

Why Care About Pesticides?

There is growing consensus in the scientific community that small doses of pesticides and other chemicals can adversely affect people, especially during vulnerable periods of fetal development and childhood, when exposures can have long lasting effects. Because the toxic effects of pesticides are worrisome, not well understood, or in some cases completely unstudied, shoppers are wise to minimize exposure to pesticides whenever possible.

EWG's 2015 Shopper's Guide to pesticide in produce

The Dirty Dozen

BUY THESE ORGANIC

Below are the 12 most contaminated fruits and veggies, containing the highest levels of pesticide residue. Buying this produce organic will greatly reduce the chance of pesticides affecting your body.

- 1 Apples
- 2 Peaches
- 3 Nectarines
- 4 Strawberries
- 5 Grapes
- 6 Celery
- 7 Spinach
- 8 Sweet Bell Peppers
- 9 Cucumbers
- 10 Cherry Tomatoes
- 11 Snap Peas (*Imported*)
- 12 Potatoes



The Clean Fifteen

LOWEST IN PESTICIDE

Below are the 15 least contaminated fruits and veggies, containing the lowest levels of pesticide residue. If you choose not to buy organic produce, these are the safest regarding pesticides.

- 1 Avocados
- 2 Sweet Corn
- 3 Pineapples
- 4 Cabbage
- 5 Sweet Peas (*frozen*)
- 6 Onions
- 7 Asparagus
- 8 Mangoes
- 9 Papayas
- 10 Kiwi
- 11 Eggplant
- 12 Grapefruit
- 13 Cantaloupe
- 14 Cauliflower
- 15 Sweet Potatoes



What's the difference?

An EWG simulation of thousands of consumers eating high and low pesticide diets shows that people can lower their pesticide exposure by almost 90% by avoiding the top twelve most contaminated fruits and vegetables, and eating the least contaminated instead. Eating the 12 most contaminated fruits and vegetables will expose a person to about 15 pesticides per day, on average. Eating the 12 least contaminated will expose a person to less than 2 pesticides per day. Less dramatic comparisons will produce less dramatic reductions, but without doubt using the Guide provides people with a way to make choices that lower pesticide exposure in the diet.

Will washing and peeling help?

Nearly all of the data used to create these lists already considers how people typically wash and prepare produce (for example, apples are washed before testing, bananas are peeled.) While washing and rinsing fresh produce may reduce levels of some pesticides, it does not eliminate them. Peeling also reduces exposures, but valuable nutrients often go down the drain with the peel. The best option is to eat a varied diet, wash all produce, and choose organic when possible to reduce exposure to potentially harmful chemicals.

How was this guide developed?

The produce ranking was developed by analysts at the not-for-profit Environmental Working Group (EWG), based on the results of nearly 43,000 tests for pesticides on produce collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration between 2000 and 2004. A detailed description of the criteria used in developing the rankings as well as a full list of fresh fruits and vegetables that have been tested is available at www.foodnews.org.

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