Garden to Table

Five Steps to Food Safe Fruit and Vegetable Home Gardening

New England Food Safety Partnership:
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University of Maine
University of New Hampshire
University of Rhode Island
University of Vermont

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Produce Safety Concerns—Why Now?

- Centers for Disease Control estimates, 1990s, 12 percent foodborne illness outbreaks linked to fresh produce
- We eat more fruits and vegetables for a healthy diet
- Fruits and vegetables are most often eaten raw

What does this have to do with your home garden? Harmful microorganisms (pathogens) are a part of the gardening environment. Home-grown produce can become contaminated from—

- Soil
- Water
- Manure/Compost
- Wild and Domestic Animals
- Ill home gardeners
- Dirty harvesting containers
- Improper post-harvest handling

Personal hygiene important at all steps

- If you are ill, especially diarrhea, don’t work in the garden
- Wash your hands after working in the garden, using the bathroom, and before preparing fruits and vegetables.
- Cover open cuts and sores

Follow these five simple steps to reduce the risk of someone suffering a foodborne illness after eating produce from your home garden.

- Cover open cuts and sores
- If you are ill, especially diarrhea, don’t work in the garden
- Wash your hands after working in the garden, using the bathroom, and before preparing fruits and vegetables.
- Improper post-harvest handling

Humans are a major source of disease transmission in food. What can you do?

- Wear clean gloves or have clean hands
- Cover any open wounds
- Never harvest when you are ill
- Use clean food containers
- Dispose of damaged fruit
- Don’t eat directly from the garden
- Shake, rub, or brush off any garden soil or debris

Harvesting Garden Produce

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