



Organic Foods and the Dirty Dozen

If you have ever wondered whether its worth paying more for organic foods, here are the reasons why I think it is and guidance about where to start.

The traditional argument — that the nutritional value of organic foods is no better than conventionally grown foods — only works when you limit your comparison to vitamin and mineral content.

Vitamins and minerals are just a small portion of the nutritional value of foods. Antioxidants, phenols, and resveratrol are part of the thousands of nutrients found in plants, collectively called phytonutrients.

Organic foods produce far more phytonutrients because these compounds protect them. Plants sprayed with herbicides and insecticides don't need them; they are already protected and therefore produce less nutrients.

The sprays leave a residual film on the plant. So far the FDA has ruled that the amount of toxin in this residual is low enough to be safe – but many groups question this ruling.

Studies show that increasing levels of chemicals are making their way into our soil and water systems (and our bodies). Much of this is hard for us as individuals to control, but we do have control over the food we eat. I think it is wise to choose organic foods when you can.

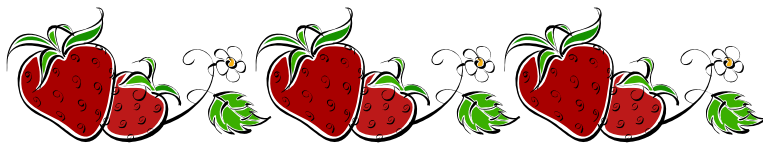
Because organic foods are often more expensive, it may help to know which conventionally grown produce has the most and least residual. Find updates at www.foodnews.org.

The Dirty Dozen (12 worst in descending order):

Peach, apple, bell pepper, celery, nectarine, strawberries, cherries, kale, lettuce, imported grapes, carrot, and pear

The Clean 15 (least residual, in ascending order):

Onion, avocado, sweet corn, pineapple, mango, asparagus, sweet peas, kiwi, cabbage, eggplant, papaya, watermelon, broccoli, tomato and sweet potato.



Mindful Eating

Developing a practice of mindfulness basically just means becoming more aware. If you are fully present – here and now – you are being mindful. When you are mindful about eating, it means you are aware of what you eat and how it makes you feel. Mindful eating simply means paying attention.

So often we eat without conscious thought or awareness of what we are doing. Do you ever grab food without thinking much about it, and then gulp it down without really tasting it? Sometimes our eating is on autopilot, like when we head for the kitchen when we come home, or eat in front of the TV.

These are examples of mindless eating. With mindless eating, our actions become automatic and seem to happen without us. If you feel stuck in a rut with your eating habits, you are probably experiencing mindless eating. You can change your whole experience by eating with mindfulness.

When you practice mindfulness, you are less reactive to your emotions, thoughts and cravings. Mindful eating helps you consciously choose food that are enjoyable and nourishing.

To develop mindfulness, imagine that you are Sherlock Holmes, and that your intention is to observe your current eating habits without trying to change them. That is it. Just like the great detective looking for clues, bring along an open mind. Preconceived ideas can prevent you from seeing what is right in front of you.

Having judgments about what is right or wrong, what are good or bad choices, doesn't help much. In fact, when you get angry or frustrated with yourself it actually gets in the way. It shuts you down and you stop seeing what is really there. So put your opinions about what you "should" be doing on hold, and just notice what is actually happening.

Think of it as gathering information: the more you know, the more choices you'll have. As you observe your activities around food and eating, you begin to get a sense of what works and what doesn't. This is all good information that can help you create healthy habits.

Recipe of the Month

The most popular blog post I've ever written is my Healthy Homemade Granola recipe. Look under "top posts" and choose the updated version. It is easy, yummy and healthy! www.HealthyHabitsCoach.wordpress.com.

Develop Mindful Eating Habits

The hardest part of mindful eating is suspending your own judgment. I can help you stay balanced and focused on the big picture, and teach you tools that will enhance your healthy habits. Call me to find out more: 707 431-7524.

Kathy Nichols: Life Coach & Registered Dietitian

Are you ready to stop dieting and looking for a way of eating that is sustainable, enjoyable and healthy?

Discover Wellness from the Inside Out!

