

## **Fresh Produce concerns amid COVID-19**

Here's a food safety update for you regarding COVID-19. Are you concerned about the virus contaminating your fresh produce? Do we continue to eat fresh fruits and vegetables? The answer is yes. There is no reason to assume that fresh fruits and vegetables are unsafe. Regardless of where the produce is from, fruits and vegetables are a healthy part of the diet.

We know that the COVID-19 virus doesn't appear to last long on organic surfaces like the outside of fruits and vegetables, and it doesn't appear that we can get sick from 'eating' the virus. But there are some general food safety steps that we always recommend when eating or preparing fresh fruits and vegetables.

Start by washing your hands, then rinse all fresh fruits and vegetables with clean running water and dry with a paper towel before you eat or prepare them. Scrub the surfaces of melons, apples or other firm items. If you want an added safety step, dip rinsed fruits and vegetables in a vinegar solution of 2 cups vinegar + 2 cups water, allow to stand for 1 minute, then rinse again with clean water and dry with a paper towel. Research has shown that this vinegar rinse will help remove harmful bacteria like Salmonella. Whether the vinegar rinse will destroy the coronavirus, we don't yet know but we do know that it won't hurt.