Safe Handling Practices for Melons

Selecting a Melon

- Select melons with minimal imperfections, i.e., few sunken or dark spots

- Imperfections may help transport bacteria

- If mold is present, do not use

Sanitizing the Kitchen Sink, Countertops, & Cutting Boards

- Clean, rinse and sanitize all food-contact surfaces, allowing surfaces to air dry
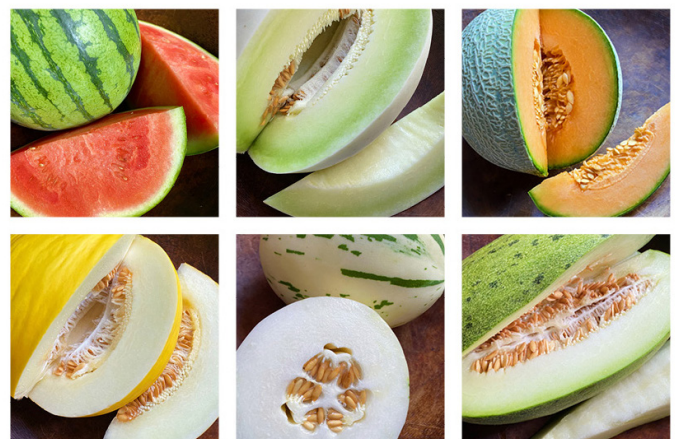
Before Cutting Melons

- Wash the outside of the melon

  - If bacteria are present on the outer melon surface, it can transfer easily from the outer surface to the inner area while cutting

  - Wash melons with cool tap water; soap/detergent is not recommended

  - Air dry melons on sanitary surface, then store in refrigerator until ready to cut

Cutting & Preparing Melons

- Wash hands before cutting the melon

- Use only clean and sanitized utensils for cutting and preparation

- Use a barrier such as gloves, deli paper, or an appropriate utensil to touch/cut melons

- Remove all rind from the melon

- Do not touch/cut melons with bare hands

After Cutting Melons

- Wash hands again after cutting the melon

- Maintain the temperature of cut melons at 41°F or below. Cut melons should be displayed in a refrigerated case, not just displayed on top of ice. *Uncut melons do not need to be refrigerated*

- Date mark cut melons that are held more than 24 hours to indicate that they must be consumed or discarded within 7 days

- Mark the time when cut melons are displayed without refrigeration. **Cut melons may be displayed for a maximum of 4 hours without temperature control,** and, if not eaten, must be thrown away at the end of 4 hours

- Offer toothpicks or single-use/disposable serving utensils to consumers when offering samples

- Serve samples with gloved hands, changing gloves after touching any unsanitary surface or substance

- Avoid leaving samples unattended if possible

Sources
Information from: FDA Training Resources > Retail Food Safety Program Information Manual: Safe Handling Practices for Melons and University of Florida IFAS Extension Melons: Safe Handling Practices for Consumers