

CHILDREN NEED ORGANIC FOOD



Why is it critical to protect children from pesticide residues in food?

Children's developing organs create "early windows of great vulnerability" during which exposure to pesticides can cause great damage. This is supported by the findings of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), which concludes, "Children encounter pesticides daily and have unique susceptibilities to their potential toxicity." In another report, AAP says that organic foods provide health advantages by way of reducing exposure to pesticides, especially for children, reporting "sound evidence" that organic foods contain more vitamin C and phosphorus. According to the report, "in terms of health advantages, organic diets have been convincingly demonstrated to expose consumers to fewer pesticides associated with human disease.

TIPS FOR PROVIDING ORGANIC FOOD FOR KIDS

It is often said that organic food is more expensive than "conventional" food produced by chemical-intensive farming. This accounting, however, fails to take into account some important costs of the chemical-intensive system that are "externalized"—that is, not paid directly by the farmer or the consumer, but ultimately borne by all of us.

These costs include contamination of air, soil, and water—and the cost of cleaning them up. They include health effects suffered by consumers, farmworkers, and the public at large—and, in particular, to our children. To some extent, organic production can be seen as health insurance.



BEYOND PESTICIDES

beyondpesticides.org

Pesticides not used in organic are linked to ADHD, autism, and developmental delays

Organic farming has been demonstrated to have less environmental impact than conventional approaches.” It also goes on to note that organic farming can be competitive and yields comparable to those of conventional farming techniques. AAP recommends that “pediatricians should incorporate this evidence when discussing the health and environmental impact of organic foods and organic farming while continuing to encourage all patients and their families to attain optimal nutrition and dietary variety.”

Studies find that eating a conventional diet produced in a chemical-intensive manner increases the presence of pesticides and their metabolites in an individual's urine, including higher pesticide body burden from eating foods grown in chemical-intensive systems. Because of their smaller size, children carry higher levels of toxic pesticides in their body. Multiple studies show that many common pesticides result in developmental problems in children, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, and developmental delays. There is also strong evidence that organophosphate insecticides, still widely used on fruits and vegetables in the U.S., are dropping children's IQs on a national and global scale, costing billions to the economy in the form of lost brain power.

ORGANIC ON A BUDGET

Organic food does require an investment—one that an increasing number of people are choosing to make. Surveys show that the preference for organic food is relatively even across income levels, with 56% of those earning less than \$25k per year, 61.2% earning in the \$25-\$49.9k bracket, 59% in the \$50-\$99.9k bracket, and 60% of those earning more than \$100k per year expressing preference for organic food.

Providing our children with a healthy head start requires some planning. ***Here are some tips for eating organic on a budget:***

► **Eat home-prepared foods.** Foods that we prepare ourselves are not nearly as expensive as those we pay others to prepare—whether fast food, restaurant meals, or packaged prepared foods.

► **Eat seasonally and locally.** Organic produce from farmers markets consistently costs less than produce from grocery stores. If you have a freezer, stock up on food in season.

► **Choose simple recipes and preparations.** Not only will you save time, but you will preserve the nutrients in your foods.

Switching to an organic diet can reduce pesticides and their metabolites in the body, even within a week of the change.... Researchers find that children who eat organic food display higher scores measuring fluid intelligence and working memory. A switch to an organic diet reduced the body burden of pesticides in children, especially those in low-income urban, and in agricultural families.