

# How to Clean Fruits and Vegetables

Fresh fruits and vegetables need to be cleaned prior to eating to remove bacteria and dirt. Even produce that will be peeled (*like a banana or orange*) needs to be washed because the bacteria can be transferred from the peel onto the part that will be eaten. The only vegetables that do not need to be cleaned are those that are labeled pre-washed like lettuce and spinach.



Here are some things to remember when cleaning fruits and vegetables.

- Before preparing fruits and vegetables, use warm soapy water to wash your hands, countertops, cutting boards, and knives.
- Wash fruits and vegetables under cool, running water. There is no need to buy commercial fruit and vegetable cleaners.
- After washing, pat produce dry with a paper towel.
- After cutting produce, cook or eat it immediately or store it in the refrigerator in clean bags or containers.
- After cleaning fruits and vegetables, use hot soapy water to wash hands, countertops, cutting boards, and knives.

- First clean, then cut into bite sized pieces, chunks, or slices so they are ready to go when needed for a meal or snack.
- Store in snack sized containers or plastic bags to grab for snacks.
- Store in large containers or plastic bags to use for meals. These can be eaten raw, steamed, roasted, or added to recipes.

<b>FIRM VEGETABLES</b>	Use a scrub brush on firm vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, or squash.
<b>FIRM FRUITS</b>	Use pressure from your hands to wash apples, bananas, peaches, etc.
<b>LEAFY GREENS</b>	Separate leafy greens and wash under cool, running water several times.
<b>FRAGILE FRUITS</b>	Put fragile fruits, such as berries and cherries, in a colander and rinse.

## VEGGIE TASTING PARTY

### INGREDIENTS

Any whole, raw vegetables such as:

broccoli  
bell peppers  
carrots  
cauliflower  
celery  
cucumbers

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Set up an area by the sink with a garbage can, snack bags, large storage bags or containers, cutting board, and knives.
2. Wash vegetables using a produce brush.
3. Cut off the bottom of the vegetable bunches (*celery, broccoli, cauliflower*) or trim the ends of vegetables (*bell peppers, carrots, cucumbers*).
4. Wash vegetables again if soil is visible.
5. Cut vegetables into desired sizes.
6. Sort into snack sized bags for lunches and take-along snacks. A larger container with a variety of small pieces is nice for snacks at home or for easy use with meals.
7. Refrigerate for later use.

### TIP

- Prepared, raw vegetables last longer if air is squeezed out of bags before sealing.



### CHECK OUT OUR VIDEOS:

[spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/videos](https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/videos) for more information on basic food preparation, safety, storage, and easy recipes!

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