

There's a lot of misinformation out there right now, especially when it comes to the safety of our food. But we're here to reassure you that it's okay to eat fruits and veggies you know and love – Have A Plant®! We've put together this Q&A featuring science-driven, expert advice and links to helpful resources to help set the record straight and provide the answers you've been looking for. For more information on how to properly clean fruits and vegetables at home, foods that have a longer shelf life, food delivery services, affordable food access, and more, read on!

1. Is it safe to eat fresh/raw fruits and vegetables?

It is absolutely safe to eat fresh/raw fruits and vegetables. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance recommends that you rinse fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten (e.g., oranges). Scrub firm produce, such as apples or potatoes, with a clean produce brush. However, when it comes to canned or frozen fruits and vegetables, they are completely safe to eat as is and there is no need to rinse before consumption.

*Learn more about safe food handling practices: <http://bit.ly/2yApoYl>.
And, follow the CDC's four easy steps to safe food handling: <https://bit.ly/2Xblhfl>.*

2. Why are there shortages of certain foods and not others?

While certain foods at your grocery store may temporarily be in short supply, according to the CDC and FDA, there are no nationwide shortages of food, thanks to our wonderful farmers/ranchers and foodservice and retail employees who are working around the clock to keep our supply chain running. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3e5NlXt>

In search of a smart food swap? You can substitute canned, dried or frozen fruits and vegetables for fresh produce in most instances. PBH Fruit and Vegetable Ambassador in Action, Cara Harbstreet, MS, RD, LD, dishes on creative swaps for fruits, vegetables and herbs: bit.ly/2R7yu4Y.

3. What is the best method for unpacking your groceries when you get home from the grocery store? Should I wipe down packaged or canned foods with cleaning wipes?

According to the e CDC and FDA, there is no current evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19. If you are concerned about your food or packaging, don't stress! Just make sure to wash your fruits and vegetables under running tap water and wash your hands after handling food and food packages when you return from the grocery store.

For additional information on COVID-19 and produce safety tips, read PBH Fruit and Vegetable Ambassador in Action, Lori Taylor's blog: <https://t.co/HAFLOHowvG?amp=1> .

4. Any recommendations on healthy foods to buy in bulk that freeze well or have a longer shelf life?

Hitting the bulk foods section, which is full of healthy foods like whole grains, nuts, dried fruits and more, is a great idea! Not only can you mix and match items to create tasty snacks such as trail mixes, or make your own nut butters, you can stock up on foods that keep well in air-tight containers, like lentils, quinoa and oats. Don't forget, frozen, dried and canned fruits and vegetables, as well as 100% juice, have a longer shelf life and can last in your pantry for a while - some even last from weeks to months when stored properly.

For bulk food recommendations and storage tips, check out Alyson Dykstra, RD, LD, CPT's ideas: <https://bit.ly/2xINWOn>. And, learn from PBH Fruit and Vegetable Ambassador in Action, Lori Taylor, about produce with the best shelf life: <https://bit.ly/349dqsN>.

5. Do you know any websites that have people deliver food, specifically groceries?

Depending on where you live, there may be a handful of options to consider for grocery delivery. These services are growing in popularity, and include companies such as AmazonFresh, Instacart, Peapod, and more. Browse this list of the top five grocery delivery services: <https://bit.ly/2UJqxW5>.

And, if you need affordable access to food, find your local food bank via this resource: <https://bit.ly/2V3QfmU>.

6. Is it safe to eat fruits and vegetables that are mixed with others that have begun to go bad, even if they still look ok to eat?

While all fruits and veggies mixed with others may not appear to be top quality, they are likely safe to eat. Use this fabulous resource from The Greater Chicago Food Depository to identify if your fruits and vegetables – citrus fruits, berries, onions, leafy greens and more – are still okay to eat: <https://bit.ly/2V6f6qu>.