

 West Lothian Council	Environmental Health		SUBJECT: SAFE PREPARATION OF SALADS
	✓	Food Safety/Food Hygiene	NUMBER: FH13
Revised: 29/06/15		Health & Safety	
		Public Health	
Status: TRADE ADVICE		Pollution Control	
Data label: Public		Pest Control/Dog Warden	

Information Sheet FH13

SAFE PREPARATION OF SALADS

Introduction

Salads – including vegetables and fruit – can carry food poisoning germs just like any other ready to eat food. Salads are therefore classed as a HIGH RISK FOOD and need special care.

Samples from shops, restaurants and takeaways have been found to contain the germs *E. COLI*, *SALMONELLA* and *LISTERIA*, among others.

If you sell any food, including salad, which is not safe to eat then you will be breaking the law and could face severe penalties.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has given guidance on salad washing in its publication *E. coli O157 Control of Cross – contamination* and is given below.

Fresh Produce – Fruits and vegetables that are not supplied as Ready to Eat (RTE) must be treated as a potential source of E. coli O157 and to make them safe to eat they will need to undergo an adequate washing and/or processing treatment (for example peeling or cooking). Soil where fresh produce grows can become contaminated with bacteria such as E. coli O157 which can transfer to fruits and vegetables. Root crops and leafy vegetables sold loose are likely to have the most soil on the outside. Fresh produce that is not supplied as RTE is to be handled, stored and displayed in such a way that it does not contaminate RTE foods. Special attention is required when storing soiled vegetables to ensure that they do not contaminate other produce that may not be supplied as RTE but are likely to be consumed raw (for example fruits such as strawberries or raspberries).

Fruits and vegetables that have been supplied as RTE should already have been subjected to controlled procedures to ensure that they do not present a risk to health. It is not necessary to re-wash them and re-washing is not recommended as it could introduce an additional cross-contamination risk.

The full document can be found online at

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ecoli-cross-contamination-guidance.pdf>

Safe Salad Preparation

To make sure that your salads are always safe, we recommend that you follow this basic guide.

- Buy your salads, fruit, and vegetables from an established and reputable supplier that you know and trust.
- Insist on good quality, and don't accept anything that is not in first class condition. Always check deliveries carefully.
- Store in a cool dry place, preferably in a refrigerator, unless you intend to use them immediately.
- The FSA recommendation is that *washing will help to remove bacteria including E. coli from the surface of fruit and vegetables. Most of the bacteria will be in the soil attached to the produce. Washing to remove any soil is, therefore, particularly important. When washing vegetables, do not just hold them under the running tap, rub them under water, for example in a bowl of fresh water starting with the least soiled items first and then give each of them a final rinse. Washing loose produce is particularly important as it tends to have more soil attached to it than pre-packaged fruit and vegetables* – NHS choices - How to wash fruits and vegetables:<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/homehygiene/Pages/How-to-wash-fruit-and-vegetables.aspx>
- When salad has been washed and rinsed keep it in a freshly washed container, with a lid to stop any more germs getting on to it.
- Always wash your hands before touching salads or fruit to avoid passing on germs, and avoid touching it with bare hands at all if possible – use tongs etc instead.
- Many businesses have now opted to buy in ready prepared salad, which is supplied in sealed packs. This is cleaned and sanitised in a food factory. It can also save you a great deal of time in preparation, and will result in much less wastage.

Further help

Remember it is your responsibility to ensure that the food served to your customers is safe. If you would like help, or need any further advice, then please contact us on 01506 280000 or environmentalhealth@westlothian.gov.uk