



Food Facts Highlights:

FIT Fruit and Vegetable Wash: Do the Ads and Research Match?

Fit produce wash is designed to easily remove unwanted residues or deposits such as wax, dirt, and pesticides. The product then rinses away, leaving t produce clean.

Claim: Fit is designed to help consumers enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables by removing unwanted residues from handling, like oils. Fit removes 95% of people handling residues like oil and fingerprints.

Analysis: The manufacturer used glass containers to test this claim. They did not test removal of handling residue on actual produce, although they claim that the glass container system mimicked the produce. Produce just might have fewer fingerprints if washed in Fit.

Claim: Fit is effective at removing the most commonly found pesticides on the most commonly consumed produce. Fit is 98% more effective than water at removing pesticides most commonly found on produce.

Analysis: Produce was grown to maturity and then pesticide was applied per label instructions. The produce was harvested immediately after pesticide application and analyzed. Rarely is any produce eaten immediately after pesticide application. We certainly would never recommend this. Because Fit contains chemicals that help to remove wax, it should be effective at removing surface-applied pesticides. Peeling would be at least as effective. Neither water nor Fit would be effective at removing systemic pesticides, those pesticides that are applied and distribute themselves throughout a crop. I contacted Dr. Teryl Roper, UW-Extension Fruits Crop Specialist, about the use of systemic pesticides in produce. Dr. Roper indicated that few, if any, systemic pesticides would be used on food crops. Dr. Roper indicated that the whether or not pesticides are removed in water depends on their solubility in water. Some pesticides would wash off easily in water, others that are not so water soluble might not. Dr. Roper also indicated that, regardless, running water is the best way to remove pesticide residues. Dr. Roper cited FDA data that shows that most samples taken have no detectible levels of pesticide residue, perhaps because pesticide application is set to ensure that residues are gone by the time the crop is harvested. The manufacturer did not design their study to test this situation, but analyzed produce immediately after pesticide application.

Claim: Fit removes deposits such as wax from the surface of fresh produce. Fit removes 93% of wax.

Analysis: Produce was purchased and washed in either Fit or water. The manufacturer analyzed produce that is purposely waxed; items such as cucumbers, apples, and oranges would be in this category. Fit contains chemicals such as grapefruit oil and oleic acid; chemicals that could dissolve wax and thus remove it from produce. Water would not be able to dissolve wax. Peeling would also be effective at removing the wax.

Claim: Fit makes produce cleaner by removing dirt. Fit removes significantly more dirt than water.

Analysis: Spinach was purchased, dirt was applied, and then the spinach was washed with Fit versus water to see which worked best. Only one crop, spinach, was tested. No data is given to indicate how much better Fit removes dirt from spinach than plain water.

Overall: Fit's overall claim is to provide a convenient and more effective way to CLEAN fresh produce-better than water alone. It makes no claims for increased safety or quality. Fit may indeed clean produce better than water by removing wax and fingerprints. There is no available proof that Fit increases safety of produce.

Fit Ingredients: Purified water, oleic acid (from Vegetable Sources), Glycerol (from Vegetable Sources), Ethyl Alcohol (from Corn), Potassium Hydrate (from Basic Minerals), Baking Soda (from Basic Minerals), Citric Acid (from Cornstarch and Molasses), and Distilled Grapefruit Oil.

July 2000