

How to not be poisoned -- Food that's safe to eat!

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adapted from: <http://waterworksvalley.com/food-thats-safe-to-eat/>

Source: *Vegetarian Times Magazine & To Buy or Not to Buy* by Cindy Burke

[GMO note: "Organic" always means non-GMO. "Non-GMO" is important, but sometimes it's greenwashing on products that never have been GMO; in the case of grains, the crop is sometimes sprayed with Round-Up close to harvest to make harvesting easier, so although non-GMO, it may contain some of the serious health threats characteristic of GMOs. -- ed.]

Some fruit and vegetables are sprayed a lot, others not so. Some absorb pesticides, others are more resilient. How the hell do we find out?

VEGETABLES

Buy organic

- **Beets** – Thin skinned veggies that grow underground can absorb pesticides and heavy metals. Organic is best.
- **Bell Peppers (all colors)** – Conventionally grown peppers are highly likely to contain multiple pesticide residues
- **Carrots** – Carrots are so good at absorbing heavy metals from soil, they are sometimes grown as a throw away crop to rid a field of lead or arsenic contamination. Always buy organic.
- **Celery** – Is the vegetable most likely to contain pesticide residues. 82% of samples have tested positive
- **Collard & Salad greens, Swiss chard** – Leafy greens that grow close to the ground tend to have high pesticide residue levels
- **Cucumbers** – Highly toxic organophosphate pesticides are used on conventionally grown cucumbers
- **Green Beans** – Sprayed multiple times with pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides
- **Potatoes** – Especially russets, are highly likely to contain multiple pesticide residues
- **Spinach** – Is often grown in less-than-ideal conditions, so conventional farmers use significant amounts of pesticides, fungicides and herbicides. More than 60% of the non-organic spinach tested by the FDA contains pesticide residue, including DDT and permethrin
- **Winter Squash** – Mild pesticides are used on hard winter squashes. Conventionally grown winter squash is coated with an oily wax, making the skin inedible. Organic is a better choice but non-organic is acceptable if you don't eat the skin.

OK to buy non-organic

- **Asparagus** – Does not appeal to many pests and is rarely treated with pesticides
- **Avocados** – Low pesticide residues and a thick skin make non-organic avocados an acceptable choice
- **Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cauliflower, Cabbage** – Pesticides don't work well on these veggies so few are used.
- **Corn, sweet** – Although it may be sprayed with herbicides and some pesticides, sweet corn almost never contains pesticide residue (buy local).
- **Eggplant (all varieties)** – Because it is selectively sprayed with minimally toxic pesticides, eggplant rarely contains pesticide residue

- **Garlic** – Has natural pest control and is rarely sprayed
- **Onions (all)** – Have natural pest control and are not sprayed much. Green onions are sometimes sprayed with an herbicide. Organic is better, but non is acceptable
- **Rhubarb** – Pesticides are almost never used on rhubarb, as the leaves are already highly toxic to many creatures including humans
- **Sweet Potatoes** – Pesticides do not work well for this crop and are used sparingly
- **Tomatoes** – Buy local tomatoes. Always. If you cannot find them, buy whatever tomato smells the closest to a home grown tomato
- **Zucchini** – Does not tolerate many pesticides and herbicides, but the pesticides used on this crop include several known carcinogens

FRUITS

Buy organic

- **Apples** – Multiple pesticides are found on apples – a favorite food of many children
- **Apricots, nectarines, peaches** – Most stone fruits are highly likely to contain pesticide residues
- **Cherries** – During their growth cycle, cherries are sprayed 8 to 10 times with various pesticides and other chemicals, and are likely to contain pesticide residue
- **Grapes (Imported)** – Buy only organic or avoid imported grapes entirely, especially for children. Imported grapes may be fumigated with highly toxic methyl bromide.
- **Lemons, limes, oranges** – Most pesticide residue is concentrated in the peel, so buy organic when using peel in baking or drinks
- **Pears** – Highly likely to contain pesticide residues after harvest
- **Raspberries** – Highly likely to contain pesticide and fungicide residue – buy local.
- **Strawberries** – When the USDA's pesticide data program releases its annual list of produce samples with residues that exceed tolerable levels, strawberries appear more often than any other.

OK to buy non-organic

- **Blueberries** – Have low pesticide residues – buy local.
- **Cantaloupe (Domestic)** – It's OK to eat domestically grown non-organic melons in season. However, cantaloupes imported from Mexico frequently test positive for pesticide residues and should be avoided
- **Bananas** – Low pesticide residues and a thick skin made non-organic an acceptable choice. Fair-trade or organic bananas are often the same price as non-organic.
- **Grapes (Domestic)** – Grapes grown in the U.S. typically test low for pesticide residue. Non-organic grapes are fine but for small children organic is the best choice
- **Grapefruit, Tangerines** – Among citrus fruits, both rank low in pesticide residue. Most pesticide residue is concentrated in the peel. Buy organic if using the peel
- **Mangoes** – This thick skinned tropical fruit typically has little or no pesticide residue
- **Watermelon** – Pesticides do not work well for this crop and are used sparingly

NUTS, SEEDS & LEGUMES

Buy organic

- **Almonds** – Many toxic pesticides and herbicides are used on almond trees. If you eat almonds daily, buy organic

- **Peanuts (and peanut butter)** – Peanuts grown underground and are known to absorb toxins from the soil.
- **Pecans**- If you can find organic pecans, they're a good choice because pecan trees tend to be sprayed frequently, herbicides, and miticides
- **Soy Foods** – Soy foods, soymilk and tofu are so processed that few pesticide residues remain; however, several very toxic pesticides are used to grow conventional soybeans.

OK to buy non-organic

- **Beans** – Dried beans are usually washed, soaked, rinsed, and boiled, so insecticide residues are likely removed in the process.
- **Cashews** – Are grown almost exclusively in tropical locations where pesticides are rarely used.
- **Macadamia Nuts** – Few pesticides are used, if any.
- **Sesame Seeds** – Organic is better, but pesticide residues are minor in non-organic sesame seeds and oils

DAIRY

Organic is best

- **Butter** – Typically shows low pesticide levels, but pesticide residues are stored in fat and butter is nearly all fat
- **Cheese** – is mostly fat, and pesticides and persistent organic pollutants tend to accumulate in animal fat. Organic cheese is best, but hard to find. For children, buy only organic. Local cheese may be a good option. BUY LOCAL
- **Eggs** – Local pastured eggs are wonderful if you have access to a farm. If not, organic eggs are the next best choice, followed by cage-free eggs. BUY LOCAL
- **Milk, Yogurt** – Organic milk and milk products contain no hormones or antibiotics. Organic milk is highly recommended.

ALPHABETIC SUMMARY

o = Buy Organic x = OK to buy non-organic b = Organic is better

o Almonds	o Carrots	o Green Beans	o Potatoes
o Apples	x Cashews	o Lemons	o Raspberries
o Apricots	x Cauliflower	x Limes	x Rhubarb
x Asparagus	o Celery	x Macadamia Nuts	x Salad greens
x Avocados	b Cheese	x Mangoes	x Sesame Seeds
x Bananas	o Cherries	b Milk	o Soy Foods
x Beans	o Collard greens	o Nectarines	o Spinach
o Beets	x Corn, sweet	x Onions (all)	o Strawberries
x Blueberries	o Cucumbers	x Oranges	x Sweet Potatoes
x Broccoli	x Eggplant (all)	o Peaches	x Swiss chard
x Brussels Sprouts	b Eggs	o Peanut butter	x Tangerines
b Butter	x Garlic	o Peanuts	x Tomatoes
x Cabbage	x Grapefruit	o Pears	x Watermelon
x Cantaloupe (Domestic)	x Grapes (Domestic)	o Pecans	o Winter Squash
	o Grapes (Imported)	o Peppers, bell (all)	