

NC STATE EXTENSION



# Infused Water Safety Tips

## Infused Water

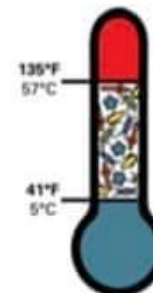
Infused water is created by adding fresh produce such as fruit, vegetables and herbs to water. The best flavor is created by allowing the produce to sit in the water for several hours before serving. Many recipes are available for infused water, but they do not always mention how to prepare and store the water safely.

Keep the water at or below 41°F. Temperature is the only reliable way to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria.

There haven't been any foodborne outbreaks to date with infused water, but there are risks with combining fresh produce and water, particularly if it is left unrefrigerated. According to Center for Science in the Public Interest, fresh produce is more likely to cause foodborne illness than any other food category. Norovirus, *Salmonella* species and shiga toxin producing *Escherichia coli* are listed as the top three harmful foodborne microorganisms associated with fresh produce in the United States.

## Steps to Control Risk

- Buy good quality, unbruised produce. Bruised spots can introduce unwanted bacteria.
- Wash hands thoroughly before preparing infused water.
- Rinse produce before adding it to water.
- Use clean knives, prep surfaces and containers while preparing produce.
- Keep the temperature of infused water at or below 41°F.



Temperature Danger Zone

## If infused water will be kept out of the refrigerator, consider:

- Keeping enough ice in the water to **keep the temperature at 41°F or below**. To test the temperature of the water, use a digital tip-sensitive thermometer after preparing and note the time. Check the temperature at least every two hours, stirring the water first before testing to get an accurate measurement. If above 41°F add ice as necessary to bring it down to 41°F or below, stir and test again.
- Allowing infused water to **sit out at room temperature no more than 4 hours**. This is only safe if the temperature started at or below 41°F. Throw out the water after 4 hours at room temperature. Wash and sanitize the container before making a new infusion.

