



Handling Fresh Produce in Classrooms*

Guidance for School Nutrition Staff

Follow your school district's food safety plan for appropriate actions when temperature standards are not met.

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water prior to handling or serving fresh fruits and vegetables to students.**
- Pre-package cut produce into single-serve, closed or covered containers or individually sealed bags.
- Consider packaging whole produce, such as oranges, apples, plums, etc, in bags or wrap.
- Provide condiments, such as ranch or yogurt dip, in single-serve portions to minimize cross-contamination.
- Provide wrapped, disposable utensils to students, if needed.
- Deliver produce to classrooms immediately prior to service.
- Use a clean, sanitized, and calibrated thermometer to check food temperatures. Cut produce should be 41°F or below. Record produce temperatures when delivered to the classroom.
- Use coolers with ice, ice packs, or mobile refrigerated carts to keep produce cold if holding it in classrooms prior to service.
- Return to classrooms to pick up leftover produce after service.
- Discard all leftover cut produce, such as veggie sticks, sliced apples, sliced oranges, or melon.
- Wash all leftover unpackaged whole produce, such as apples or pears, if serving it again.
- Train classroom teachers and staff at the beginning of each school year about hand-washing, controlling time/temperature, and preventing cross contamination.

*These best practices are based on the 2009 FDA Food Code. Follow the food code for your local or state jurisdiction. Consult with your local health department if you have any questions. www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/RetailFoodProtection/FoodCode/FoodCode2009/default.htm

**For hand washing information refer to the National Food Service Management Institute's resource, *Wash Your Hands: Educating the School Community*: www.nfsmi-web01.nfsmi.olemiss.edu/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=118



Handling Fresh Produce in Classrooms, continued

Guidance for Teachers and Aids

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water prior to handling or serving fresh fruits and vegetables to students.*
- Allow time for students to wash their hands with soap and water prior to eating fresh produce, if possible.
- Use hand sanitizers if soap and water are not available. Hand sanitizers alone kill most, but not all, harmful microorganisms.
- Keep produce cold, or serve produce as soon as possible after it is delivered to the classroom.
- Do not serve any cut produce that has been held at room temperature for more than 2 hours or above 90 °F for more than one hour.**
- Distribute produce or allow students to select pre-packaged produce to minimize potential contamination.
- Discard all leftover fresh-cut produce, such as veggie sticks, sliced apples, sliced oranges, or melon.

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**Source: The Partnership for Food Safety Education. www.fightbac.org/safe-food-handling/chill