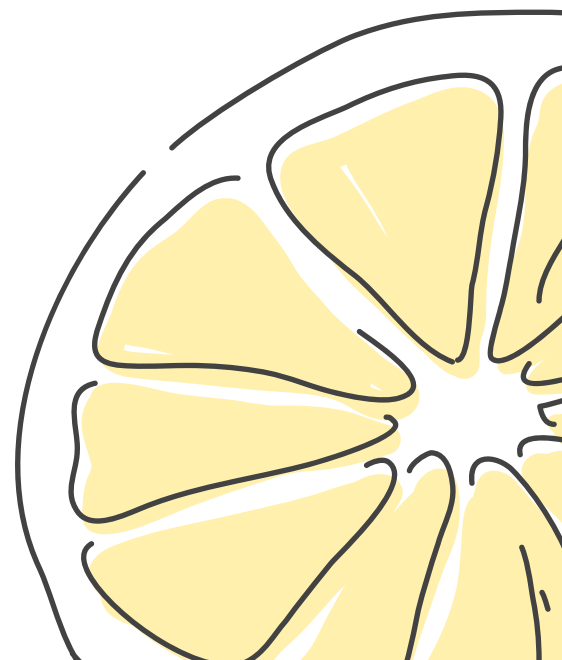


# Handling Fresh Produce in Schools and in The Classroom

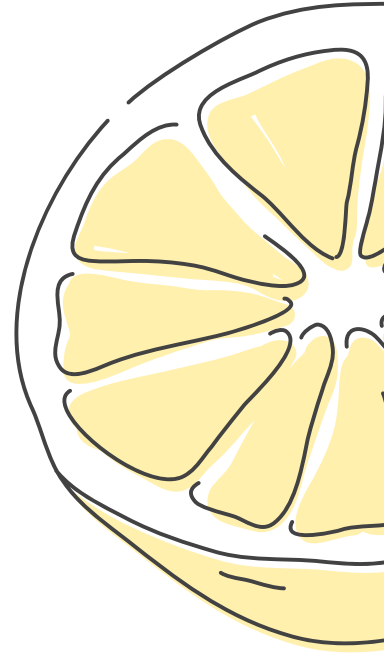


NH Department of Education  
**Office of  
Nutrition Programs  
& Services**



Produce can become contaminated at all stages of production, processing, transportation, storage, preparation, and when serving.

To prevent the chance of foodborne illness, fresh produce must be handled carefully at each step – from the time it leaves the farm to the time of service.



## Purchasing

- Check the storage and handling practices of vendors the school or SAU is using.
- Establish procedures for inspecting and accepting (or rejecting) produce deliveries.

## Washing and Preparation

- Make sure to inspect produce for visible signs of soil or damage BEFORE cutting, slicing or dicing.
- Wash produce before serving or cutting using either:
  - Continuous running water
  - Chemical disinfectants, used according to the manufacturer's instructions.



# Hand Hygiene

- Wash hands with soap and water prior to handling fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Use gloves, deli paper or an appropriate utensil to touch ready-to-eat produce.
  - Always wash hands before putting on disposable gloves.
- Always change gloves anytime they may have been contaminated or when changing tasks.
- Do not wash or reuse disposable gloves.



*For more information on handwashing: [Handwashing in Communities: Clean Hands Save Lives | CDC](#)*

## Serving

- Do not store produce in direct contact with ice or water while on display (serving lines, salad bars).
- Record the time when produce (that is cut) is displayed without refrigeration.
- Display cut produce for a maximum of 4 hours if not refrigerated or in containers surrounded by ice. Discard any produce that was not consumed in the 4-hour time.
- Provide wrapped, disposable utensils to students, if needed.



# Storing

- Pre-package cut produce into single serve, closed or covered containers or individually sealed bags.
- Use coolers with ice, ice packs, or mobile refrigerated carts to keep produce chilled if holding in classrooms before serving.
- Discard all leftover cut produce, such as veggie sticks, sliced apples, slices oranges or melon.
- Using a clean, sanitized, and calibrated thermometer – check food temperatures to make sure cut produce is 41-degrees Fahrenheit or below.

# Training

- Develop training programs to teach why food safety is important – all staff that will be handling food should be properly trained.
  - Train classroom teachers and staff at the beginning of each school year about handwashing, controlling time/temperature, and preventing cross-contamination.

