

Keep clean and carry on

Reusable grocery totes are popular. They're an eco-friendly choice to carry groceries. But only 15% of Americans regularly wash their tote bags, thus creating a breeding zone for harmful bacteria, according to a survey by the Home Food Safety program. For example, juices from raw meat or germs from unclean objects can come in contact with bread or produce. And each year 48 million Americans get food poisoning from food-borne germs.

You can prevent getting sick, says the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:

- Wash your grocery tote often, either in the washing machine or by hand with hot, soapy water. Turn it inside out.
- Clean all areas where you place your totes, such as the kitchen counter or kitchen table.
- Store totes in a clean, dry location. Avoid leaving empty totes in the trunk of your car.
- Wrap meat, poultry, and fish in plastic bags at the grocery store before putting them in your tote. Use one tote for raw meats, poultry and seafoods. Use a different one for ready-to-eat foods.

