

Fresh cut fruit and vegetables



Whole fruit and vegetables are safe and nutritious. However, when these foods are cut there is a risk of harmful bacteria contaminating and growing on the produce unless it is handled correctly.

Fresh fruit and vegetables that will be consumed raw, without any heat treatment (eg cooking) to destroy bacteria, need to be handled safely to minimise cross contamination and prevent harmful bacteria from growing.

The tips below are relevant for many types of fresh cut fruit and vegetables that the children's service may prepare, such as fruit platters, fruit salad, fruit kebabs, carrot and celery sticks, vegetable platters and salads.

Preparing

- Keep separated from other raw foods (eg meat, chicken, fish, eggs) to avoid cross contamination
- Use a clean and sanitised chopping board and knife when cutting (a colour coded chopping board may also be appropriate)
- Wash fruit, vegetables and salad ingredients thoroughly in clean, drinking-quality water just before preparing and serving
- Peel, trim or remove the skin or outer leaves (as appropriate)
- Remove any bruised or damaged parts

Serving

- Use cut fruit and vegetables on the day they are prepared
- Handling of cut fruit and vegetables should follow the '4-hour/2-hour' rule for potentially hazardous foods
- Serve immediately after preparing or within two hours (if possible)
- If not serving within two hours, cover and store in the fridge until serving (on the same day of preparation)

4-hour/2-hour rule

The time for which food can be safely held between 5°C and 60°C is commonly referred to as the '4-hour/2-hour rule' and is applied as follows:

0 to 2 hours

Use immediately, or keep at or below 5°C, or at or above 60°C

2 to 4 hours

Use immediately

More than 4 hours

Throw away



If you intend to use the 4-hour/2-hour rule you will need to demonstrate that the food is safe. See the guideline on the 4-hour/2-hour rule on the Authority's website.