

Title Microbiological hazards in fresh leafy vegetables and herbs
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Abstract

Food poisoning outbreaks involving the consumption of vegetables are not as common as those caused by the consumption of other foods. Nevertheless there have been a number of well documented cases where fresh or minimally processed vegetables/fruit have been clearly implicated. Furthermore, produce related outbreaks appear to be on the increase. Bacteria, viruses and parasites are all potential contaminants of horticultural produce and their mode of contamination is made possible through the very nature of plant production. Another complicating feature is the microbiology of vegetables. They have very high natural bacterial populations, it is not uncommon to find total aerobic counts up to 10⁸ organisms per gram and the interaction of normal bacteria with human pathogens is still unclear. This presentation will discuss microbiological hazards related to vegetables and what research is being carried out to understand how they find their way into vegetable farms and what growers can do to reduce this type of hazard.