

The most common food safety rules involve preparation and storage, but bacteria can start growing as soon as groceries are taken to the car. Improperly bagging and transporting food after shopping can cause bacteria and contamination of food. Following just a few tips can help prevent contamination, said Julie Albrecht, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension food specialist.

“To make sure that the food you bring home is as safe and delicious as it was at the store, it’s important to know the best way to pack and transport your groceries,” she said.

Different food types should be separated. Transport foods to be cooked in one bag and those not to be cooked in another. Bag eggs separately from foods you will eat raw in case they crack. Put foods of similar temperatures in the same bags. Do not pack meat and dairy in the same bag as produce and other raw foods.

A reusable, thermal bag can keep groceries hot or cold until they can be stored properly. When using these bags, however, it is still important to use a separate bag for meats.