

Why should you eat organic foods?

The Food Drug Administration (FDA) regulates the amount of **food additives** that can safely be added to our foods. The food additives can be added to meat, fruits, veggies, dairy products, baked goods, beverages, etc. They are added for a variety of reasons. Some of their most common functions are as follows: emulsifier, flavor enhancer, color, stabilizer, pH control, preservative, etc.

What are pesticides?

Pesticides are added to foods (mainly produce) to prevent, destroy, repel or mitigate any pest that by harm the foods. The FDA monitors the pesticide residue levels to ensure that the risk of food contamination remains low. However, some studies have showed pesticide consumption to increase the risk of certain cancers, nervous system disorders and decrease your immune system.

What are GMO's?

GMO stands for "genetically modified organism". GMO's alter the genes of plants and animals in order to produce lower crop losses during harsh growing conditions (drought, salty soil, climate extremes), decrease bruising during transport, increasing shelf life by improving the spoilage. "The FDA states GMO's pose no health risk unless the foods contain new allergens, modified nutrient profiles or represent a new plant."

What does organic mean?

The terms "free-range", "hormone-free", "natural", "organically produced" or "pesticide free" have no definition associated with them and are not regulated by the FDA. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has defined organic as follows:

- Food products that have been produced without most synthetic pesticides and fertilizers.
- Crops that have not been genetically modified (no GMO's)
- Livestock produced without antibiotics
- Food products that have not been irradiated (method used to preserve food)

The USDA has labeled "organic" to fit into one of the following definitions:

Organic Term	Definition
100 % Organic	100% of ingredients are organic.
Organic	$\geq 95\%$ of ingredients are organic.
Made with Organic Ingredients	$\geq 70\%$ of ingredients are organic.
Some Organic Ingredients	$\leq 70\%$ of ingredients are organic.

The best ways for you and your family to eat organic foods:

- **Buy Certified Organic foods.** Look for products with the organic seal to ensure that you are buying organic foods.
- **Buy fruits and veggies on the “dirty dozen” list.** It can be expensive to purchase all organic fruits and veggies. The dirty dozen is a list of the most highly contaminated foods. You can save your money with the fruits and veggies on the “clean 15” list because they contain little to no pesticides.



Dirty Dozen	Clean 15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peaches ▪ Apples ▪ Sweet Bell Peppers ▪ Celery ▪ Nectarines ▪ Strawberries ▪ Cherries ▪ Pears ▪ Grapes (Imported) ▪ Spinach, Kale and Collard Greens ▪ Lettuce ▪ Potatoes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onions • Avocados • Sweet Corn • Pineapples • Mango • Sweet Peas • Asparagus • Kiwi Fruit • Cabbage • Eggplant • Cantaloupe • Watermelon • Grapefruit • Sweet Potatoes • Sweet Onions

- **Use a Fruit and Veggie Wash.** If you cannot afford to buy organic produce, use a fruit and veggie wash to thoroughly clean off pesticides. You can purchase a fruit and veggie wash commercially or make your own.
 - Fruit and Veggie Wash:
 - Ingredients: 1 c. water, 1 c. white vinegar, 1 TBSP baking soda, juice of ½ lemon
 - Directions: Combine all ingredients in a spray bottle. Spray produce with mixture, let it sit for 5 minutes, rinse with water and enjoy!
- **Grow Your Own Fruits and Veggies.** As long as you have some soil, sunlight and water, you can grow your own organic fruits and veggies in your back yard!



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