

## EATING ORGANIC PRODUCE

More than 500 different chemicals are routinely used on conventional produce. A single grape is covered in 15 different types of synthetic pesticides! The use of pesticides is widespread, but hasn't been going on for very long – before WWII, everything was organic. Learning to eat the “old fashioned” way can benefit you in a number of different ways. Organic produce is, for one thing, significantly lower in pesticide residues. The pesticides on conventional produce are very difficult to wash off, and some are absorbed into the plants themselves. Pesticides can wreak havoc on your body – some affect your nervous system, others disrupt your hormones, and many cause birth defects in later generations.

Regardless of whether or not you can afford organic, don't be discouraged! Eating fresh fruits and vegetables will make you feel so much better than you felt on your old diet. The benefits of eating fresh produce far outweigh the consequences of consuming pesticides. Just remember to wash non-organic produce very thoroughly before eating. Some fruits and vegetables are contaminated with more pesticides than others. The most pesticide-contaminated fruits and vegetables – the “dirty dozen” – include apples, strawberries, and grapes at the top of the list. Conventional avocados, on the other hand, are relatively safe. When choosing between organic and conventional options, make sure to get organic versions of the dirty dozen!

At the grocery store; you have choices to make – do you buy the more expensive organic options or opt for the cheaper, more readily available conventional produce? Try to think about what is good, better, or best for your body. Eating lots of fresh produce will be better already, but choosing organic is always best. Knowing which fruits and vegetables are “safe” and which need to be organic will help you to make better choices. We don't require that you buy organic versions of the “dirty dozen,” but we strongly recommend it.

### WHICH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES NEED TO BE ORGANIC?

#### *THE DIRTY DOZEN (Should be organic)*

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

## THE CLEAN FIFTEEN (Don't need to be organic)

1. Avocados
2. Sweet corn
3. Pineapples
4. Cabbage
5. Sweet peas
6. Onions
7. Asparagus
8. Mangoes
9. Papayas
10. Kiwis
11. Eggplant
12. Grapefruit
13. Cantaloupe
14. Cauliflower
15. Sweet potatoes

Organic produce is more nutritious, too! On average, organic fruits and veggies have 29% more magnesium, 27% more vitamin C, 21% more iron, and 14% more phosphorous than their conventional counterparts. This means that individuals who consume five servings of organic vegetables will meet their RDA (recommended daily intake) of vitamins and minerals, while those eating the same amount of conventional produce will not! That's a big difference.

Organic farming methods are also better for the environment. Over the course of human history, almost all farming has been organic. It's only in the last 70 years or so that we've begun to use synthetic pesticides on our food. Organic farming methods don't release toxins into the environment. Conventional methods, on the other hand, release pesticides into the ground, the air, and even our water supplies. These pesticides harm bee populations, other wildlife, and most significantly – humans. Transitioning away from the use and consumption of synthetic pesticides benefits everyone in the long run.

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## EATING RAW, FRESH PRODUCE

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### COOKING KILLS NUTRIENTS



Did you know that cooking your vegetables reduces nutrient content by 25% to 75%? Your serving of vitamin-rich broccoli loses half of its nutritional value when you boil it on the stove! Different types of cooking methods cause different nutrient losses. In general, boiling depletes far more nutrients than steaming or lightly sautéing. When you boil vegetables, many of the nutrients leach out into the water and aren't consumed. Unless you want to drink the boiled vegetable water, you should opt for a lighter cooking method. Reheating leftovers can cause further nutrient losses of 10% to 45%! Food is always best when it's fresh.