

5.2 Safe preparation of vegetables

All vegetables should be fresh and of good quality. You will be preparing food for children in your work area, e.g. in the staff room, the classroom or the school's canteen. Some areas are not necessarily designed for such preparation. Fresh vegetables are safe, delicious and nutritious. However, when these foods are cut there is a risk of harmful bacteria contaminating and growing on the produce unless it is handled correctly. Following below tips will contribute to ensuring that those risks are minimized. Obviously, each school has a different set up and materials available. Therefore, we will only present general best practices and tips to prepare food safely for you to take into account.

- Start by **washing your hands**. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sopxnqGrqSc&feature=youtu.be>)



Wet your hands and rub together well to build up a good lather with soap as the suds help to carry the bugs away. Do this for at least 20 seconds and don't forget to wash between your fingers and under your nails. Rinse well under running water to remove the bugs from your hands. Dry your hands thoroughly on a clean towel for at least 20 seconds. Touching surfaces with moist hands encourages bugs to spread from the surface to your hands.



- **Organise your preparation area**. Choose an area that is neat, clean and easily accessible and preferably close to the sink. Give a quick clean with detergent and water to sanitize.



- **Wash the vegetables** under running tap water to remove any traces of soil.



- **Use** a clean and dedicated **cutting board** to place the vegetables on.
- **Use appropriate knives**. Be careful when manipulating them not to injure yourself. When you are not using them, think about having them rest far from the edge of the table so you do not risk dropping them and harming yourself or others.



- **Remove** any bruised or **damaged parts**.
- **Peel** the vegetables if needs be with a peeler. Then, **prepare** them in **bite-size pieces** (i.e. individual florets for broccolis and cauliflowers, sticks for carrots, slices for cucumbers and mushrooms, dices for beetroots, shreds for cabbages...).

- Place cut vegetables on a plate covered with cling wrap or use a plastic container (i.e. Tupperware)
- Serve immediately after preparing or **within two hours** (if possible)
- If not serving within two hours, cover and **store in the fridge** for maximum 24h.



The preparation of one vegetable for the whole class normally will take no more than 5-10 min.

For further information of safe preparation of foods, see:

<http://www.foodsafety.asn.au/>

<http://www.csiro.au/Outcomes/Food-and-Agriculture/refrigerated-storage-of-perishable-foods/Refrigerating-products.aspx>