



Handling Fresh Produce in Classrooms*

Guidance for School Nutrition Staff

- 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.
- 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 FDA Food Code. Follow the food code for your local or state jurisdiction. Consult with your local health department if you have any questions. <https://www.fda.gov/food/retail-food-protection/fda-food-code>

**For hand washing information refer to the Wash Your Hands: Educating the School Community resource, available at: <https://professionalstandards.fns.usda.gov/content/wash-your-hands-educating-school-community>.



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, types of germs.
- 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.

Follow the Food Code for your local or state jurisdiction. Consult your school district's food safety plan for appropriate actions when temperature standards are not met. Ask your local health department if you have any questions.

*For hand washing information refer to the *Wash Your Hands: Educating the School Community* resource: <https://professionalstandards.fns.usda.gov/content/wash-your-hands-educating-school-community>.

**Source: The Partnership for Food Safety Education. <https://www.fightbac.org/>.

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