

## The Benefits of Organic Food

The benefits of eating organic foods ~~is~~are numerous. With it becoming more and more popular to eat organically, it is becoming easier and a little more affordable to purchase organic foods. Local farmers' markets, health food stores, and even Walmart cater to those who eat organically.

Organic crops are foods that are grown in safe soil, without any additives or alterations. Organic livestock means the animals have been fed organically and have lived naturally (outdoors). While many foods are deemed "organic," only those that meet the above criteria are stamped with the USDA approval for organic. In stores, you can be assured that foods with the USDA organic seal are at least ~~ninety~~90 percent organic.

### Support Local Farmers

Because most organic foods are grown and sold locally, it promotes and supports farmers in your surrounding area. With a drastic drop in the number of people living on farms, this helps keep the remaining farmers in business. By purchasing foods from organic farmers, it makes a statement that you are willing to pay a little more in order to be healthy, you refuse to purchase fruits and vegetables that have chemicals sprayed on them, and you are against the feeding of chemically treated foods to animals.

## Environment

Organically-grown foods also benefit our environment in many important ways. One benefit is that it helps keep our water safe to drink. Water is the most important liquid on Earth, and it is vital to ensure its purity. When pesticides are sprayed on plants or when medicated animals defecate on the land, these harmful chemicals make their way into the water system. Organic farming plays an important part in keeping water clean for our ecosystem.

It follows if our water is tainted by chemical processes, then the soil is as well. If the soil is contaminated, then whatever feeds off of it or is grown in it has the likelihood of being polluted. This also means producing organic foods makes it safer for wildlife.

## Higher Nutrient Levels

Whether or not organic foods have higher nutrient levels than treated foods is a highly debated topic. However, many treated foods give the appearance of being more nutritious because they are bigger. Do not be deserved decieved by size, though. Most treated fruits and vegetables are larger due to a higher content of water. While organic fruits and vegetables are smaller, they still are packed with nutrients—just minus the deceptive water size.

## Absence of Food Colorings

Many treated foods have vibrant, healthy-looking colors. However, you bite into them only to find that they are not ripe (or sometimes too ripe). In these cases, food colorings have been added to the fruit or vegetables to make them appear healthy and convince you to purchase them. Organic foods do not have food coloring. What you see ~~setting~~ sitting in front of you is exactly what you are getting.

### **Better Taste**

If you are only going for taste, organically grown foods have a much richer taste than treated foods. Most organic foods are fresh because they are usually locally grown. The majority of people will agree that fresh foods are hands-down significantly more lush and tasty than preserved foods. Plus, because organic foods do not have all the additives and are instead grown as they were originally meant to be, they taste better.

### **No Pesticides**

Even after you have washed or even peeled foods that have been previously treated with pesticides, there can still be a remnant of pesticides left. The Environmental Working Group has studied the effect of pesticides on foods and has determined the top ~~12~~ twelve fruits and vegetables that are most effected by pesticides. In order from highest, they are apples, bell peppers,

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carrots, celery, cherries, imported grapes, kale, lettuce, nectarines, peaches, pears, and strawberries.

Pesticides build up inside your body and create health problems, which can progressively grow worse as you eat more and more non-organic foods over the years. Problems that can occur as a result include birth defects, and headaches. Babies, children, and pregnant women are especially prone to pesticide-related health issues. Because pesticides add stress to immune systems that are already ~~week~~weak, the chance of getting sick is much higher. Women also need to be aware that pesticides in foods they eat can also be transmitted to their child while pregnant or nursing.

By eating organic foods, you can rest assured that they are free from pesticides.

### **No Antibiotics**

Antibiotics are commonly injected into animals. These antibiotics can then be transferred into your body when you eat meat. A bombardment of antibiotics actually makes your body immune to the ~~affects~~effects of antibiotics.

Consequently, when you need to take antibiotics to fight disease, your body is unable to use them.

Organic farmers who raise cattle or chickens or other animals for meat always feed their animals natural foods the way they were originally meant to eat, and they do not inject antibiotics. Consequently, meats coming from organic farms are free from antibiotics.

### **No Hormones**

To meet the high demand for meat, commercial, non-organic farms give their animals hormone-injected feed in order to make them grow bigger and faster. While this may work for meat production, it can lead to your children's hormones maturing faster.

As organic farmers do not use hormones, they allow ~~his~~their animals to grow naturally. There are no problems with hormones in organic ~~meat~~meat.

### **More Antioxidants**

Non-organic foods have fewer antioxidants than organic foods. This is because the longer foods sit out in the store, the fewer antioxidants are left. Organic foods are fresh and must be eaten faster than non-organic. Consequently, they are higher in antioxidants.

Antioxidants help boost your health, including fighting heart disease. There are even studies that seem to indicate that antioxidants can fight cancer.

### **Reduce Health Risks**

Obviously, the benefit of avoiding foods that are treated with pesticides, hormones, and antibiotics is that you will be less likely to develop many debilitating—if not deadly—health risks. While many people will argue there is not that big of a difference in health risks between organic and treated foods, there have not been definitive studies to show that the treated substances put into our foods is not detrimental in the long run. By purchasing organic foods, you steer clear of the possibility of harming your family's and your health.

### **Knowledge**

Knowledge is power. By knowing what we are purchasing, we have the ability to choose how to protect our health and lifestyles.