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**Subject: FW: Dr. Mercola on Buying Organic**  
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Dr. Mercola Comments:

The biggest study ever into organic food – a four-year EU funded project called the [Quality Low Input Food \(QLIF\) project](#) – found that organic food is FAR more nutritious than ordinary produce, and can help improve your health and longevity. You're likely to hear more about this again, once they publish their findings in full, which is expected to occur by the end of this year.

This study may have considerable impact, as its findings may even overturn government advice – at least in the U.K. – which currently states that eating organic food is no more than a lifestyle choice.

For example, this study found that:

- Organic fruit and vegetables contain up to **40 percent more antioxidants**
- Organic produce had **higher levels of beneficial minerals like iron and zinc**
- Milk from organic herds contained up to **90 percent more antioxidants**

The researchers even went so far as to say that eating organic foods can help to increase the nutrient intake of people who don't eat the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

Food grown in healthier soil, with natural fertilizers and no chemicals, simply has to be more nutritious. It is common knowledge -- though knowledge that is greatly suppressed in the United States. But science is catching up, making suppression of this fact more difficult to sustain.

A 2003 study in the *Journal of Agricultural Food Chemistry*, for example, found that [organic foods are better for fighting cancer](#). And in 2005, scientists found that, compared to rats that ate conventional diets, organically fed rats experienced various health benefits, including:

- Improved immune system status
- Better sleeping habits
- Less weight and were slimmer than rats fed other diets

- Higher vitamin E content in their blood (for organically fed rats)

Does this mean that you should ditch all of your conventional produce and meat, and only buy certified organic foods? Well, yes ... and no.

### **What Should You Buy Organic?**

Aside from the fact that organic food contains higher levels of vital nutrients, organic foods are also lower in other residues and compounds that are seriously detrimental to your health, such as herbicide- and pesticide residues.

Additionally, the use of pesticides and herbicides in conventional farming practices contaminates groundwater, ruins the soil structure and promotes erosion. They've also been linked to the mysterious "colony collapse disorder" that threatens pollinating honeybees around the world. With that in mind, buying or growing as much organic food as possible is not only best for your health, but for the health of the entire planet.

That said, however, certain fruits and vegetables are subjected to far heavier pesticide use than others. And with food prices rising, many are looking for ways to buy the healthiest foods possible at the lowest cost. One such way would be to focus on purchasing certain organic items, while "settling" for others that are conventionally-grown.

This is where the EWG study of pesticide residue on produce really helps.

Of the 43 different fruit and vegetable categories tested, these 12 fruits and vegetables had the **highest pesticide load**, making them the most important to buy or grow organic:

- Peaches
- Apples
- Sweet bell peppers
- Celery
- Nectarines
- Strawberries
- Cherries
- Lettuce
- Grapes (imported)
- Pears
- Spinach
- Potatoes

Conventionally-grown strawberries, in particular, were found to be highly toxic due to a poisonous blend of pesticides in a previous [2007 EU study](#) as well.

But be VERY careful as the list above is for fruits and vegetables. Non-organic meats

have far higher concentrations of pesticides than all of the fruits and vegetables. And the highest concentration of pesticides is actually in non-organic butter.

So if you can only buy one organic food item it should be butter. Next priority would be meats and once those are addressed, you will want to focus on the fruit and vegetable list above.

Locally-grown organics are your absolute best bet, but bear in mind that many times buying [locally-grown food](#) is your best choice even if it's grown conventionally, as the environmental impact of shipping organic produce across the globe can cancel out many its benefits. Organic farming standards are also questionable in many parts of the world.

### **These Conventionally-Grown Foods are Low in Pesticide Residue -- But Watch Out For GMO Varieties!**

While you may have heard about the most common GMO food sources, such as corn, many people are clueless about JUST HOW MUCH of your produce is now available in GMO varieties. And, perhaps even worse, just how many [deliberate GMO field trials](#) are actually going on, all across the world.

A perfect example of the repercussions of this practice can be seen in Hawaii, where [non-GMO papaya seed supplies are now so seriously contaminated by GMO seeds](#) that at least 50 percent of organic seeds test positive for GMO!

That means you have a greater than 50/50 chance of buying GMO even when buying organic Hawaiian papaya...

Although the U.S. does not require GMOs to be labeled, you can still find out whether or not your produce is genetically engineered, by looking at its [PLU code](#). For example:

- A conventionally grown product carries a 4-digit PLU code (Ex: conventionally grown banana: **4011**)
- An organic product carries a 5-digit code, starting with the number 9: (Ex: organic banana: **94011**)
- A genetically engineered (GE or GMO) product has a 5-digit code, starting with the number 8: (Ex: GE banana: **84011**)

Here are a few other fruits that are LOW in pesticide residue, and therefore good candidates to purchase as conventionally-grown, however, double-check to make sure you're not buying a GMO variety.

- **Avocado** – A new GMO avocado variety is scheduled to be introduced this year that is immune to "stress" and pests, per an Indian state [report](#) published in March, 2008.

- **Bananas** – The first [GMO banana](#) with extra genes that increase its levels of pro-vitamin A and iron is being unleashed in Australian field trials this year. At Cornell University, researchers are also working to [develop a banana](#) that carries the hepatitis B vaccine.
- **Pineapple** -- [GMO pineapples](#), designed to produce greater levels of proteins, vitamins and sugars may already be on the market. Australia applied for pineapple into environment all the way back in 2002. The pineapple is called "Smooth Cayenne," which has delayed flowering and herbicide resistance. It also contains the tobacco acetolactate synthase gene (suRB) from *Nicotiana tabacum*.
- **Kiwi** -- The [transgenic variety of kiwi](#) fruit is the *Actinidia deliciosa* [from Italy](#).

Remember, if you can't afford to purchase all organic food, at least aim to buy produce that has a lower toxic load and is non-GMO. For tips on where to find organic foods, and how to stretch your dollar when shopping for organic, please read through my Related Articles below.

#### **Related Articles:**

- » [How to Shop for Organic Foods Without Breaking Your Budget](#)
- » [Your Family Could be Eating Organic Food for the Same Price as Processed Foods -- or Less](#)
- » [The Rise of the Eat Locally Locavore](#)

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