

Working for Wisconsin Families

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Shawano County UW-Extension

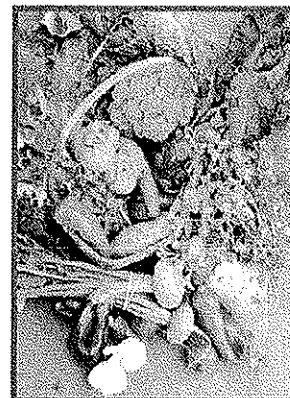
June/July/August 2013

FAMILY LIVING EDUCATION

Think Safety When Buying and Handling Fresh Produce

Barbara Ingham, Extension Food Safety Specialist, UW-Madison

During summer and fall, garden baskets, market stands and grocery shelves fill with fresh fruits and vegetables. These fruits and vegetables are recognized as important components of a healthy diet because they are sources of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants. But because fruits and vegetables are grown in a natural environment, they can become contaminated with harmful pathogens from soil or water, from animals, or when un-composted manure is used as fertilizer. Produce can also be contaminated during harvest, packing, processing, distribution or preparation.



Eating contaminated fruits or vegetables, or juices made from contaminated produce, can lead to a serious - and sometimes fatal – foodborne illness. Recent foodborne illness outbreaks have been linked to popular produce items: sprouted seeds, spinach, lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers and green onions. Despite this threat, it's easy to help protect yourself and your family from illness by following these steps for choosing and preparing fresh fruits and vegetables.

Buying Tips for Fresh Produce. If you are buying fresh fruits or vegetables at the market or grocery store, you can help keep produce safe by making wise buying decisions.

- ✓ Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged.
- ✓ When selecting fresh-cut produce - such as a half a watermelon or diced tomatoes - choose only those items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- ✓ Bag fresh fruits and vegetables separately from meat, poultry and seafood products when packing them to take home from the market.
- ✓ Place produce in clean bags for transport. Reusable cloth bags or totes are increasingly popular for market shopping. If re-using bags, make sure to launder them often enough to keep them clean and prevent transfer of germs on to fresh produce.

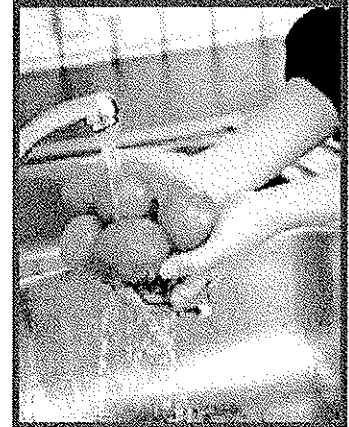
Storage Tips for Fresh Produce. Whether produce is harvested from the garden, or purchased at a grocery or farmers' market, there are certain things that you can do to maintain both safety and quality.

- ✓ Certain perishable fresh fruits and vegetables (like strawberries, lettuce, herbs, and mushrooms) can be best maintained by storing in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 32°-40° F.
- ✓ All produce that is purchased pre-cut or peeled should be kept in the refrigerator to maintain both quality and safety. Limit the time out of refrigeration, to just two hours. If you are traveling or at a picnic and the time out of refrigeration extends beyond two hours, discard these items.
- ✓ Other produce such as uncut tomatoes, bananas, potatoes and onions are best stored at cool room temperature, and refrigerated only when peeled, cut or sliced.
- ✓ Produce should not be washed before storage as excess water will encourage the growth of spoilage bacteria.

A UWEX publication, *Storing Fruits and Vegetables from the Home Garden A3823*, offers tips on maintaining quality of harvested produce <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Default.aspx> and search for A3823 in the search bar.

Preparation Tips for Fresh Produce. *Always wash fresh produce!* This includes produce grown conventionally or organically at home, or produce that is purchased from a grocery store or farmers' market.

- ✓ Begin with clean hands. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap before, and after, preparing fresh produce.
- ✓ Cut away any damaged or bruised areas before preparing or eating.
- ✓ Gently rub produce while holding under plain running water. There's no need to use soap or a produce wash.
- ✓ Wash produce **BEFORE** you peel it, so dirt and bacteria aren't transferred from the knife onto the fruit or vegetable.
- ✓ Use a clean vegetable brush to scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers.
- ✓ Dry produce with a clean cloth or paper towel to further reduce bacteria that may be present.
- ✓ Throw away the outermost leaves of a head of lettuce or cabbage which can trap dirt and harmful bacteria.

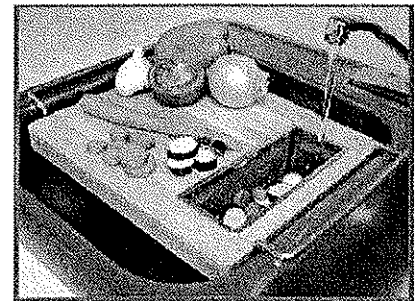


What about pre-washed produce? Even though many bagged produce items like lettuce mixes are prewashed, UW-Extension recommends that all produce items be washed before eating or preparing.

Separate for Safety. Keep fruits and vegetables that will be eaten raw separate from other foods such as raw meat, poultry or seafood — and from kitchen utensils used for those products.

In addition, be sure to:

- ✓ Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils and countertops with warm water and soap between the preparation of raw meat, poultry and seafood products and the preparation of all fruits and vegetables, especially produce that will not be cooked.
- ✓ If you use plastic or other non-porous cutting boards, run them through the dishwasher after use, or wash with warm soapy water, rinse and then sanitize in a dilute bleach solution (see below).



For added protection, kitchen sanitizers can be used on cutting boards and counter tops to kill bacteria that may remain on cleaned surfaces. Begin by washing and rinsing the cutting board, knife or other utensil, then rinse with a dilute bleach solution: **one teaspoon of chlorine bleach to one quart of water**. Dip or spray, and then allow to air-dry. The chlorine will evaporate, leaving the surface free of bacteria. [Note: be sure to use regular, unscented bleach for sanitizing your kitchen.]

For more information on the safety of fresh produce: Contact the Shawano County UW-Extension Office, 311 North Main Street, Shawano, WI 54166 ▪ 715-526-6136 ▪ <http://shawano.uwex.edu/>



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

For more information on these programs or to register call the Shawano County UW-Extension office at: 526-6136 or 866-526-2128.



Share The Bounty - 2013

The Hunger Prevention Project Program runs July through October.

A hunger prevention program that allows area gardeners to donate extra home-grown fruits and excess vegetables to those in need. Gardeners bring their produce to drop-off sites in Shawano County where it is distributed to those who can use it. It's a simple program. No income requirements and no paperwork! All varieties of fruits and vegetables are accepted in quantities both large and small. Produce should be reasonably clean. Containers are provided on site. This is a "win-win" situation because gardeners' produce will not go to waste and recipients get healthy food at no cost.

2013 Drop off and pick up sites:

SAFPARC – 218 E Richmond, Shawano

Lutheran Counseling & Family Services Thrift Store 2324 E. Richmond St.

Goodwill Industries – 300 Lakeland Rd. Shawano

St. Martin's Catholic Church

407 S. Warrington Ave. Cecil – 4th Tuesday Morning drop off 9am to 1pm

Wittenberg

Community Center -Tuesdays from 9am to 5pm

Lunch & Learn

Summertime is Food Preservation Time and that is the topic of our Lunch & Learn at the County Extension Office. Starting on June 1st and running through August 16th we will have 7 sessions on various food preservation topics. The sessions will be from Noon to 1 pm at the Shawano County court house in Room A . For more details go to:
<http://shawano.uwex.edu/family-living/food-safety/>

Senior Government Day

The seventh annual Senior Information Day will be held on Thursday, July 18th at the Shawano Civic Center located at 225 S. Main Street from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm. This year's focus will be "Lifelong Learning & Mental Wellness." Our first speaker will be Beverly Bartlett, Outreach Specialist for the Alzheimer's Association presenting about disease related changes that take place, importance of continued socializations and ways to approach a person who has dementia. Nancy Schultz, Family Living Educator from the UW-Extension Office will be presenting how Healthy

Aging: Keeping Mentally Fit as You Age. There will also be a presentation from ROADS- Reaching out About Depression and Suicide. They will discuss the issues surrounding depression and suicide while creating awareness of available resources, education and support. There will also be Bingo with prizes. This event is free. Area businesses help sponsor the cost to run this program and donate door prizes. Since a meal will be provided, seniors need to preregister. This can be done by calling Shawano Community Education Office at 715-526-2192 x3102 or online at www.shawanoschools.com and click 'Community Education'. Registration deadline is July 12.

Shawano County's 30th Brunch On The Farm

Will be held on Sunday, June 23 on the Terry and Dianne Nohr Farm, N2903 Nohr Rd., Marion, WI 54950-9162. The farm is approximately 1/2 mile off Highway 45. Check out the Shawano County Farm Bureau Brunch on the Farm Facebook page for more details and information as it becomes available:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/200628876647492>

Farm Technology Days Barron County

Wisconsin Farm Technology Days will be hosted by Breezy Hill Dairy of Dallas, owners Alex and Mary Olson on July 9-11, 2013. *Honoring our Heritage – Cultivating the Future* is the theme for the Family Living Tent. To learn more about the 2013 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days Visit the Farm Technology Days website at www.barronfarmtech.com.

Shawano County Fair

Now is the time to be thinking about open class entries for the Shawano County Fair. The fair premium book is the same last year. Dates are August 28th thru Sept. 2nd. Entries are due by the first Monday in August.

Important Dates To Remember

University of Wisconsin 50th Annual College Days
June 4th to the 6th – Madison, WI
Shawano County Court House – Closed July 4th & 5th
2013 Grandparents University – UW Madison
July 11th to 26th – Sessions I, II and III

Shawano County UW-Extension
Courthouse - Room 101
311 North Main Street
Shawano, WI 54166

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Working for Wisconsin Families

Dear Friends,

I think finally we have spring. Spring brings about new life in our yards and gardens. As you prepare for planting your garden or just planning on going to the farmer's market, the article on the front page will give you tips to help keep your family safe as you buy, store, and prepare fresh produce. Shawano County UW-Extension is offering a series of lunchtime learning opportunities so your summertime canning and food preservation activities will be based on up-to-date research-tested information. Each of these one-hour programs will be a chance to listen, learn, and ask questions of experts in the field. For more information about these one hour sessions, please contact the UW-Extension office. Information is also available online at www.foodsafety.wisc.edu. Food safety is, and should be, a primary concern when preserving food at home, from freezing peas to drying of apples. The extension service sets itself apart in providing research-based information. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Nancy Schultz

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Family Living Educator

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