Fruits and vegetables are healthy to eat. But did you know that harmful germs, like Salmonella, E. coli, and Listeria, can sometimes be on fruits and vegetables? There are steps that can help keep you healthy—and your fruits and vegetables safer to eat—from the store to your table.

**BEFORE PREPARING FRESH PRODUCE:**

- **Wash your hands under running water** and scrub with soap for 20 seconds. Remind your family to wash their hands before eating, too!
- **Rinse all produce thoroughly** under cool running water, even if you plan to peel it. This will get rid of dirt, germs, and chemicals.
- **Some produce is hard to wash** (lettuce, spinach, other leafy green vegetables and grapes). Use a colander and gently shake them under the running water.
- **Soap should not be used on produce.** A good, long rinse is good enough!

**ALWAYS CLEAN FOOD PREPARATION AREAS**

Before you start cutting produce, make sure your food preparation area is clean.

- **Wash cutting boards, knives, and counter tops** with soap and hot water.
- **For added safety, kitchen sanitizers can also be used** to kill food germs. For a home-made sanitizer, mix 1/4 teaspoon of bleach into 1 quart of water.

**STORE YOUR PRODUCE PROPERLY**

To keep fruits and veggies fresh and crisp for longer, put them in the refrigerator.

- **Always store cut-up or cooked fruits and vegetables in the fridge.** Keeping cantaloupe and watermelon in the fridge is also very important.
- **Produce should go on a shelf** above meats and eggs.
- **Check the temperature of your fridge using a thermometer.** It should be 41°F or colder.