

“ORGANIC VS. NON-ORGANIC”

We have all heard that organic foods provide a healthier approach than the normal conventional diet. Recently, Stanford University performed a review that compared the two groups. Using studies over the past 45 years, the researchers included 240 papers for their studies. The study involved human subjects and lasted for approximately two years.

Their findings included;

- No consistent difference in vitamin content between organic and non-organic foods.
- No consistent difference in mineral content, except for phosphorus, which was higher in organic fruits and vegetables.
- No difference in protein or fat content between organic and non-organic milk, though organic milk contains mildly higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids, in limited studies.
- 23 percent of organic produce had pesticide contamination, compared to 37 percent of conventional produce, though these numbers are both within the FDA allowable limits.
- 21 percent of organic chicken and pork contained bacteria resistant to three or more antibiotics, compared to 45 percent of non-organic chicken and pork.

The researchers seemed to conclude that there are not significant differences between organic and commercial foods in regards to nutrients and pesticide content.

There was a follow up study in regards to what types of produce contain the highest and lowest pesticide levels. Among the highest levels are; Apples, celery, bell peppers, peaches, strawberries, potatoes, lettuce, grapes, green beans, cucumbers, and spinach. In the low category; onions, corn, pineapples, avocados, cabbage, sweet peas, asparagus, mangoes, eggplant, kiwi, cantaloupes, sweet potatoes, grapefruit, watermelon, and mushrooms. Apples and celery were at the top for contamination levels and onions were the lowest.

Food for thought: While the findings may not reveal significant advantages in purchasing the higher cost organic foods, you may want to consider purchasing organic foods for the lower pesticide levels, as there are no studies on the accumulative effect of consuming organic vs. non-organic over the course of a lifetime.

Reference:

1) Smith-Spangler C, Brandeau ML, Hunter GE, Baviinger JC, et al. “Annals of Internal Medicine”, Sept. 4, 2012; 157(5):348-366

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