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Planetary Wellbeing

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Go Organic at the Farmer's Market

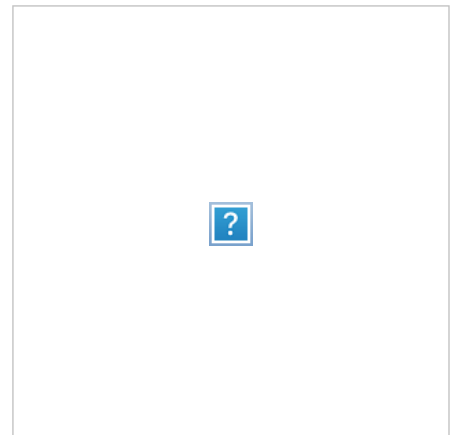
Organic foods are packed with nutrients, free of agricultural chemicals, and are grown in such a way to increase the vibrancy of our planet rather than poison and pollute it. You'll boost your own health, protect animals, plants, and insects, and stimulate your local economy by choosing to go organic in your food buying habits.

Quick Guide: What is Organic Produce and Organic Farming?

- **About organic food – the health benefits:** By eating organic, you can avoid ingesting agricultural chemicals that could harm your health,^[i] which may help fend off coronary and endocrine diseases as well as cancer.^[ii] Plus, many organic fruits, vegetables, and grains are more nutritious (higher in micronutrients, vitamins, and minerals), so calorie-for-calorie you get more bang for your buck with organic. In fact, some organic veggies and fruits are 40% more antioxidant-dense than conventional foods.^[iii]
- **Health effects of non organic foods:** While more research is needed, pesticide consumption has been linked to health problems such as brain and nervous system toxicity, hormone disruption, cancer, as well as skin and eye irritation.^[iv]
- **Environmental degradation with agricultural chems:** Rather than enhancing natural ecosystems so that they can fend off disease and pests and self-nourish themselves, conventional agriculture damages ecosystems and kills beneficial insects, plants and animals by polluting soil, water, and air. Additionally, the hormones and steroids fed to conventionally-raised animals (cows, pigs, and chickens) are damaging to human health in a variety of ways.^[v]

Take Action! Increase Your Intake of Organic Foods

1. **Garden organically at home:** This is a simple and cost-effective solution for not only getting organic produce into your diet, but also lowering your food miles by growing locally.
2. **Avoid the Dirty Dozen:** The [Dirty Dozen](#) are the foods that have the highest levels of pesticide residue according to the annual report put out by the Environmental Working Group (EWG). Switching to organic foods to avoid these 12 worst conventional foods can reduce your pesticide exposure from food by 80%.^[vi] The Dirty Dozen list is updated every year based on the previous year's crops, so be sure to check it out annually.
3. **Don't fret about the Clean 15:** The EWG also puts together a [Clean 15](#) list which summarizes the foods with the lowest levels of pesticide residues. If you're budget conscious, sidestepping organic varieties of these foods will help you save money without compromising your health.
4. **Where to get organic produce... locally:** Support local farms that are doing the right thing for the environment and your health. This [Farm Locator database](#) lets you search to find farms selling organic foods directly to consumers.



Dig Deeper: Agricultural Chemicals versus Human and Environmental Health

- Find out more about the cost of various organic foods compared to conventional varieties with the [Rodale Institute's Organic Price Report](#).
- Learn your [certified organic food labels](#) so that you can recognize real organic foods and greenwashing while in the grocery store.
- Get the basics about how to garden organically at home from this [10-Minute University Guide to Organic Gardening Fundamentals](#) then dive deeper with Mother Earth News' [Food Gardening Guide](#) (free).

^[i] *Organic foods: Are they safer? More nutritious?* (n.d.). Retrieved from Mayo Clinic: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/organic-food/NU00255/NSECTIONGROUP=2>

^[ii] *Organic Gardening Offers Many Health Benefits to Plants and Animals.* (2009, February 11). Retrieved from Organic Consumers Association: http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_16830.cfm

^[iii] Weil, D. A. (n.d.). *Organic Foods Have More Antioxidants, Minerals.* Retrieved from DrWeil.com: <http://www.drweil.com/drw/u/WBL02077/Organic-Foods-Have-More-Antioxidants-Minerals.html>

^[iv] *Decision Points: Organic Versus Conventional Produce.* (2012, June 18). Retrieved from Fox Business: <http://www.foxbusiness.com/personal-finance/2012/05/30/decision-points-organic-versus-conventional-produce/>

^[v] *Organic food and farming: Myth and Reality.* (n.d.). Retrieved from Soil Association & Sustain: Organic food and farming: Myth and reality. (n.d.). Retrieved June 21, 2010, from Soil Association Organic Standard: <http://www.soilassociation.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=30Bk3Sg6Pp0%3D&tabid=385>

^[vi] Shapley, D. (n.d.). *The New Dirty Dozen: 12 Foods to Eat Organic.* Retrieved from The Daily Green: <http://www.thedailygreen.com/healthy-eating/eat-safe/dirty-dozen-foods#fbIndex1>

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