



When good fruit goes bad

When I hear about a recall involving fresh produce, how can I find out if the fruits and vegetables in my refrigerator are affected? If I buy organic produce, am I safe?

Information about recent recalls and food safety alerts are available on the front page of foodsafety.gov.

This listing contains information from both the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which oversees 80 percent of the nation's food supply including produce, seafood and dairy, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which is in charge of meat, poultry and processed egg products. For foods covered just by the FDA, see www.fda.gov/safety/recalls for recall information going back 60 days.

For recalled fresh produce check the FDA list. You can run a specific search by using the product name as a keyword. By clicking on the name of the product, you'll see a description and the pictures of the product that was recalled and the retailers that sold the item. Packaged products that have been recalled will have a date, and a production lot number to look for on the package. For bulk produce without a label, check with the store where you bought the product to find out if your items are part of the recall.

If you do have a product that's been recalled, follow the FDA's advice

and don't take any chances. Either throw it away or take it back to the store and ask for a refund.

To be on the safe side, the FDA recommends that you should also:

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds (count it out -- it's longer than you might think) with soap and warm water after handling the recalled items.

- Wash any surface that the recalled items have touched, including refrigerator shelves or bins, countertops, bowls or plates, with soap and warm water.

Unfortunately, organic produce isn't immune to food safety problems. For example, one brand of organic mangos sold in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Jersey and Texas was the subject of a recall in May due to possible contamination with *Listeria monocytogenes*. A more recent recall of peaches, nectarines, plums and pluots (a cross between a plum and an apricot) included both conventional and organic produce, because they were packed in the same facility where, again, *Listeria* was found.

Anyone can sign up to get automatic alerts about recalls by email or text. Just go to foodsafety.gov/recalls/alerts to sign up.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences and its outreach and research arms, Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1043, or filipic.3@osu.edu.



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Aug. 15, 2014

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Editor:

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