



BalanceWorks® Newsletter

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Eating Organic

Once upon a time, organic products were only found in specialty health food stores and were purchased mostly by the wealthy. However, organic products have gone mainstream. They are found in almost every grocery store and people from all walks of life are adopting organic lifestyles. Many people though, are unsure if buying organic is worth the extra cost and don't fully understand the difference between organic products and conventional products.

First, let's define what makes a product organic. According to the Mayo Clinic, the word "organic" refers to the way farmers grow and process agricultural products, such as fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy products and meat. Organic farming practices are designed to encourage soil and water conservation and reduce pollution. Organic farmers do not use conventional methods to fertilize or control weeds and pests. Instead of using pesticides to repel bugs or using unnatural fertilizers to encourage growth, organic farmers use only natural fertilizers to feed soil and plants and do not utilize toxic pesticides.

So what are the benefits of eating organic? Since no pesticides or

unnatural products are used in organic farming methods, eating organic is a great way to keep chemicals out of your body. There is debate as to how much harm (if any) these chemicals cause the human body if ingested. Rodale News reports that pesticide exposure has been linked to a variety of conditions including rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, and some cancers. In addition, a 2012 report by the American Academy of Pediatrics said children are particularly susceptible to the impacts of pesticide exposure, including an increased risk of pediatric cancers and behavioral problems, along with trouble learning.

Deciding to eat organic food vs. conventional food is a personal choice and it is important to weigh the pros and cons. There is no significant difference in the nutritional value (amount of vitamins and minerals, calorie count, etc) of organic vs. conventional products. Organic products tend to be pricier than conventional products. When purchasing conventional fruits or vegetables, you can wash them thoroughly to remove some of the pesticides, but remember that some chemicals may have soaked into the produce making it impossible to remove

For more information or support on eating organic, contact the work/life experts at BalanceWorks® by calling:

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all of the pesticide residue. Also, with conventional products like meat, dairy, or grains, there is no real way to reduce or remove any chemicals or additives that may be present in the products.

Since it is more expensive to purchase organic products, many people choose to eat organic products that are shown to have particularly high rates of chemicals, while choosing conventional products for the rest of their shopping list. To make this decision easier, for fruits and veggies at least, each year the Environmental Working Group (EWG) releases a “Dirty Dozen” list, which is a list of produce that have extremely high levels of pesticides, so they recommend you buy organic and a “Clean 15” list, which is a list of produce that have the lowest levels of pesticides and are generally considered safe to eat conventionally.

To determine the 2014 “Clean 15” and “Dirty Dozen” lists, EWG scientists focused on 48 popular fruits and vegetables and based their rankings on an analysis of 32,000 samples tested by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). To rank produce, EWG analysts use six metrics, including the total number of pesticides detected on a crop and the percent of samples tested with detectable pesticides.

2014 Dirty Dozen

- Apples
- Strawberries
- Grapes
- Celery
- Peaches
- Spinach
- Sweet Bell Peppers

- Nectarines (Imported)
- Cucumbers
- Cherry Tomatoes
- Snap Peas (Imported)
- Potatoes

2014 Clean 15

- Avocados
- Sweet Corn
- Pineapples
- Cabbage
- Sweet Peas (Frozen)
- Onions
- Asparagus
- Mangoes
- Papayas
- Kiwi
- Eggplant
- Grapefruit
- Cantaloupe
- Cauliflower
- Sweet Potatoes

This article is designed to provide a general overview of organic farming methods, so you can make informed decisions at the grocery store. Choosing which organic products, if any, to purchase is a personal decision only you can make.

If you are interested in learning more about eating organic or would like to know what organic products the stores in your area carry, remember that your Personal Assistant is available!

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