

## Wash Your Produce, Not Your Meat

### SAFE FOOD HANDLING HELPS PREVENT ILLNESS

All fruits and vegetables should be washed prior to consuming. But raw meat, poultry or fish should NOT be washed. This may seem counter-intuitive or contrary to what you've previously been taught, but times change and so do food handling recommendations. Washing produce helps to remove dirt and bacteria not only from surfaces, but also prevents them from being carried into the food when cut with a knife. But why not wash meat for the same reasons? Recent research has shown that when washing meat and poultry, pathogens such as *Salmonella* can be carried by water spray onto nearby items and surfaces, thus contaminating them.

A few quick tips for handling produce and meat:

- just before using, wash all fresh produce, even if the skins or rinds won't be eaten
- do not wash meat, poultry, or fish (pat dry with clean paper towels if necessary, then immediately dispose of the towel)
- use separate cutting boards and utensils for meat and produce, or wash them thoroughly before switching from one food type to another
- keep meat separate from other foods – in your shopping cart and checkout bags, in the refrigerator, and during food preparation.

And of course, always clean and sanitize your work area before and after food handling. And wash your hands, wash your hands, wash your hands!

*For further information, check out the National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP) website at <https://nchfp.uga.edu/> or visit your local Cooperative Extension service.*

Brought to you by the UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County  
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