

Fresh Produce Storage Tips

Temperature control is essential!



- **DO** keep produce that requires cooling in refrigeration (34° - 41°F; 1° - 5°C) as much as possible.
- **DON'T** leave fresh produce sit out of the fridge.
- **DO** make sure the dry storage area has good air circulation.
- **DON'T** leave produce under hot, stuffy environments!
- **DO** store produce at least 6-12 inches off the floor in a crate or a stable box, container or stand for sanitary and safety reasons.
- Produce storage should be away from lockers, toilets, garbage, mechanical rooms, sewer and water lines, under stairwells, or other areas of possible contamination.

Ethylene – Fruits and vegetables produce ethylene, a naturally occurring plant hormone gas that helps them ripen. Special care must be given when storing produce in order to minimize the breakdown and waste caused by ethylene.

Produce that releases high or medium amounts of ethylene:	apples, apricots, avocados, bananas, cantaloupes, mangos, nectarines, pears, peaches, and tomatoes
Produce with Ethylene Sensitivity: [should NOT be stored near high or medium ethylene producers to reduce premature breakdown or decay]	apples, avocados, bananas, bok choy, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, chard, collards, cucumbers, edible flowers, herbs, kale, lettuce, green onions, mature dry onions, pears, spinach, and watermelons

- ❖ See the **Washington Grown Produce Basics Chart** to learn fresh produce storage conditions including temperature, humidity, and various levels of ethylene production and sensitivity.

Storage Tips for Organic Produce:

Organic produce is grown without use of synthetic chemical pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides. This may affect the shelf-life.

Remember “First In, First Out” (FIFO) – Rotating your produce supply using the **FIFO** method will help keep produce fresh for use.



References:

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Nutrition for Everyone. Fruits and Vegetables. <http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/fruitsvegetables/index.html>. Accessed August 15, 2011.
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- Alabama State Department of Education. *Produce Storage and Handling Guide*. <https://docs.alsde.edu/documents/53/Produce%20Storage%20and%20Handling%20Guide.pdf>. Accessed November 14, 2011
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