

# Appetite for Knowledge



## FARMER'S MARKET FOOD SAFETY TIPS

Food that is fresh is a delicious treat! Shopping at the farmers market not only offers some of the freshest fruits, vegetables and other foods you can find, it also offers the opportunity to buy locally and connect with your community.

No matter where you get your food, food safety is always important. As you explore farmers' markets, be mindful of food safety. Most markets have their own food safety rules that vendors must comply with, as well as government regulations. Follow these guidelines to reduce the risk of bringing home a case of foodborne illness.

### VENDORS

The condition of the vendors' booths and their products can tell you a lot about their safe food practices. Here are some things to look for:

- Good hygiene, such as clean hands and clothing.
- Hands are being washed.
- Vendors using gloves, tongs, tissues, or other utensils are doing it right! If knives, serving

utensils, dishes, and service surfaces are not kept clean, pass on these foods.

- Ask vendors about how the food was grown and prepared. If you are not comfortable with the answers, politely move on the next vendor.



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## FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Home grown, store purchased, organic, or non-organically grown produce all have some bacteria. Here are ways to reduce your risk:

- Avoid produce with mold, bruises, cuts, and insect holes. These are places for bacteria to hide and spread.
- If you do purchase “less than perfect” produce, plan to use it in cooked items such as spaghetti sauce or chili.
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting, or cooking. Dry with a clean cloth or paper towel to eliminate bacteria.
- Wash produce even if you plan to peel it before eating. Bacteria present on the outside of foods like melons and bananas can be transferred to the inside when you cut or peel them.
- Refrigerate cut or peeled fruits and vegetables within two hours.
- Cut or peeled produce should be surrounded by ice.

## EGGS

- Eggs should be properly chilled under 41°F. Do not let them stay at room temperature.
- Make sure the cartons and eggs are clean and the shells are not cracked.
- Once eggs are washed they need to be dried and stored in covered containers since the natural protection has now been removed.

## MILK AND CHEESES

- Choose pasteurized milk and dairy products. Remember, if consuming raw milk, it has not been treated with heat, or pasteurized, to kill harmful pathogens.

- Pregnant women, older adults, young children, and people with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for illness caused by Brucella, Campylobacter, Cryptosporidium, E. coli, Listeria, and Salmonella.

## MEAT

- Meat should be kept in closed coolers with adequate amounts of ice.
- Perishables must be refrigerated within 2 hours (1 hour if it's over 90°F), so bring an insulated bag or cooler with you to keep meat cool on the way home.
- Separate meat from other ready-to-eat foods, so the juices from raw meat do not come in contact with produce and other ready-to-eat foods. This includes using separate grocery totes.

## JUICES, CIDER, AND HONEY

Unpasteurized juice, cider, and honey may have harmful bacteria present. Since unpasteurized foods are sources of foodborne pathogens, shoppers should ask when samples and products are not clearly labeled.

## READY-TO-EAT ITEMS

- Foods served hot should be kept over 135°F.
- Cold foods should be kept under 41°F.
- If you buy perishable items, they should not remain unrefrigerated for over two hours, and only one hour in hot weather with temperatures of 90°F or above.

## HOME CANNED FOODS

- Ask how the food was prepared – boiling water bath, pressure canned, or other method.
- Ask if the product should be refrigerated at home.



## GROCERY TOTES

Use separate reusable grocery totes for raw meat and poultry and ready-to-eat foods such as fresh produce and breads. Reduce or eliminate bacteria by:

- Frequently washing grocery totes.
- Cleaning all areas where totes are placed, such as the kitchen counter.
- Storing totes in a clean, dry location.
- Avoiding leaving empty totes in the trunk of a vehicle unless wrapped.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Make the farmers' market your final stop before heading home. Your fresh veggies and fruit, and



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other perishable foods won't have to sit long in a hot car and will make it much more quickly to the refrigerator.

Do not count on a vendor to keep you healthy; use your own safety standards. Foodborne illness is no laughing matter; serious cases can have severe and long-lasting consequences. Food safety regulations for farmer's markets in Wyoming can be found at <https://wyagric.state.wy.us/divisions/chs>.

### Sources

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, [USDA.gov](https://www.usda.gov)
- Wyoming Department of Agriculture, [wyagric.state.wy.us](https://wyagric.state.wy.us)



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