
FOOD SAFETY ISSUES

Surface decontamination of fruits and vegetables eaten raw: a review

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Preface

Prevention of contamination is the most efficient way to ensure food safety and prevent foodborne illness. Thus, every effort should be made to protect food from primary sources of contamination. This is, however, not always possible. Raw foodstuffs, particularly fruits and vegetables grown close to the soil, may be contaminated with various foodborne pathogens.

In some countries, chemical disinfectant agents are used to decontaminate the surface of fruits and vegetables, in addition to washing with water. It is not clearly known to which extent these agents are effective, what their optimum conditions of use are, and whether they have adverse toxicological effects.

The present document attempts to provide an insight into some of these concerns. It presents a review of pathogens associated with fruits and vegetables and a literature review of studies carried out to investigate the efficacy of a range of methods used for surface decontamination. However, it does not review the potential adverse effects of using chemical disinfectants. Further work is needed on this subject. Therefore, the document should not be seen as a recommendation of the use of chemical disinfectant agents for surface decontamination of fruits and vegetables.



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