

Organic Foods

There have been studies based on U.S. government data that ranked pesticide levels in conventionally grown (non-organic) fruits and vegetables. One recent study found that kids who ate conventionally grown fruits and vegetables from supermarkets had pesticides in both their urine and saliva. So why not go organic? "Organic" refers to farming methods that avoid the use of pesticides and other chemicals in order to protect the environment. Organic farms use about 50 percent less energy than conventional farms.

Top 14 Fruits and Veggies You Should Buy Organic, from Registered Nutritionist Diane Henderiks

1. Apples
2. Bell peppers
3. Carrots
4. Celery
5. Cherries
6. Imported grapes
7. Lettuce
8. Nectarines
9. Peaches
10. Pears
11. Potatoes
12. Red raspberries
13. Spinach
14. Strawberries

Chensheng Lu, a professor at Emory University's School of Public Health and the author of the recent study on pesticides' effects on children, told Seattlepi.com, "Once you switch from conventional food to organic, the pesticides (malathion and chlorpyrifos) that we can measure in the urine disappears. The level returns immediately when you go back to the conventional diets." He added, "It is appropriate to assume that if we -- human beings -- are exposed to pesticides, even though it's a low-level exposure on a daily basis, there are going to be some health concerns down the road."

What Moms Can Do about Organic Foods

Radha McLean, author of "The Green Pregnancy Diet," explains why it is beneficial to eat organic foods -- during pregnancy and beyond -- and how to start going green in your kitchen.

Eating a green diet during pregnancy is ideal; it protects both mom and baby from toxins added to food that have been proven to be linked with devastating health problems and even death. Specifically, the chemicals used to grow conventionally grown (non-organic) food have been shown in studies to increase the risk of many types of cancer, including breast cancer.

Next, the mercury found in all kinds of fish (not only high-mercury fish) is associated with premature birth and autism in the babies of moms who had high mercury levels in their bodies during pregnancy.

Lastly, the hormones fed to some non-organic animals grown for meat can cause breast cancer. So there is no doubt that you and your baby are better off if you eat a green diet. You can even start changing your diet before pregnancy!

The first thing you can do is start buying organic food. It sounds so overstated, but it's true. Many people think they cannot afford organic stuff or that it's hard to find. Start with the basics. Organic apples and bananas, for example, cost about the same as the conventionally grown ones. Dairy is a big one, too. Organic milk can be found in most grocery stores these days.

Even if you pick one or two foods to buy organic and spend no more than a few extra dollars, you are making a difference.

For your kitchen, the most important thing you can do, other than recycle and reuse plastic and glass containers, is buy non-toxic (cast-iron or stainless steel) pots and pans. The Teflon, aluminum, and non-stick pans that most people use actually leach toxins into the food you cook. Cast-iron pans have been around for a long time, so they are pretty inexpensive and easy to find. Added bonus: they actually "leach" something good into your food: iron!

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1. [Shopping for the Big O: Organic](#)
2. [The Green Pregnancy Diet](#)

3. [The Hidden Poison in Your Family's Food](#)

Additional Resources for Organic Foods

- [United States Department of Agriculture](#)
- [Mayo Clinic](#)
- [Organic Consumers Association](#)