean water even if you don't normally eat the skin (melons, oranges, etc.). It is best to wash them just prior to eating.
2. Use a vegetable brush to clean produce especially cantaloupe because of the texture of the skin.
3. Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water prior to cutting all produce.
4. Wash, rinse, and sanitize all cutting boards before and after cutting produce. Sanitize by using one teaspoon of bleach in one quart of water. Do not rinse sanitizer off. Use separate cutting boards for raw meats and produce.
5. Wash, rinse, and sanitize all cutting utensils before and after use.
6. Cut produce should be stored in covered containers inside a refrigerator at 41°F, and discarded after 7 days.
7. Discard any cut produce items that have been out of the refrigerator for more than 4 hours.

QUESTIONS?

Contact the nearest Environmental Health office in your area.

*Document available in an alternate format upon request