

# Cleanliness and Sanitation: The Essential Ingredients

**Sanitation is basic.** At all stages in our food-handling process – preparation, storage, display and serving –make sure that all work surfaces and equipment are both *clean* and *sanitary*.

**What's the difference?** *Clean* means free of visible dirt; *sanitary* means free of harmful levels of disease-causing microorganisms and other harmful contaminants. Any dish, counter or utensil must be clean before it can be sanitized.

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## Produce Vendors –

- ✓ **Be sure produce is clean.** In general, vendors should wash fruits and vegetables, unless washing would increase spoilage or reduce their quality, as with raspberries, potatoes and onions. In all cases, remove visible dirt.
- ✓ **Ensure that transportation vehicles and containers for transporting produce are clean & sanitary.** Dirty vehicles and containers can contaminate produce with harmful microbes.
- ✓ **Use appropriate containers for selling produce.** Use food-grade containers for produce such as tomatoes, berries, etc. When bagging produce for your customers, use appropriate bags. Garbage bags are not food-grade- they are treated with mold-inhibiting chemicals. Don't reuse old bread sacks or grocery bags: These may have been contaminated by the food already stored in them.

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## Serving Food and Sampling Produce (NOT ALLOWED AT VENDOR BOOTHS):

- **Produce used for samples must be washed with cool water.** If it is thick-skinned produce, scrub with a clean vegetable brush. This removes nearly all insects, dirt, bacteria and some pesticide residues that can contaminate the interior of the produce once it is cut.
- **If washed produce is not cut for samples,** immediately store it in a clean container to prevent re-soiling of the exterior surface prior to cutting.
- **Cut samples must be covered** or protected if flies are present, the area is dusty, or weather conditions are such that the samples could become contaminated.
- **Minimize bare hand contact with cut produce.** This can be done by using single service items (as described below). If single service gloves are used, change the gloves often to prevent soiled gloves from cross-contaminating samples. Remember to wash hands between changing gloves.
- **Use single service items** to distribute samples to customers. Examples are paper plates, cups, napkins, plastic utensils or toothpicks. The customer can then dispose of single service items once the product is consumed.

# Cleaning and Sanitizing Procedures at Howard County Farmers' Market

- **Practice good hygiene.** Hands must be properly washed when selling products market and when preparing and distributing samples. Hands must be washed after smoking, eating, drinking, using the restroom, or anytime contamination occurs. When working in the kitchen, use the sink designated for handwashing. **Do not use the sinks designated for dish washing.**
- **Proper handwashing:** Wet hands with clean, warm water. Apply soap and work into a lather. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds; clean under the nails and between fingers. Rinse under clean, running water. Dry hands with disposable paper towel. Anytime visiting the restroom, wash hands thoroughly before leaving the restroom.
- **Utility sink:** Do not use the utility sink (located between men's and women's restroom) for washing hands. This sink is for mop washing and other housekeeping activities. It is NOT for washing hands or produce.
- **Use clean and sanitized dishes,** knives, utensils and cutting boards for cutting and displaying produce. To clean:
  - 1) **First sink:** Fully immerse items in soapy water to clean.
  - 2) **Second sink:** Thoroughly rinse with clean water.
  - 3) **Third sink:** Sanitize by immersing rinsed items in 75° F water (slightly cool to the touch) that has one tablespoon of regular, not scented, chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Allow to soak at least one minute, then allow to air dry on clean paper towels.

**Be sure all trash receptacles remain covered:** Be sure trash cans in kitchen and pavilion remain covered. The trash can in the women's restroom must also be covered. Any items (food samples, etc.) which might attract flies or become contaminated must be covered with netted table tents, plastic domes or other appropriate guards.

- **Ice must be made from potable water only.** Ice that has kept food cold may not be used for drinks or other human consumption.
- **Keep raw and prepared foods separate.**
- **Store chemicals, including cleaning solutions, away from food.**

## Food Safety Procedures . . . For Everyone!\*

Contamination of fresh produce is also of special concern, because people are eating increasing amounts of it, in part because public health agencies are recommending fruits and vegetables for their nutritional benefit. Also, because produce is generally grown outdoors, it can be contaminated in various ways such as by polluted irrigation water, fecal droppings from wildlife and livestock and contact with the soil.

- **Before and after preparing fresh produce, wash your hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap.**
- **Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water just before eating, cutting and cooking. (FDA does not recommend washing fruits and vegetables with soap or detergent or using commercial produce washes).**
- **Even if you plan to peel the produce before eating it, it is still important to wash it first. That's because any bacteria that might be present on the outside of items such as melons can be transferred to the inside of the fruit when you cut and peel them. (Any knife that will be used on the produce should be washed before and after using it.)**
- **Be sure to refrigerate cut or peeled fruits and vegetables within two hours after preparation.**
- **FDA describes fresh produce as possessing a special food safety risk because, when eaten raw, it doesn't go through a "kill step" such as being subjected to temperatures high enough to kill harmful pathogens.**

### About cantaloupes and tomatoes

In the past two years, contaminated cantaloupes have killed more than 30 people and sickened hundreds. On occasion, tomatoes have been linked to Salmonella outbreaks.

Because cantaloupes grow close to, or on, the soil where harmful bacteria can get onto them, they **should be washed with a produce scrub brush**. (No need to use soap or other cleaners.) Knives used to cut the cantaloupe should also be washed before and after use. It's also important to make sure that the surfaces cantaloupes come into contact with are cleaned before and after cutting or handling the cantaloupe.

When buying cut or diced cantaloupe, make sure it's displayed on ice, with plenty of ice surrounding it. Any cut melon that has been kept for longer than two hours at room temperature, or one hour when temperatures are more than 90 degrees F., should be thrown out.

Regarding tomatoes, avoid those with nicks or cuts on them. When washing tomatoes, don't put them in a sink or tub full of water because any contamination that might be on them can get into the water and be absorbed into the tomatoes' stem scar.

Cut tomatoes for salsa should be covered and refrigerated. Throw out cut tomatoes if they've been held for longer than two hours at room temperature or one hour at temperatures of more than 90 degrees F.

\*Source: <http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2013/08/shoppers-can-pick-up-food-safety-clues-at-farmers-markets/#.VqT74SHWy9I>