

Abstract

The total viable bacterial count was determined with seven kinds of fresh-cut salad products for the duration of a year. Group A consisted of four different takeout salad products sold in sealed packages, while group B consisted of three different takeout salad products prepared and served at restaurants. Generally, the total viable bacterial counts of purchased salad products were strongly correlated with the ambient temperature and number of foodborne illnesses. When disinfected with electrolyzed acidic water, group A resulted in no significant bactericidal effect, while two samples in group B showed strong bactericidal effects. These results and the high initial bacterial counts in group B suggested possible cross-contamination during the serving process of the above two samples. The study indicated that successful prevention of microbial contamination requires thorough training of workers on sanitation control as well as low temperature distribution and storage.