



Recommendations to Consumers Regarding Washing Ready-To-Eat Lettuce/Leafy Green Salads

- 1) Carefully read labels to determine whether a product is one that should be washed before consumption (e.g. hearts of Romaine) or is a ready-to-eat (RTE) food product (e.g. pre-washed lettuce/leafy green salad). If the product is not labeled "washed", "triple washed" or "ready-to-eat", the product needs to be washed before consumption.
- 2) If a RTE lettuce/leafy green salad is received in either a sealed bag or rigid plastic containers labeled "washed", "triple washed" or "ready-to-eat" it does not need additional washing before you eat it unless specifically directed on the label.
- 3) Additional washing treatments are not likely to enhance the safety of RTE lettuce/leafy green salads.
 - Harmful bacteria are rarely found on RTE lettuce/leafy green salads.
 - In the unlikely event that harmful bacteria are present on a RTE lettuce/leafy greens salad after commercial washing, they are likely to resist removal or inactivation by further washing.
 - If the following, instructions for washing are not followed, there is a risk of cross-contamination from hands sinks, colanders, pans and utensils that may be used during washing. This may outweigh any safety benefit that further washing may provide to pre-washed, ready-to-eat salads.
- 4) If you choose to wash the RTE lettuce/leafy green salads before use, you should:
 - Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before handling RTE lettuce/leafy green salads. Rewash hands as necessary.
 - Clean with hot soapy water, the sink, colander, salad spinner and any utensils that will contact the lettuce/leafy greens salad.
 - Use cold running water to wash RTE lettuce/leafy green salads to reduce the potential for cross-contamination.
 - Dry RTE lettuce/leafy green salad with a clean salad spinner or paper towel not previously used for another purpose.
 - Never use detergent or bleach to wash fresh vegetables. These products are not intended for consumption.
- 5) Follow FightBAC!TM procedures to protect RTE lettuce/leafy green salads from contamination.

Check

- Check to be sure that RTE lettuce/leafy green salads you buy are not bruised or damaged.
- Check that RTE lettuce/leafy green salads are refrigerated at the store before buying. Do not buy RTE lettuce/leafy green salads that are not refrigerated.

Clean

- Wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before handling RTE lettuce/leafy green salads.
- Use hot water and soap to clean all surfaces and utensils, including counter tops and salad spinners, that will touch RTE lettuce/leafy green salads.
- Use a clean utensil to serve RTE lettuce/leafy green salads.

Separate

- When shopping, be sure fresh produce is separated from household chemicals and raw foods such as meat, poultry and seafood in your cart and in bags at checkout.
- Keep RTE lettuce/leafy green salads separate and protect from contact with raw meat, poultry or seafood or their juices in your refrigerator. Do not allow raw meat, poultry or seafood juices to drip onto RTE lettuce/leafy green salads.

Chill

- Store RTE lettuce/leafy green salads in the refrigerator.

Throw Away

- Throw away RTE lettuce/leafy green salad if it has touched raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- Discard the product if it appears spoiled or has exceeded its labeled use-by date.

More information regarding safe produce handling may be found on the FightBAC!TM website at:
<http://portal.fightbac.org/pfse/toolsyoucanuse/phec/>