

FARM TO SCHOOL

CUYAHOGA COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH



*Local produce
tastes better
and is better
for you!*

*Learn more
about the
Ohio Farm to
School program:
[farmtoschool.osu.
edu](http://farmtoschool.osu.edu)*

**The health of our children depends on
the choices adults make.**

**Using locally grown produce can lead to
improved health.**

*Eating fresh fruits and vegetables rather than
processed can reduce salt, sugar and fat intake*

Ways to Use Fresh Produce

Educational Activities

Use fruits and vegetables for taste-testing events and other learning activities.

School Meal Programs

When handled correctly, fruits and vegetables harvested from school gardens or procured from local growers can be used in licensed food service operations.

Public Fundraisers

School kitchens holding a valid food service license can prepare fruits and vegetables from their school garden to sell to the public.

**Some rules apply. Please contact the Cuyahoga County
Board of Health at 216.201.2000 for details.**

CUYAHOGA COUNTY
BOARD OF HEALTH
YOUR TRUSTED SOURCE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Acquiring Produce

Buying from a Local Farm

Interested in bringing local produce into your school system? Here is a checklist you can use when talking to a farmer or grower about purchasing their produce. For a more complete list, contact the Cuyahoga County Board of Health.

- Is potable water used on produce being tested?
- Are workers trained about hygiene practices and sanitation?
- Is there a risk of contamination with manure?
- Is a pest control program in place?
- Is dirt or other debris removed from products before packaging?
- Are food contact surfaces regularly washed , rinsed and sanitized?
- Are food grade packaging materials used?
- Are products kept cool during transportation?



Growing Your Own Produce

A school garden can serve as an engaging classroom for providing a wide range of educational goals. Working in a garden also offers recreation, exercise, and teaches children responsibility and teamwork. Here are some things to consider when establishing your school garden:

Start with safe soil

Don't build your garden near septic systems, parking lots, or any place where water collects. Test soil prior to planting if you're not using a raised bed to ensure that it is free of arsenic and lead.

Take proper care of your garden

Use clean water on your plants.
If you are using irrigated water, make sure it comes from an approved source.
Avoid synthetic herbicide, fungicide, and insecticide.

Grow the right produce

Know which plants to avoid growing. Raw seed sprouts (alfalfa and bean) have special requirements. Be aware of seasonal growth patterns to ensure optimal conditions for growth.

Harvest produce properly

Students and staff should be trained about hand hygiene and sanitation practices. Don't use fruits or vegetables that are rotten or damaged.

Keeping Food Safe

Students and staff should work together to ensure food safety.

- Wash hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Remove and throw away bruised or damaged portions of fruits and vegetables when preparing to cook them or before eating them raw.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water. Rub firm-skin fruits and vegetables with a clean vegetable brush to remove dirt and debris.
- Dry fruits and vegetables with a clean paper towel to prevent spoilage.
- To prevent cross-contamination, be sure to wash cutting boards and utensils thoroughly with warm, soapy water prior to using them for a new task. Never go directly from raw meat, poultry or fish to produce as this could cause foodborne illness.
- Separate fresh fruits and vegetables from raw meat, poultry and seafood.
- Cook or throw away fruits or vegetables that have touched raw meat, poultry, seafood or their juices.
- Refrigerate all cut, peeled or cooked fruits and vegetables within two hours.

