

Organic Produce The Best For Your Health

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It would be ideal if we could all eat foods grown from Nature that are pure, fresh and high in life-giving nutrients. Unfortunately our soil is becoming depleted, farmers are battling with global warming and an increasingly competitive economy, so the end result is that agriculture isn't as it used to be.

Although it can require a little more effort and money to maintain a completely organic diet, there are certain fresh food items that ought to remain high on your list.

Fresh organic foods to buy and why:

Strawberries - are commonly more heavily treated with the spray of pesticides than any other fruit. They have also been found to have the highest level of hormone-affecting pesticides, including benomyl, vinclozolin and endosulfan. Methyl bromide is another common toxic spray used on strawberries. Out of season strawberries may be more heavily treated because they are also sprayed before transportation.

Leafy Greens - lettuce, spinach etc contain folic acid plus calcium, iron and other vital minerals. However sprayed chemicals tend to remain on the leaves of these vegetables. Studies by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration in the US) found that leafy greens contain the more potent pesticides especially organophosphates (neurotoxins) and permethin (believed to be mildly carcinogenic). Australian standards are different and yet the best way to protect your family from these nasties is purchase certified organic produce only.

Grapes - provide your body with cleansing fibre, B-vitamins and vitamin C, plus some minerals from the soil (depending on where they're grown). Red grapes contain many phytonutrients including proanthocyanadins. Many fruits, including grapes ripen quickly and attract insects and mould. They therefore tend to be more heavily treated in order to get them to market.

Rice - is high-fibre, low in fat and a staple food for many cultures. It also contains the antioxidant selenium. The dangerous herbicide 2,4,5-T which was routinely sprayed on rice before the mid 1980's is fortunately no longer around (although some would argue that residue from any sprays

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may remain for some time in soil). Organic rice bought in bulk is as economical as conventionally packed rice in bags, much safer and nutritious.

Apples - most of us have grown up being told an apple a day will keep the Doctor away. That statement should include an organic apple! As a staple apples contain fibre, detoxifying pectin and many nutrients. Most apples are found to be as contaminated as strawberries though. If buy non-organic apples, opt for farm fresh if possible, and consider peeling them, discarding the peel, since most of the chemical residue are on the skin.

Nuts and Seeds - almonds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, walnuts, pine nuts and sesame seeds are nutrient rich containing most vitamins and minerals (including zinc and selenium) as well as essential fatty acids.

Tomatoes and capsicum - these "fruit of the vine" are full of health-giving nutrients that include vitamin C, B-vitamins, carotenoids and other phytonutrients such as lycopene. One study found that as many as 30 different pesticides are used to spray tomatoes. Because their skins are thin and absorbent, and since this staple is found in many soups, salads and sauces, tomatoes are worth buying organically grown.

Tropical fruits - pineapples, papayas and mangoes are very attractive to tropical pests and may be more heavily treated during cultivation, storage and transportation.

Milk - is said to be a common source of the herbicide atrazine (a known endocrine-disruptor) and the growth hormone BGH which has been genetically engineered to boost milk production.

Eggs - if you aren't allergic to eggs, they are one of the most bio-available proteins available for those needing growth. Typically, factory hens live in crowded unhygienic conditions, producing eggs that are lower in nutrients than organic eggs and less tasty than farm-fresh, free-range bred eggs that are laid by happier hens who aren't fed antibiotics.

It is ideal to consumer and support foods grown and cultivated near home and in the season they are harvested. These are the freshest and most economical - usually they are less treated and don't need to be protected for delivery purposes.

For more details on where to find cost-effective organic produce near you, check the internet and for any local food co-ops. They really do taste better too!

reference:

Dr Elson Haas, 'The Staying Healthy Shopper's Guide', Feed your family safely, 2007