



Organic Produce and Health



Did you know...

- You don't have to eat organic to be healthier.
- Eating more fruits and vegetables, organic or not, is a great first step to improving health.

How is organic produce grown?

Organic production must meet the standards of the National Organic Program, which does not allow the use of products not certified as organic. Certified organic farming only allows non-synthetic inputs, such as fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides. Products that are non-synthetic are naturally occurring. Organic farming does not use genetic engineering.

Is organic produce more healthful than non-organic (conventionally grown) produce?

There are a few things to consider when making the decision to purchase or consume organic produce or non-organic produce.

- Pesticide exposure – Research shows some concerns about the safety of ingesting pesticides applied to non-organic produce for some groups of people, such as adults with chronic health conditions, children, and pregnant women. However, even organic produce may contain some levels of pesticides due to inadvertent or indirect contact from neighboring conventional farms.

- Environmental impacts – Some pesticides used on non-organic produce may have detrimental environmental impacts, such as harming beneficial soil organisms and contaminating drinking water. Organic production may improve soil fertility and soil health.
- Cost – The cost of organic produce can be significantly more than non-organic produce, which may cause some people to decrease their fruit and vegetable consumption, when only choosing to consume organic.
- Availability – The availability of organic produce may be more limited in some areas than others.
- Nutrition – Research indicates there are no consistent nutritional differences between organic and non-organic produce.

Organic or not, what is most important is that you and your family are eating enough fruits and vegetables.

For most people, it is far more beneficial to your health to eat enough fruits and vegetables, even if they are not organic than to avoid eating enough fruits and vegetables because they are not organic.



How much do you eat?

If you are concerned about pesticide residue on produce, but also can't afford to eat everything organic, consider this: Choose organic for those produce items you eat a large amount of very often, but for other things, choose non-organic.

It is also an option to choose non-organic produce that can be peeled, such as bananas, oranges, avocados and jicama.

While consuming organic or non-organic produce is a personal choice, the nutritional quality of the overall diet is key, including consuming a diet rich in a variety of fruits and vegetables, regardless of whether they are organic or not.