
STAY SAFE

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Evaluating Pick-Your Own Fields:

Pick-your-own fruit and vegetable fields are great. After all, they provide local foods that are as fresh as possible. Other positive aspects include exercise, family activities, fun, education, great prices, and a chance to teach children about where our food comes from.

However, there are some negatives to add to the list. For example, you could be exposed to bacteria and microorganisms that can cause foodborne illnesses. The last thing you want to do at a pick-your-own market is pick up your own (or your neighbors') germs along with the produce.

Most people think to wash after, but not before picking. Do both to reduce your risk of spreading contamination.

Good Agricultural Practices:

One way that pick-your-own fields are helping to reduce foodborne illness risks is by putting up a sign that recognizes Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs). The signs encourage customers to do their part in keeping the food safe. Specifics included:

- Wash your hands before you pick
- Make sure children wash their hands, too
- Wash the fruit before eating it

These tips may sound really simple and basic, but washing your hands both before and after going into the field can help prevent contamination.

