



Recommendations to Retail and Food Service Operators Regarding Rewashing Ready-To-Eat Lettuce/Leafy Green Salads

- 1) Carefully read labels to determine whether a product is a raw agricultural commodity (e.g. hearts of Romaine) that should be washed before consumption or a ready-to-eat (RTE) food product (e.g. pre-washed lettuce/leafy green salad). If the product is not labeled "washed", "triple washed" or "ready-to-eat", the product needs to be washed before consumption.
- 2) If a RTE lettuce/leafy green salad is received in sealed bags labeled "washed", "triple washed" or "ready-to-eat" from a facility inspected by a regulatory authority and operated under cGMPs, it does not need additional washing at the time of use unless specifically directed on the label.
- 3) Additional washing of RTE lettuce/leafy green salads is not likely to enhance safety.
 - Current research suggests that, **if** harmful microorganisms are present after commercial washing treatments, they are likely to resist removal or inactivation by further washing.
 - If appropriate practices are not followed, there is a risk of cross-contamination from food handlers and food contact surfaces such as sinks, colanders and pans used during washing. This may outweigh any safety benefit that further washing may confer in bagged, pre-washed, RTE salads.
- 4) If the end-user chooses to wash the RTE lettuce/leafy green salads before use:
 - Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before handling RTE lettuce/leafy green salads. Rewash hands as necessary.
 - Clean and sanitize the sink, colander, and any equipment or utensils that will contact the product.
 - Use cold running water to wash RTE lettuce/leafy green salads to reduce the potential for cross- contamination.
 - If product is soaked, reduce the potential for cross-contamination by using an approved (U.S. EPA, U.S. FDA, State and local jurisdictions) and appropriately labeled antimicrobial as per manufacturer's directions. Antimicrobial concentrations should be monitored to ensure appropriate concentrations are maintained during soaking or washing. Household bleach is generally not acceptable for this application.
- 5) Additional Considerations
 - Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before handling RTE lettuce/leafy green salads. Rewash hands as necessary.
 - Use a barrier such as gloves and/or an appropriate clean utensil (changed with sufficient frequency to prevent cross-contamination) to handle or dispense fresh-cut lettuce/leafy green salads. This does not alleviate the need for proper hand-washing.
 - RTE lettuce/leaf green salads should be stored and displayed under refrigeration.
 - RTE lettuce/leafy green salad shipping containers may become contaminated during transport and storage. Therefore:
 - Inspect product cartons or bags upon receipt and reject any product that shows evidence of mishandling or tampering (e.g., dirty, wet, open or crushed boxes or bags, etc.).
 - Ensure that storage practices do not subject the product to potential cross-contamination (e.g., do not store raw meats above RTE lettuce/leafy green salad cartons or bags).
 - Discard the product if it appears spoiled or has exceeded its labeled use-by date