

# Not Better The Second Time Around

*By ACSH Staff — June 28, 2010*

Shoppers who use [reusable grocery bags](#) [1] and do not routinely wash them may be putting themselves at risk for food poisoning. Researchers who tested dozens of bags found half contaminated with coliform bacteria, suggesting raw-meat or uncooked-food [contamination](#) [2]. Further, E. coli was found in another 12 percent of the bags, according to a study funded by the American Chemistry Council. The data were released in opposition to a California bill proposing to ban single-use plastic bags.

The presence of E. coli in the reusable bags may be caused by fecal-oral contamination due to inadequate hygienic practices that when mixed with food could lead to food-borne illnesses, says ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross. From wherever the bacteria may originate, reusable bags seem to be a good vector for contamination. We assume plastic bags are generally free of such contamination. This information should be taken into account before the California legislature renders a decision on plastic bags."

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**Links**

[1] [http://uanews.org/pdfs/GerbaWilliamsSinclair\\_BagContamination.pdf](http://uanews.org/pdfs/GerbaWilliamsSinclair_BagContamination.pdf)

[2] <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/24/AR2010062406143.html>