

Dine Alberta Food Safety E-Tip – Crops
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Dine Alberta – Irrigation of Fresh Produce

If irrigation water becomes contaminated, it can spread the hazards to your fruit and vegetable crops. Surface water (dugouts, creeks, canals, rivers) can be contaminated with chemicals or harmful microbes.

- Use drip or trickle irrigation methods whenever possible. These methods reduce contamination because the water is less likely to come into direct contact with the edible portion of the crop.
- Build barriers around your water source to prevent livestock access.
- Use grass strips as a buffer zone around your water source to protect it from potentially harmful run off.
- Irrigate in the morning to increase rapid drying and exposure time of pathogens to ultraviolet light.
- If using surface water for irrigation, consider not applying overhead irrigation within one week of harvest.
- Test your irrigation water for total coliforms and *E. coli* at least one month prior to harvest. The presence of fecal coliforms indicates that the water may have been contaminated with manure.

These Dine Alberta food safety tips provided by:

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Food safety is everyone's responsibility!

