

# Should you “wash” your food?



When COVID-19 started to spread, many people became more concerned about germs. Some articles and videos about washing your food started to make the rounds on the Internet. But are you supposed to sanitize food or use soap? Or is water enough?

If you’re worried about keeping your food clean, here are some tips.



## AT THE GROCERY STORE

Start with a clean cart. Most grocery stores have sanitizing wipes at the entrance. Some are also sanitizing carts themselves and giving customers a clean cart or basket as they arrive.

Get a sanitized cart or use a sanitizing wipe to clean the handle and other surfaces you might touch.

Make sure any raw meats you purchase are in their own plastic bags. Keep them separated from other foods in your shopping cart and grocery bags.



## CLEANING MEATS – DON’T DO IT

Do not wash or rinse meats, poultry or fish. This includes running it under water, soaking it or using vinegar or other solutions to “clean” it. Experts say rinsing, soaking or cleaning meat does not help you. Instead, it spreads germs and bacteria in your kitchen.

Today’s meats, poultry and fish in stores are already cleaned during processing. The practice of cleaning these foods at home is outdated and not healthy.



Keep these foods each in their separate bag and keep them in the fridge or freezer until you’re ready to use it. Wash and sanitize counters, cutting boards and other surfaces that come into contact with raw or frozen meats, poultry and fish.

## CLEAN HANDS ARE KEY

After a trip to the grocery store, wash your hands with soap and water. After touching any raw foods, wash your hands again. And finally, before you prepare any food at all, wash your hands!



## CLEANING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Rinse any fresh fruits or vegetables well under running water. Do this before cutting, peeling or eating them.

You can wash foods that are labeled as “pre-washed,” but it’s not necessary. These are ready to eat.

## DON’T USE SOAP OR SANITIZERS

Sanitizing wipes and other chemicals are not safe to consume. Even household dish soaps are not safe to eat. So, don’t use these things on your food.

Rinse fruits and veggies well. Make sure you get any visible dirt off. Use a clean scrub brush on tough things like potatoes or cantaloupe.

Source: United States Department of Agriculture