

When Shopping at Farmers' Markets:

Look for vendors who have a clean stall, use clean containers for food and avoid direct handling of prepared foods (e.g. use utensils, paper napkins or similar means to serve the foods).

Make sure food has been protected from contamination, including contact with insects, birds and other animals.

Ensure that food is displayed off the ground, protected from the elements (e.g. stored out of direct sunlight, protected from rain, winds and dust) and perishables are properly temperature controlled.

Ask to see permits for any vendor selling higher risk foods for immediate consumption. Vendors selling higher risk foods not intended for immediate consumption should have documentation from the Health Authority that authorizes sale of these foods.



For more information:

BC Temporary Food Market Guidelines

<http://www.bccdc.ca/NR/rdonlyres/8084EEC3-3010-4908-876E-37BF359A939D/0/GuidelinesSaleofFoodsatTemporaryFoodMarkets2011FINAL3.pdf>

Canadian Food Inspection Agency – Handling Produce Safely

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/kitchen-cuisine/safety-salubrite/handling-manipulation-eng.php>

CanFightBac

<http://www.canfightbac.org/en/>

Eat Smart BC

<http://www.eatsmartbc.ca/>

HealthLinkBC – Food Safety for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

<http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthfiles/hfile59b.stm>

Interior Health – Health Protection Program

<http://www.interiorhealth.ca/health-and-safety.aspx>

Safe Food Tips for Farmers' Markets



Farmers' markets are an important part of life in our communities. Few things are better at bringing people together than food – especially the wide range of high quality food available at our farmers' markets.

When shopping at farmers' markets it is important to ensure the food you purchase has been stored and prepared properly in order to prevent foodborne illness.

Foodborne Illness

Foodborne illness, also known as “food poisoning,” is often caused by bacteria. It can also be caused by viruses, parasites, toxins (or poisons) produced by some bacteria, or by chemicals that may get into food.

Symptoms of foodborne illness can include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, stomach cramps, and other symptoms.

Foodborne illnesses are often mild, but sometimes can be very serious.

Symptoms can start hours to weeks after the food has been eaten. Usually people feel sick within a couple of days after eating contaminated food.

If you think you have a foodborne illness, visit your doctor and notify your local health unit right away.

High Risk Food

Any food can cause foodborne illness if not properly handled. Some foods are high risk because bacteria can grow more easily in them.

High risk foods include:

- Dairy products (e.g. milk, cream, cheese, yogurt, and products containing them such as cream pies and quiches)
- Eggs (or foods containing eggs), meat, fish, poultry and products made from these foods
- Prepared foods: antipasto, processed vegetables (bean salad, guacamole, low-acid pickled vegetables or relishes, humus, etc.), meat pies, perogies, garlic spreads, pesto

Safe Food Tips for High Risk Food

Higher risk foods should only be purchased if they are cold. Canned products may be an exception – and may only require refrigeration after opening.

Keep these foods cold until you get them home, then store them in the refrigerator or freezer to prevent the growth of bacteria. In addition, buy only:

- uncracked, clean eggs that have been kept cold
- meats or fish from approved sources that are properly labeled and have been kept frozen

Lower Risk Food

Lower risk foods are less prone to bacteria growth. Examples include:

- Most whole fresh fruits and vegetables
- Bread and most baked goods,
- Candies
- Pickles
- Honey
- Jam, jellies and fruit preserves
- Syrups
- Vinegars

Safe Food Tips for Lower Risk Food

These foods generally do not need to be refrigerated until they are opened.

Wash fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water before eating or preparing them.

