

EATING ORGANIC FOOD with HEALTH and THE ENVIRONMENT in mind

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What is "Organic" food? By the US Department of Agriculture's definition, food is organic only if it's grown without the use of most conventional pesticides, petroleum- or sewage-based fertilizers, genetic engineering, or radiation.

Hidden health hazards in non-organic food:

- Violent behavior and learning disabilities in children – Children are the most vulnerable to the neurotoxins in pesticides. Vivid differences in behavior and abilities between kids exposed to heavy pesticides, and those not, appear at ages four and five
- Reproductive Abnormalities – Sperm count data – monitored since 1939 – projects that continued consumption of pesticides and chemical fertilizers will lead to decreased human fertility in future generations. If a mother consumes even the very low "safe" level (in parts per billion or less) of pesticides at a certain critical time of her pregnancy, her child may be born with altered sexual development, or totally infertile!
- Cancer – Scientific and medical journals increasingly report the risks posed to human health by pesticides, including links between pesticides and diseases such as breast cancer and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.
- Breast Milk from Mothers – is contaminated since humans are at the top of the food chain and toxic chemicals concentrate in fat. Babies can be drinking toxins at a critical development time!

Drinking Water Contamination from Commercial Agriculture – As toxic pesticides are used for many years on a farm, they seep down into the ground and contaminate the aquifer below, or run into streams and rivers from which many rural residents, towns, and cities depend for their drinking water!

Worldwide Toxic Contamination – Many other species besides humans have been attacked by all these toxic chemicals in the environment. Low (parts per billion or less) "safe" background levels have now spread worldwide. There is no "clean" area left – even at the North Pole and in Antarctica low levels of these toxic pesticides have been detected. Other affected species include Polar Bears and birds of prey.

Growing Organic Food is CHEAPER – After the cash costs of pesticides and fertilizers are removed, organic food costs less per unit than commercial chemical monoculture toxic food. Why aren't all farms growing organic if this is true? (1) It takes at least 3 to 5 years for the soil to "recover", (2) There isn't enough demand for organic food, and (3) The political lobbies of the food and chemical industries work to keep their toxic markets.

CSCESD Chair Charles Caccia stated to Parliament in May 2000:

". . . pesticides are highly poisonous substances designed to kill living organisms and are thus potentially harmful to workers using them and to farming and urban communities unknowingly exposed as well as to consumers. Therefore, we asked ourselves whether a regulatory system could be designed that would give clear and absolute precedence to human health. Based on our findings, it must be designed as such. The choice facing us is clear: either to continue with our chronic dependence on pesticides to the detriment of the environment, agricultural sustainability and human health or, to give public health protection clear precedence. We have already done so with tobacco, lead and asbestos. Pesticides should be next."

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

- Nutrition for Optimal Health Association (NOHA) at www.nutrition4health.org
- Our Stolen Future by Theo Colburn, et al, Dutton, 1996.
- Nutrition for Optimal Health Association (NOHA) at www.nutrition4health.org
- Harvard Women's Health Watch, Vol. 10, No. 10, June 2003.
- Cancer Prevention Coalition at: www.preventcancer.com
- Canadians Against Pesticides at: <http://www.caps.20m.com>
- Canadian Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development (CSCESD) at: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/InfoComDoc/36/2/ENVI/Studies/Reports/envi01/05-pre-e.html>

(The information on this handout was obtained from these listed websites, newsletters, and books, but they contain much more.)