



CHEK POINTS for Fitness Professionals

Why Organic?

There is a growing trend worldwide towards organic foods. While some consumers are making an effort to purchase high-quality organic foods, many are still wary about spending the extra money or taking the extra time to find such foods.

The next time you are at the grocery store and have the choice between organic and conventionally grown or raised items consider these key points.

① Nutrient Values

The media generally reports that there is not a significant difference in nutrient values between organic and conventionally grown produce. This is virtually impossible if you consider what organic farming actually entails.

Virginia Worthington MS, ScD, CNS compared organic and biodynamic crops to conventionally farmed crops. She reviewed 1230 published comparisons between organically grown and conventionally grown crops. The results indicated that organic crops had higher nutrient levels or lower levels of toxicity in 56% of the comparisons while the conventional crop was better 37% of the time.

While many of these studies showed that organic foods had more nutrients, it is interesting that such a high percent determined that conventionally grown crops were actually better. You need to look closely at these studies. The British Soil Association analyzed 109 studies on organic and conventionally raised foods. They determined that only 27 of these studies were valid comparisons—

almost all of which found organic foods to be significantly better.

② Secondary Nutrients

The nutrients generally mentioned when comparing conventionally grown and organic foods are primary essential nutrients such as water, fiber, proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals. Among the differences cited between conventional and organic foods are notable differences in the amount of *secondary nutrients*. Other than primary essential nutrients, there are some 5,000 – 10,000 secondary compounds in plants.

While secondary nutrients have not been classified as, or known to be *essential* for health, there is a wealth of information suggesting their numerous health benefits. The British Soil Association's "Organic Farming, Food Quality and Human Health" report alone cites 57 references supporting both increased levels of secondary nutrients in organic produce and their beneficial effects.

Research from Copenhagen University suggests that organic food may be better at protecting us from cancer. Organic foods were found to contain high levels of a potent group of antioxidants called *phenolic compounds*—a group of secondary nutrients. According to the researchers, phenolic compounds are ten times more efficient at mopping up cancer-causing free radicals in the body than other antioxidants such as vitamins C and E.

The beneficial effects of secondary nutrients is also well known among natural medicine

doctors and practitioners. There are many doctors and healing clinics that include an organic diet in their treatment approach. The healing effects of these organic foods are associated with the superior secondary nutrient content and quality. Why wait until you are sick to consume high quality foods?

③ Protein Quality

One of the largest studies on organic food, the Haughley Experiment, found that cows fed organic produce ate less, but consistently produced more milk. This is believed to be a result of the quality of protein in the grass. Protein is dependent on the range of amino acids composing it. Plant proteins may, or may not, contain certain amino acids that are essential to animal nutrition. Whether they do or not depends largely on the soil conditions in which the plant is grown. The plant is dependent on trace minerals—of which their availability is dependent on soil microorganisms. These essential microorganisms are depleted as much as 85% in conventionally farmed soils, usually as a result of chemical fertilizers, herbicides and fungicides. The proteins in the plants growing in the depleted soil are thus inferior.

④ Less Toxins

While there is much controversy in the professional and lay literature over the nutritional differences between organic and conventionally farmed produce, meats and poultry, one thing is indisputable, even under scientific scrutiny—organically raised foods are free from harmful chemical residues from commercial farming! That alone makes them worth the extra money they may cost and the time they may take to acquire. There is a mass of new information emerging implicating environmental pollutants, farming chemicals and food additives as the source of degenerative diseases, obesity, allergies and mental dysfunction.

⑤ Better for the Environment

From the soil up, organic farming is better for the environment as a whole. It was the

The Life of a Jolly Green Giant Tomato

To give you a sample of what conventionally raised produce goes through, consider the tomato. The plant begins as a hybrid seed developed from a Mexican strain. This seed is planted in soil that was first fumigated with methyl bromide, an ozone depleter 120 times more powerful than CFC-111—an already potent ozone depleter! *Think about that next time you get a sunburn twice as fast as you did as little as 20 years ago.* The plant is then treated with pesticides developed and manufactured by the Monsanto Corporation, one of the largest polluters in the world. The Mexican farm workers handling the tomato and his buddies are given no protection from pesticides used—no gloves, masks or safety instructions.

The tomato is harvested when it is still green. It's new home is on a plastic tray, covered in plastic wrap, packaged in cardboard boxes and distributed using refrigerated trucks throughout North America. The tomato, reddened using ether, is tasteless and with no nutritional value.

way we survived for thousands of years. Modern "advances" in farming such as, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides, are destroying our soils which results in destruction of the plants, animals and ultimately humans dependent on them. There are numerous sources of information on the benefits of organic products. Here are just a few to check out. Remember, when you spend a bit more to buy organic, you are not only doing yourself a favor, you are helping improve the environment.

www.mercola.com
www.westonaprice.org
www.soilassociation.org
www.organic-research.com
www.organicconsumers.org

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www.chekinstitute.com.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!