

Organic Foods

Organic foods are becoming more popular as we become more aware of the effects of pesticides and farming techniques on food production. What do you need to know about organic foods? The following Facts and Questions will give you a quick introduction to organic foods and which organic foods you may want to purchase:

What is organic farming?

The word "organic" refers to the way farmers grow and process agricultural products. Organic farming does not use synthetic fertilizers or pesticides or allow for Genetically Modified crops. Organic farmers seek to reduce pollution and support self-sustaining farms.

Organic food: Is it safer or more nutritious?

Some studies have shown differences in the health benefits of organic foods over traditionally produced crops. But there is limited evidence to show how the differences translate into better health. Potential benefits include increased antioxidant properties, Higher Omega-3 fatty acids, and reduced pesticide residue.

Organic and Natural are two terms heard frequently when speaking about food. Natural foods indicate they have no artificial colors, flavors or preservatives. It does not refer to the method of producing the food.

What if I cannot afford to buy organic fruits and vegetables?

One concern with organically grown foods is the cost of the food. Organic food costs more to produce, and that cost is paid by the consumer.

Wash and scrub fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water. Washing helps remove dirt, bacteria and traces of chemicals from the surface of fruits and vegetables, but not all pesticide residues can be removed by washing. Discarding outer leaves of leafy vegetables can reduce contaminants. Peeling fruits and vegetables can also reduce pesticide residues, but you are peeling away most of the nutrients

If you can afford organic fruits and vegetables, spend your money wisely. Focus on the “Dirty Dozen.” These are the 12 foods highest in pesticide residues.

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Apples | 5. Peaches | 8. Imported nectarines | 11. Cherry tomatoes |
| 2. Strawberries | 6. Spinach | 9. Cucumbers | 12. Hot peppers. |
| 3. Grapes | 7. Sweet bell peppers | 10. Potatoes | |
| 4. Celery | | | |

The following are the “Clean 15.” These are foods are low in pesticide residue as they have thick skins/husks to protect the inner fruit or vegetable from pesticides:

- | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. onions | 5. mango | 9. cabbage | 13. grapefruit |
| 2. avocados | 6. sweet peas | 10. eggplant | 14. sweet potatoes |
| 3. sweet corn | 7. asparagus | 11. cantaloupe | 15. Potatoes |
| 4. pineapples | 8. kiwi fruit | 12. watermelon | |

• s e
w t
e