



Reusable Bag Safety

Residents of San Mateo County concerned with bacteria passed on by use of reusable bags, no matter how slight, can take comfort in knowing that adjacent counties and cities have banned disposable plastic shopping bags with no increased rates of bacterial infections associated with the increased use of reusable bags.

"There's nothing about reusable bags that renders them more susceptible to bacterial contamination than other common items we encounter every day, such as a cutting board, toothbrush, or door handles," says Dr. Scott Morrow, San Mateo County Health Officer. "Good and bad bacteria are everywhere, and there is no study that I am aware of that remotely suggests reusable bags could be considered a public health threat or a notable source of disease. While anything is theoretically possible, clearly the benefits of using environmentally-friendly reusable bags significantly outweigh the risks."

While reusable bags are safe, washing reusable bags is a good idea. Here are some additional tips for using reusable grocery bags:

- Do not transport raw foods and other food products in the same bag.
- Do not use reusable grocery bags for other purposes, such as carrying books, laundry, or gym clothes.
- Wash your reusable bags when they get soiled or as necessary.