

News Column for Use Week of 7/26/2021
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Melon Safety

It is melon season and I want to discuss a few tips about Melon Safety. At this time of year, I cannot resist the thought of biting into a fresh melon which includes watermelon, cantaloupe, and honeydew. First of all, why eat melon? For example, watermelon. Water makes up about 60% of our body weight. Our body depends on water to survive. Like its name watermelon is 92% water and helps to keep our bodies hydrated. Every cell, tissue, and organ in the body needs water to work properly. Lack of water can lead to dehydration – a condition that occurs when we do not have enough water in the body to carry out normal functions. Even mild dehydration can drain your energy and make you tired. Every day we lose water through our breath, perspiration, urine, and bowel movements.

For the body to function properly, we must replenish its water supply by consuming beverages and foods that contain water. Watermelon is naturally low in fat, sodium, and has no cholesterol. It provides a source of potassium, Vitamin C, Vitamin A, and folic acid. We have talked a bit about why watermelon is good for you, now let us think about choosing a melon, choose a firm, symmetrical, fruit, free of cracks, bruises, soft spots, or mold. A ripe watermelon will have a dull sheen, dried stem, and buttery yellow underside where it has touched the ground. Lift the watermelon as well, it should be heavy for its size – it is 92% water.

Now the part I have been waiting for, it is time to eat the melon. Think Food Safety; wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least twenty seconds. Rinse your hands thoroughly with soap. Wash and scrub the melon with a clean vegetable brush under running water. Dry with a clean towel or clean paper towel. This removes any bacteria before you start cutting. Always make sure your knives and cutting boards are clean and sanitized. After cutting, store the cut melon in the refrigerator. Serve cut melon on ice. Think of the temperature danger zone 40 – 140 degrees Fahrenheit. Do not let the melon sit in the temperature danger zone for longer than two hours. If the temperature is above ninety degrees do not let the cut melon sit in this temperature for more than one hour.

Cut melons can be potentially hazardous because they support the growth of bacteria. E. Coli, Salmonella, and Listeria can be present on the rind, but the rind protects the inside of the melon from these bacteria. Best advice, play it safe, cut melons immediately before serving.

Melons – a bit of hydration. It's what we all need. This melon season, enjoy this tasty treat.
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