

WHY EAT ORGANIC FOODS?

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Many people are turning to organically grown fruits, vegetables and meats as awareness increases about the value of these foods in our diet. Yet even the health conscious often wonder “Do I need to spend more money on this organic product when I can purchase non-organic for less?” I would like to go over some of the reasons why purchasing organic foods is good for our health and our planet. First I would like to summarize that organic foods:

- Are not raised with dangerous pesticides and herbicides
- Always have higher nutrient content than non-organic counterparts
- Help our environment by protecting precious topsoil
- Have a higher quantity of beneficial fatty acids
- Do not contain hormones or antibiotics
- Are not genetically modified
- Are not irradiated

The use of pesticides has doubled every ten years since 1945 yet pest damage to crops is now just as prevalent than it has been. Many pests are now pesticide resistant. Chlorinated pesticide residues have been shown to stay in our waters and soils for decades and are particularly harmful to children. One study by the Center for Disease Control declared pesticides are harmful to the normal growth and development of children. A University of Washington study found children who ate non-organic foods had six times the amount of pesticides than children who ate organic foods. Organophosphate pesticides are harmful to our nervous system and have been associated as the cause for neurodegenerative diseases such as Multiple Sclerosis, ALS, Parkinson and Alzheimer’s disease. Commercial fertilizers are allowed to contain industrial waste, which may have heavy metals. Non-organic foods have been shown to contain higher amounts of harmful heavy metals than organic foods.

Foods grown with conventional fertilizers have fewer nutrients than organic foods. Fertilizers have been shown to deplete our topsoil of nutrients making them less available during the growth of the plant. One study showed that organic vegetables had 200 percent more iron, chromium, magnesium, zinc, selenium and other minerals. Those who eat organic fruits and vegetables agree that organic foods taste much better. That is because organic fruits and vegetables have higher mineral content and the minerals give flavor to foods.

Meats raised free range and given a diet closer to their natural diet have a higher ratio of beneficial fatty acids. For example cattle fed on grass (their natural food choice) rather than grains have more omega 3 fatty acids than the harmful omega 9 fatty acids. Ingestion of the harmful omega 9 fatty acids has been correlated with the formation of diabetes, cancer and heart disease. Some researchers recommend a 1:2 ratio of omega 3: omega 9 yet in our western diet we often eat a diet that has a ratio of 1:22. This is harming our bodies and destroying our innate ability to repair cell damage.

Cattle, chickens and fish are raised with synthetic hormones to increase their growth. Often they are raised in tight quarters without movement and this causes health problems. These creatures are then fed antibiotics to prevent or treat the diseases they

incur in these environments. Seventy percent of cattle raised in the U.S. receive injections of rBGH, bovine growth hormone. Residues of this hormone has been found in meats and it has been theorized that this hormone is responsible for early puberty in our youth, including breast development in girls at the age of eight or nine.

Genetically modified food (GMO) has not been well researched. Although the hopes of the developers of GMO is to grow foods that are pest-resistant and yield better crops we cannot be sure that genetically modifying plants won't produce chemicals that we cannot metabolize and may cause health problems.

Foods are irradiated under the premise that destroying bacteria and yeast on the surface of foods will prevent spoilage, extending the life of the produce. Studies of irradiated foods show that nutrients are destroyed in the process. Animal studies show consumption of irradiated foods may cause thyroid, pituitary, heart, lung and chromosomal damage.

So, you see when someone states that they cannot afford organic foods I say that we can't afford not to eat organically. It is clear that the way in which we have developed conventional agriculture is harming our children our planet and ourselves. I believe that as more people purchase organic foods the prices will come down according to the laws of supply and demand.

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