Making Produce As Safe As Possible
Judy Lueders, Nutrition and Health Education Specialist

Fruits and vegetables are important for good health, but they must be handled correctly to prevent food borne illness. There are many microorganisms in soil that can make humans ill. Even water that is used for the plants can carry illness causing microorganisms which can get on the plants. During harvesting or shipment harmful bacteria can come into contact with produce. Some fairly simple steps can help reduce the chances of food bourne illness from fruits and vegetables.

When purchasing produce choose fruits and vegetables that are not bruised or damaged. The skin on fruits and the plant tissue forms a barrier to microorganisms. When the skin or tissue is damaged, it increases the chances of exposure to illness causing microorganisms. If you are purchasing cut produce, be sure it is kept cold. Once fruits and vegetables are cut their natural protection has been breached, and they become much more perishable. Keep fresh produce away from raw meat or seafood products that can introduce microorganisms that causes illness, particularly in foods that will not be cooked.

Proper storage of vegetables and fruits is also important in food safety. Refrigerators should be set at 40 degrees. All precut or peeled foods should be refrigerated. Very perishable foods like strawberries, lettuce and mushrooms should also be refrigerated. Make sure that any meats or meat products that might drip are stored away from produce. The recommendation is to store the meat products on a shelf that is lower than the fruit, but sometimes the produce storage compartments are in the lower part of the refrigerator. Put a pan under meat products that might drip to prevent cross contamination.

When you are ready to prepare fresh produce, make sure all surfaces, such as cutting boards, counter tops, and knives are clean and free from any meat juices. Wash your hands thoroughly with very warm soap and water. Wash all produce under running cold water just before eating, cutting or cooking. Even vegetables that are going to be peeled, or the rind is not eaten, need to be washed first, so the knife does not take bacteria from the outside onto the cut surface. Some bagged produce says it is ready to eat, so it does not have to be washed, however many people prefer to wash it again under cold running water. Do not use detergent on fruits and vegetables. (Continued on page 4)
Friends Make Good Marriage Partners
Mary Gosche, Human Development Specialist

To have and to hold from this day forward...for better for worse for richer for poorer....sound familiar? These words are part of the traditional wedding vows. Everytime I attend a wedding, I think of my own wedding day thirty-six years ago and the secrets of a successful marriage.

Before you marry
Become friends first before falling in love. Friendship is a stabilizing basis for marriage and is better than romance. A circle of friends who like you and who do not have strict rules on being a woman or man is one secret of marriage success.
Don’t marry someone who has very traditional women’s work and men’s work ideas.

Know what you are getting yourself into.
Understand the background of your prospective spouse’s previous marriage and of their parent’s marriage, too. It is much easier to make a marriage work with someone who learned about marriage growing up. If you didn’t grow up with marriages that worked, ask people who are happy and married, how do they get along. Usually they are willing to share their joy.

Don’t believe in myths or falsehoods. It is a myth that couples who cohabitat before marriage usually report greater marital satisfaction than couples who did not. Couples who cohabitat before they are engaged have a higher divorce rate than those who do not. No one is perfect, expecting perfection leads to disappointment.

Now that you are married
Frank Pittman, M.D. says, “that marriage is like a submarine, it is only safe if you get all the way inside it”. Put all your energies into this union.

One of the most important things is to be kind to each other. Remember when you were friends? A marital partnership has many rights and privileges, but being mean to each other is not one of them. Intimacy needs to be tender. Kindness is the heart of the happy marriage, secret number two.

Fighting over little events and expressing every foolish thing you feel is like putting more pus in an infection. This does not make marriages happier. As John Gottman says in his book, Why Marriages Succeed or Fail, contempt, criticism, complaining, and withdrawing predict gloom for a marriage.

Talk about your hurt when your mate hurts you. Do not act on your anger. Discuss your anger calmly, as your problem, not as something your mate has done wrong. The purpose of marital conflict is to understand the issues and emotions rather than determining who wins the fight.

The third secret is never to consider divorce.
Don’t think, talk, or scream it. For the marriage to work, divorce is not an option. Commitment to the marriage and to each other is the goal.

Put it all together
1. Get along with your in-laws. You have no special rights and privileges with your in-laws. You should appreciate the good things they do for you and cheerfully overlook the bad. And try not to criticize them.
2. Find a work-life balance. Never put your career before your marriage. This is a big deal. Think how you would feel if work always comes before those you love.
3. Be realistic. Remember you will not be “in love” all the time. The best way to recapture the magic of being in love is for you to be more loving.
4. Be fully there. Do more than your share of working and loving. Do not keep score on events and who did that nasty household chore last. A person will get out of marriage what a person invests in it. You do not have to be perfect and your partner does not have to be perfect. But you have to be part of the partnership.

Annual flowering vines grow quickly and bloom profusely over the summer. They are commonly overlooked for adding color, texture, and height to the landscape or the garden. Flowering vines are a great addition to any landscape or garden. They are fairly inexpensive since they can be grown easily from seed and germinate readily in native soils. They can camouflage unsightly fences, walls, or unsightly structural defects on buildings. They are great for creating a temporary screen for privacy or shade for us or other plants. They can soften harsh structural lines and blend the structure with other plantings. Many of the vines are highly ornamental, with attractive flowers, foliage or fruits.

Most vines climb by twisting around a support. Vines anchor themselves by tendrils, suction cups or root-like growths to cling to a wall or trellis. Trellises can be made of wood, fencing, wires or twine, depending on the growth habit of the vine. For vines that climb by twining, supports can range from a single strand of wire to an elaborate wood trellis system. Tendrils can grip twine, wire and narrow stakes, like bamboo, but cannot hold on to larger supports. Vines that cling by means of suction cups or root-like growths can climb up a wall without any support. With any vine, a trellis which includes both vertical and horizontal supports are best.

Scarlet Runner Beans (*Phaseolus coccineus*) are warm season plants so, plant the seed after the danger of frost is past. The flowers are bright red and the vines bloom all summer long and into the fall. After the flowers bloom, the plant will set bean pods which are edible if you pick them when they are young and tender. If they over grow, don't worry -- leave them to mature and save the seeds for next year!

Black-eyed Susan Vines (*Thunbergia alata*) have colorful bright orange, yellow or white flowers, resembling black-eyed Susans. The vine is a vigorous climbing annual and blooms in one season. The black-eyed Susan is a very versatile vine which can be planted in part shade to full sun. They are warm season vines, so plant them after the danger of frost is past.

Moonflower (*Ipomoea alba*) is a very leafy vine that has white fragrant blossoms that bloom in the evenings into the night. Place this vine where you can sit and enjoy the fragrant blossoms because they will be gone the next morning. Moonflowers open in the evening so they can be pollinated by moths and like most moth pollinated flowers, the Moonflower is white, which attracts the moths. It is best to start Moonflower from seed after the threat of frost has past. Seeds benefit from soaking for 24 hours before planting.

Hyacinth Bean Vine (*Lablab purpureus*) produces an abundance of purple or white pea flowers on 6-inch long peduncles. Flowers are followed by shining purplish-iridescent fat bean pods that grow to 2½ inches long. Because the plant is a vigorous vine it continues to flower throughout the summer as long as conditions are favorable. The seed pod is not edible. Seed may be planted directly in the garden where they will grow. For faster germination, soak the seeds in water for a few hours before planting.

Cardinal Vines and Cypress Vines are very similar although they are different species. Both have a similar twining growth habit but Cypress vine has ferny leaves whereas Cardinal vine has palm shaped leaves. Both plants offer scarlet red flowers which are favored by hummingbirds. Both readily self-seed into the garden from year to year and can become a nuisance, so take care on planting location.

These are just a few of the many summer blooming vines that can be planted in landscapes and gardens.
A produce brush is good to use on produce with firm skins to assist in removing dirt and microorganisms. Raw sprouts are grown in an environment that is perfect for the growth of microorganisms. Anyone with a weak immune system, children, elderly, or pregnant women should not eat raw sprouts.

Another potentially dangerous product, especially for the young, elderly and people with immunity deficiencies, are unprocessed fruit juices. When the juices are stored without pasteurization or processing, there is the potential for food borne illness. Fruit or vegetable juices should either be processed or have a warning label about potential health risks, even though the juices are refrigerated or on ice. Juices that are fresh squeezed, just before being sold by the glass, are not required to have a warning label. The Food and Drug web site states, “Those at risk of food bourne illness should not drink unpasteurized juice unless it is brought to a boil first.”

Thoroughly heating unpasteurized juices, bean sprouts, or fresh produce, will destroy most bacteria. Foods that are to be consumed raw, should be handled very carefully. They should be kept away from meats, poultry, and seafood, and any utensils or surfaces that have come into contact with meat products. A kitchen sanitizer made of 1 teaspoon of bleach in one quart of water should be used periodically to sanitize cutting boards and work surfaces. Plastic or non-porous cutting boards can also be run through the dishwasher for sanitizing.

In the heat of summer, meals made with raw fruits and vegetable salads are so refreshing and provide many nutrients our bodies need to function. As long as the produce is handled properly, fruits and vegetables can provide many health benefits to our bodies. Enjoy five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables every day for the best health.

http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm114299