



GO ORGANIC

Going and growing organic protects you and your loved ones' health. You are also protecting the environment when you grow or purchase organic produce and products.

WHAT TO BUY ORGANIC

Meat

Conventional meats contain hormones, antibiotics and pesticides from animal feed containing fertilizers and herbicides. Hormones like estrogen in beef have been linked to increased cancer in humans, especially breast cancer. By consuming organic beef, you avoid massive doses of antibiotics that are given to non-organic cows. The USDA reports that consumption of antibiotics in meat may lead to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in people.

Dairy

Dairy products made from cow milk account for 60 to 70% of the estrogen hormones we consume. About 17% of cows are treated with the hormone rBST or rBGH which stimulates milk production by increasing levels of the hormone insulin-like growth factor (IGF-1). Increased levels of IGF-1 are associated with increased risk of cancer like breast cancer. The use of rBGH is banned in Europe and Canada. Certified organic dairy means the cows consumed only 100% organic feed with no antibiotics or growth hormones. Purchase organic eggs from free-range chickens.

Fruits: Strawberries, Peaches, Apples, Blueberries, Cherries, Grapes, Nectarines

An analysis by the Environmental Working Group (EWG) detected pesticides on 99% of conventional fruit tested. The outer structure of a strawberry is very porous and may contain Captan, a pesticide residue that is a probable human carcinogen. Other fruits like blueberries, peaches, apples, cherries, grapes and nectarines are usually eaten with the skin on increasing your intake of pesticides. Blueberries have been found to carry more than 50 different pesticide residues. A 2015 EWG study found more than 15 different types of pesticide residues on grapes. The USDA Pesticide Data Program found 33 different pesticides on 97% of the nectarines tested.

Vegetables: Celery, Peppers, Potatoes, Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Greens, Peas

Celery, bell peppers, spinach and potatoes are some of the most contaminated vegetables by pesticides. Celery stalks are very porous and have been found to contain 64 different types of pesticides. Potatoes had on average more pesticides by weight than any other type of produce. The USDA Pesticide Program found that tomatoes carry 69 different pesticides. Cucumbers were found to have more than 86 different types of pesticides. Conventional peppers contain 75 pesticide residues, including known carcinogens and neurotoxins. Leafy greens have more surface area to retain pesticides.

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Soy

94% of the soybeans sold in the U.S. in 2015 were genetically-modified. Soybeans are processed into oils and incorporated into many packaged foods like tofu.

Food Products Packaged in Cans

The inside lining of food cans contains BPA which is used to protect against corrosion and bacteria. Testing from Consumer Reports has shown that this chemical leach into food. Choose glass jars instead of boxes or cans.

Cookware

Anyone who has pet birds knows that nonstick cookware can be lethal. Nonstick cookware contains a fluorochemical called PTFE that breaks down to form toxic fumes when overheated. Tests have shown that nonstick surfaces could exceed temperatures emitting toxic gases and that are deadly to birds and dangerous for people. Use stainless steel, ceramic or cast-iron cookware instead of nonstick.

Corn and Popcorn

90% of corn is genetically modified and used in many processed food products including sweeteners, oils, and starches. The linings of many microwave-popcorn bags contain a toxic chemical called perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) that makes them nonstick. The EPA found PFOA to be a likely carcinogen with links to cancer, and threats to the immune, nervous, and endocrine systems. Use an air-popper or make popcorn in a nonstick pan on the stove top.

Water Bottles & Food Storage Containers

Many hard-reusable plastic water bottles and food-storage containers contain BPA (bisphenol A) which disrupts endocrine systems and increases the risk of breast cancer in women and reduced sperm counts in men. Use a stainless steel, glass, or BPA-free plastic bottles and food-storage containers.

Home Cleaning Products

Some household cleaners contain phthalates which can disrupt endocrines and interfere with normal hormone activity. Go natural with your household cleaners especially those you use in the kitchen and bathroom. Check out our [Eco-Cleaning Tips](#) and [Eco-Certification Seals](#).

Household Items

Household items like mattresses, carpet padding and some electronics contain polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) that have been linked to behavioral, learning and memory impairments. Chose natural products that have not been treated with brominated fire retardants. Make sure newborns and young children are not exposed to these products.

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Pesticides

According to the USDA, about 50 million people in the United States are exposed to pesticides and other agricultural chemicals through their drinking water and produce. The EPA has reported that some lawn and garden pesticides contain carcinogens and exposure increases vulnerability to cancer, respiratory illness, and damage to the central nervous systems. Avoid products with neonicotinoids, a new class of insecticides, that have been linked to the deaths of pollinators like bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Use natural or organic products with natural ingredients like vinegar, lemon juice, and essential oils.

Finding Organic Produce

Go to [local harvest](#) or contact your state's organic-certifying organization for names of organic growers in your area.

GROW ORGANIC

According to the Audubon Society, farming and gardening practices may be considered “organic” by a number of different guidelines. However, in the most general sense, organic gardening should be free of hormones, pesticides, synthetics, GMOs, sewage and radiation. Organic farming increases biodiversity and promotes resilience by eliminating pesticides and providing habitat and food sources for wildlife. Oxford University has shown that, on average, organic farms support 34% more plant, insect and animal species than traditional farms. Organic gardening is not new. It is how our grandparents gardened.

Steps for Growing Organic

Prep the Soil

- Turn soil loose and airy to a depth of 12 inches for several weeks before planting
- Add about one to two inches of compost made from decomposed yard waste, fruit and vegetable scraps, and leaves
- Rake the surface to remove weeds, dirt clumps or big stones

Select a Garden Design

- Create rows, furrows or grids
- Integrate a mix of different vegetables, herbs and flowers
- Plant the three sisters - corn, beans, and squash - near each other in order to balance the nutrient profile of the soil

Water Wisely

- Water well but don't soak the soil before planting seeds
- Use drip irrigation

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Sow the Seeds or Plant Young Plants

- Use organic, hybrid, or heirloom seeds and plants
- Follow planting directions
- Keep moist until all seeds have sprouted
- Eat any plants that you thin out

Weed Control

- Remove weeds manually
- Use newspapers, paper bags, straw or grass clippings to block weeds

Insect Control

- Use [natural pest management](#) practices
- Attract beneficial insects like ladybugs and green lacewings to control pests
- Plant different plants during different seasons to break up pest life cycles and encourage biodiversity