



FOOD SAFETY: SHOPPING AND TRANSPORTING GROCERIES

Food safety starts right at the supermarket. To help keep your groceries safe, follow these tips for shopping and transporting them home.

General Safety Tips



- ▶ Use a sanitizing wipe on the handle and seat of your grocery cart, which may contain harmful bacteria. Many stores supply wipes near the carts or bring your own.
- ▶ Bring hand sanitizer and use it before sampling foods at the store.
- ▶ Make sure food packages are free from debris, holes, tears, or openings.

KEEP A CLEAN ROUTINE FOR REUSABLE TOTES

Did you know that reusable grocery totes need regular cleaning? That's because raw meat, poultry, eggs, or other raw foods could leave behind harmful bacteria that could spread to other foods.

Use these tips to help keep your reusable totes safe:

- ▶ At check-out, put meat, poultry, and seafood in a plastic bag before placing in a separate tote away from

10 Tips for Food Safety in the Aisles

1. Pick produce that is free of major bruises and damage.
2. When buying precut fresh produce, make sure it's refrigerated or set in ice.
3. Keep fruits and vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry, and seafood products in your cart.
4. Put raw meat, poultry, and seafood in plastic bags before placing them in your cart to keep bacteria-containing juices from leaking onto other items in your cart. Plastic bags are usually provided near the meat case, or grab some from the produce department.
5. At the butcher counter, choose precooked meats and fish that are completely separated from raw items in the display.

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ready-to-eat foods. This help prevents juices from leaking and contaminating your reusable totes and food.

- ▶ At home, reduce cross-contamination by cleaning areas where you place your totes, such as the kitchen counter or table.
- ▶ Wash reusable cloth totes frequently in the washing machine or by hand with hot, soapy water. Wipe down plastic bags with antibacterial sprays.
- ▶ Store totes in a clean, dry location. Avoid leaving totes in the trunk of a vehicle.

6. Make sure cartons of milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, and other dairy products are cold. Lukewarm cartons might have been left unrefrigerated long enough for bacteria to grow.
7. Choose clean eggs that aren't broken or cracked.
8. Avoid frozen foods that show signs of thawing.
9. Buy perishable items like meat and dairy products toward the end of your shopping trip so they stay chilled longer.
10. Don't buy canned goods that are deeply dented, bulging, or rusting.

At the Checkout

- ▶ Ask the cashier to place your raw meat, poultry, and seafood items in a separate bag so their juices don't leak onto ready-to-eat items like produce, bread, or snacks.
- ▶ Bag frozen foods together to keep them cold.

Transporting and Storing

- ▶ If possible, go straight home after grocery shopping because perishable foods must be refrigerated within 2 hours (or 1 hour if it's hotter than 90 °F outside). This includes the time foods were in your cart at the store.
- ◀ If you know you can't go straight home, bring a cooler bag with ice packs to store perishable items.
- ▶ Refrigerate or freeze perishable foods as soon as you get home so they don't get warm enough for bacteria to grow. Set your refrigerator temperature at 40 °F or below and your freezer temperature at 0 °F or below.
- ▶ Wash reusable grocery bags regularly. For tips, see the sidebar **Keep a Clean Routine for Reusable Totes**.

