

August 2014 | MindBodyGreen.com | Dr. Amy Myers | Health & Wellness

A Doctor's Top 4 Reasons To Eat Organic



Our great-great-grandparents subsisted on a completely organic diet. Modern or conventional farming methods that involve the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides simply did not exist back then. Over the last century, our diet and farming practices have changed significantly, however our bodies and our genetics have not.

You can't expect to fuel your body and achieve optimal health by eating food, laced with toxic chemicals, that your body doesn't recognize. So, why settle for getting by when you can thrive? Here are my top four reasons to eat like your ancestors and adopt an organic* diet.

*Look for a label that says "USDA Certified 100% Organic." Foods labeled "Organic" or "Made with Organic" may still contain some non-organic ingredients.

1. Eating organic helps to reduce your body's total toxic burden.

Plants and animals termed "organic" have been treated with:

READ MORE AT THE JUICE BAR

August 2014 | MindBodyGreen.com | Dr. Amy Myers | Health & Wellness

NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with PROJECT: PFC's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you.

A Doctor's Top 4 Reasons To Eat Organic

Our great-great-grandparents subsisted on a completely organic diet. Modern or conventional farming methods that involve the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs), synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides simply did not exist back then. Over the last century, our diet and farming practices have changed significantly, however our bodies and our genetics have not.



You can't expect to fuel your body and achieve optimal health by eating food, laced with toxic chemicals, that your body doesn't recognize. So, why settle for getting by when you can thrive? Here are my top four reasons to eat like your ancestors and adopt an organic* diet.

*Look for a label that says "USDA Certified 100% Organic." Foods labeled "Organic" or "Made with Organic" may still contain some non-organic ingredients.

1. Eating organic helps to reduce your body's total toxic burden.

Plants and animals termed "organic" have not been treated with:

- pesticides
- herbicides
- fertilizers from synthetic ingredients or sewage sludge
- ionizing radiation
- growth hormones
- antibiotics

Pesticides and herbicides are by their very nature toxic, and your diet chronically exposes you to these dangerous poisons. The National Research Council claims that, in children especially, dietary intake of pesticides accounts for most pesticide exposure.

Animal products are no different. Most conventionally raised livestock are fed a combination of soy and corn, 90% of which is GMO. Their feed is also laced with hormones and antibiotics. Dairy cows are given a genetically engineered bovine growth hormone called rBGH to increase milk production. The forced increase in milk production causes infections, and the animals are dosed with antibiotics. These hormones and antibiotics make their way into dairy products and, eventually, your body.

Luckily, eating organic foods can reduce pesticide buildup. A study in 2005 demonstrated that in as little as 15 days, children adopting a primarily organic diet experienced a dramatic decrease in urinary concentrations of organophosphorus pesticides.

You've likely been eating a conventional diet for years. Cleanse your body of toxic residues by substituting as much of your diet as you can with organic foods.

2. Organic foods are by definition non-GMO.

GMOs are plants and animals that have been created by combining DNA of different species in a way that could not occur in nature or by traditional cross-breeding. They comprise a large percentage of commercial soy, corn, beets, and alfalfa crops in the United States.

Genetic engineering alters crops to make them weather- and pest-resistant. GMO Corn for example was combined with bacteria in order to produce its own insecticide, called Bt-toxin. Bt-toxin kills insects by destroying the lining of their digestive tracts. The poison is not specific to insects and also pokes holes in human cells, damaging the intestines and causing leaky gut. The growing body of evidence that GMOs are dangerous prompted the American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM) to publicly warn that "it is biologically plausible for Genetically Modified Foods to cause adverse health effects in humans."

Bt-toxin was originally derived from bacteria, the DNA of which was combined with corn. Organic farmers actually use Bt-toxin-producing bacteria as an effective nematode control. The bacteria produce a much lower concentration of Bt-toxin. The higher potency Bt-toxin in GMO corn can't be washed off--it's part of the genetic makeup of the genetically engineered crop.

3. Organic farming is good for the earth.

Organic farmers rely on crop rotation, companion planting, and animal manure in place of synthetic fertilizers, weed killers, and pesticides to control pests and maintain the quality and integrity of the soil.

In 2000 the National Water Quality Inventory concluded that pollution from agriculture in the United States is the largest factor affecting the water quality of rivers and lakes. You can help lessen the damage by supporting farmers who maintain their crops and livestock responsibly.

4. Organic crops are more nutritious.

Many question the nutritional benefit of organic crops over conventionally grown crops. A recent study shed new light on the debate, providing evidence that organic foods are richer in nutrients and antioxidants and lower in heavy metals, especially cadmium, and pesticides. Other studies suggest that good soil nutrition increases the production of cancer-fighting compounds, called flavonoids, and that conventional farming practices like pesticide and herbicide use disturb their production.

Overall, crops treated with any amount or form of chemicals have a negative impact on your body. Organic crops are more nutritious, and they won't deplete your health by putting unwanted and unnecessary toxins in your body.

I know it may seem a bit daunting at first to eat 100% organic. It might not be available or within your budget. If that's the case, I recommend starting with one food at a time, and making the complete switch when you are able.

In the meantime, enjoy plenty of these foods, keeping in mind which ones are usually GMO. They're considered The Clean Fifteen as they contain the lowest concentration of pesticides:

- Avocados • Sweet corn* • Pineapples • Cabbage • Sweet peas (frozen) • Onions • Asparagus • Mangoes • Papayas* • Kiwi
- Eggplant • Grapefruit • Cantaloupe • Cauliflower • Sweet potatoes

*These foods are often GMO

These are considered The Dirty Dozen, and they contain the highest concentration of pesticides. Try to avoid these if possible.:

- Apples • Strawberries • Grapes • Celery • Peaches • Spinach • Sweet Bell Peppers • Nectarines (Imported) • Cucumbers
- Cherry Tomatoes • Snap Peas (Imported) • Potatoes • Hot Peppers • Kale & Collard Greens

These are the top GMO foods:

Soy
Corn (including high fructose corn syrup, corn oil, corn syrup)
Sugar Beets (most sugar is made from this)
Canola (as in canola oil)
Cotton (including cottonseed oil)
Alfalfa
Zucchini and yellow squash
Papaya