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# Preventing Disease Through Organic Whole Food Choices

You make food choices every day... what you eat, how much of it you eat, and when you eat it. These choices determine more than just satisfying your schedule and your appetite. They affect your health, your immune system, your organs and joints in your body, your blood glucose levels, your energy level and most importantly, the odds of whether or not you'll contract diseases such as cancer, hypertension, dementia, alzheimer's disease, arthritis, stroke, heart disease, and the list goes on. It also determines whether or not you will experience optimal health, glowing skin, a youthful appearance, decreased inflammation in the body, improved cognitive ability, body function... and that list goes on as well. Your diet is key to making a difference in literally every body part and every body function imaginable. And practicing good nutrition habits, particularly paying attention to natural and organic foods, can improve your health, not to mention reduce the risk of short-term and long-term illness and disease. What goes in the body is almost more important than even exercise! Any good doctor or dietician familiar with good nutrients will tell you that plant-based foods offer protective effects against a variety of diseases including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, rheumatoid arthritis, as well as many cancers like liver, esophagus, prostate, endometrium, rectum, ovary, colon, pancreas and stomach.



## The Difference Between Conventionally-Produced Foods VS Organic Foods

But what about conventionally produced vegetables and fruits vs. organic ones? Does that really matter, and if so, why? First, let's go over the differences between the two. Most standard vegetables and fruits are grown in mass quantities, requiring multiple methods for preventing crop diseases, bug infestations, and even fungicides to preserve them during transport. Organic vegetables are different. They are grown in smaller quantities, and are guaranteed free of these chemicals that go hand-in-hand with conventional produce. Many people shirk these differences off, but studies have shown that these chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, are in fact real and do build up in the body – specifically the fat cells of humans, producing toxicity as these chemicals are known carcinogens, many of which have been banned in the European Union. Organic produce is grown with more consideration to the land, and in turn, they affect your body more gently in a wholesome way, as mother nature intended. Granted, some organic fruits and veggies do cost more, but not by much these days. They were certainly more costly in the past, when they were newer to the food market, and there were less organic farms. But today most are competitively priced due to their popularity and demand. This is great news, because these fruits and vegetables are grown in smaller quantities, even on smaller plots of land, where soil is preserved, which means more nutrients in the form of vitamins and minerals in your food. Conventionally grown fruits and veggies are grown on the same soils year after year, and the crops are not usually rotated, a method which would allow the soil to replenish lost nutrients from repeated use if implemented. There are some veggies that do not require a lot of chemicals, and they are considered 'clean' – such as avocados, bananas, asparagus – whereas there are many that do require them – such as berries, peaches and spinach – and those are best purchased if an organic and/or pesticide free label is visible. Some labels will also say sustainably harvested 'wild', and these are wild grown foods, such as wild arugula. These are harvested without depleting the food supply or otherwise harming the environment. Rather, the food was grown in the biosphere surrounding it, such as butterflies, bees or birds.

# READ MORE AT THE JUICE BAR

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*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.*

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**Immune Boosting Foods** - A healthy lifestyle is your first line of defense for good health and a strong immune system. Your body simply functions better when protected from environmental assaults and invasion of disease. It's ultimately bolstered by healthy-living strategies. Make sure you're eating a diet high in organic fruits, organic whole grains and organic vegetables; exercising regularly to maintain a healthy weight; cutting back on smoking and drinking; getting adequate sleep and controlling your blood pressure. These steps make a significant difference, and can really help as you age. While some people age healthy, studies compared the elderly with younger people, and found that the elderly are far more likely to contract infectious diseases because of a lower immune system. Respiratory infections, pneumonia and influenza are leading causes of death for those over 65. Eating healthy organic foods increases the production of T-cells, which help fight off infection and helps the body's ability to mount a more vigorous immune response.

**Organically Grown Whole Foods Promote Good Glucose and Insulin Function** - Diabetics need to understand the importance of various foods' affect on blood glucose. Having diabetes means that your body has trouble controlling blood glucose levels. When blood glucose stays too high for too long, serious health problems can develop. However, by controlling your blood glucose through medication, exercise and most importantly, an organic diet, you can delay or prevent problematic conditions associated with diabetes, such as

kidney malfunctions, eye problems, heart disease and other complications. According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), following a diabetes meal plan, which consists of organic foods, can help you keep your blood glucose levels on track. Glucose is regulated by the insulin in your body. Insulin helps glucose move from the blood into your muscle cells, where it can be used for energy. Some oral diabetes medications help you produce more insulin or help your insulin work more efficiently, so your medications and food plan have to work together. If you take insulin shots, you need to be especially careful to match the amount of carbohydrates you eat with your insulin dose. Eating an excessive amount of carbs without adjusting your insulin dose might cause your blood glucose to spike. If you consume too few carbohydrates, your blood glucose might bottom out, or become too low. The best choice for whatever food choices you make should consist of organic foods such as fruit, vegetables, poultry, beef and pork. These will regulate your blood sugar, unlike processed food, which can spike or bottom out your insulin levels and cause inflammation, which can eventually lead to rheumatoid arthritis.

**Nutrient Deficiencies** - Your immune response needs regular nourishment through organic foods to stay strong. There is evidence that suggests that people who live in poverty and are malnourished are more vulnerable to infectious diseases. Various “micronutrient” deficiencies — for example, deficiencies in vitamins A, B6, C, and E, as well as zinc, copper, iron, folic acid and selenium — alter immune responses. If you suspect your diet is not providing you with all your micronutrient needs, eating healthy organic food rich in these vitamins and minerals brings health benefits of many types, especially a healthy immune system. Eat organic foods like fruits, vegetables, grass-fed beef and cage-free eggs. These will provide all the vitamins you need, and then some. Additionally, a number of herbs and vitamins can influence the immune system in good ways. These include foods like organic spirulina, organic chlorella, sustainably grown and harvested ginseng, aloe vera, echinacea, garlic, licorice root and probiotics. And while science has not proven that these nutrients unequivocally promote good immune function, if you do choose to take these nutrients, it can't hurt.

**High Nutrient, Low-Carb** - Carbohydrates are foods that have the biggest effect on your blood glucose levels. After you eat carbohydrates, your blood glucose rises. Fruits, dairy, sweets and starches all contain carbohydrates. Although carbohydrates are important for health, when you eat too many at once, your blood glucose can rise too high. This can also lead to other diseases such as heart attack, stroke and rheumatoid arthritis. Other carbs, such as sweet potatoes and vegetables, are better for you and less risky when considering a glucose spike. Additionally, avoiding processed and packaged foods and eating more fiber and nutrients is another good strategy. If you're overweight, you can eat the same foods as everyone else, but the devil is in the details. A smart meal plan will tell you when, what and how much to eat. It's important not to completely deprive yourself of the foods you like, so your diet can include your favorite foods. Just make sure your meal plan is also covering foods like fruits, vegetables, low-fat organic dairy, whole grains, eggs, lean meats and fish. Other organic disease-fighting foods include:

**Tea** - Green and black teas are rich in polyphenols (catechins), which are known to reduce inflammation, lower the risk of stroke and prevent cancer cells from dividing. These polyphenols may protect against various types of diseases. Red wine and olive oil are also rich in polyphenols.

**Soy** - Soy foods are rich in nutrients, especially in several types of phytoestrogens — weak, non-steroidal estrogens — that can help prevent prostate, stomach, esophageal and breast cancers by blocking and suppressing the cancerous changes. Soy protein can lead to the lowest mortality rate among cancer patients, along with the lower probability of recurrence.

**Allium Vegetables** - Ever heard of allium vegetables? Onions, leeks, garlic and onions are allium-based veggies that can significantly lower the risk of heart disease, stroke and prostate cancer. These vegetables contain immune-enhancing allium compounds (diallyl sulfides) that appear to increase the activity of the immune cells that fight disease. These compounds also help in blocking carcinogens from entering into the cells apart from slowing down the development of tumors.

**Fiber** - Fiber protects and helps in clearing off the disease causing wastes and toxins from your gastrointestinal tract. It promotes weight loss by making you feel fuller, longer. Being obese or overweight will put you at greater risk for heart disease, stroke and Alzheimer's disease.

**Vegetables** - Carrots have falcarinol and beta carotene, which has been shown to reduce a wide range of cancers such as throat, mouth, lung, breast, prostate, bladder, intestine and stomach cancers. Isolated cancer cells grow more slowly when exposed to falcarinol and beta carotene. Tomatoes contain lycopene, an antioxidant known for its anti-cancer properties, specifically preventing cancers in breast, pancreas, colon and prostate regions. Vegetables like kale, brussels sprouts, cauliflower and broccoli contain disease fighting antioxidants like zeaxanthin and lutein. Cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli have a chemical component called indole-3-carbinol that can combat breast cancer by converting a cancer-promoting estrogen into a more protective variety. Broccoli alone has phytochemical called sulforaphane, a product of glucoraphanin, which is believed to aid in preventing rectum and colon cancers, as well as prevent cardiovascular disease.

**Fruit** - Grapes contain bioflavonoids, the powerful antioxidants that work as disease preventives. Grapes are also rich sources of resveratrol, a natural phenol, which inhibits the enzymes that can stimulate cancer-cell growth and suppress the immune response. Avocados are rich in glutathione, a powerful antioxidant that attacks the free radicals in the body by blocking the intestinal absorption of certain fats. They also supply a high level of potassium and are strong sources of beta-carotene. Finally, berries — like blue, red, black and strawberries — are rich in ellagic acid, one of the most powerful antioxidants, which help in preventing the growth of cancer cells and boosts your immune system. Food choices that includes these specific disease fighting foods can be a huge factor in boosting your immune system, preventing illness, and a big help to those suffering from major illness during their recovery process. Having a healthy lifestyle, void of smoking and drinking, is vital as well. Research suggests that around 70-percent of all major diseases can be averted if people exercise, eat organic plant-based foods and minimize bad foods, including chemically treated and altered foods. Doing so will ensure that your body is healthy, clean and chemically free.

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