

The List: What to Eat, What to Avoid, How to Compromise

In the first column, you'll find things you want to avoid eating or buying. In the middle, a step up, but still a compromise compared to the last column, which contains the ideal choice in a given situation. From KitchenStewardship.com

No Way!	Okay	Hey hey!
Produce <i>In general, focus your organic funds on the dirty dozen produce list for maximum impact.</i>		
Not washing your produce	Any conventional produce is better than not eating your fruits and veggies.	Fruits and veggies from the clean 15 , the 15 least chemical-laden conventionally grown items
Fruit snacks	Regular old fruit from the dirty dozen :	Organic fruits of any kind, especially local
Canned vegetables (corn, peas, beans)	In a pinch, frozen veggies. Steam, do not microwave .	Fresh vegetables, focus on the dirty dozen for organic purchases
Most juices – why bother with *not* the whole fruit?	100% grape, cranberry or orange juice. Some redeeming qualities there.	
Canned fruits in heavy syrup	In a pinch, canned fruit in its own juice. Organic best.	Freshly picked, whole fruits
Off season supermarket tomatoes – why bother?	Canned tomatoes. Nutrition enhanced by cooking toms, BPA in cans a concern	Organic tomatoes in glass jars or home canned
Canned refried beans with lots of bad oils & additives	In a pinch, canned beans or pressure cooked dry beans	Dry beans soaked overnight and cooked slowly
<i>The eternal question: local and non-organic or organic and not local? Most bloggers in the Real Food Face-Off chose local every time, and almost every time, I would, too. It's great to talk to your local farmers; often you can find someone who keeps chemical use at a minimum for a much lower cost than grocery organic produce.</i>		

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Dairy <i>Because cattle consume lots of food to produce a little milk or meat, the chemicals are concentrated in these products. Prioritize organic over plant items.</i>		
Organic, UHT (ultra high temp) pasteurized milk – not worth the \$ premium	*regular store milk, either whole milk or skim with lots of other fat in the diet *preferably Rbgh/Rbst free *organic, non-UHT pasteurized milk * unhomogenized whole milk...maybe	*organic, low-temp pasteurized skim milk with added cream *organic, grassfed, unhomogenized low-temp pasteurized whole milk *organic, grassfed raw milk
Processed cheese product (Kraft singles, Velveeta); powdered cheese; EZ cheese in a can	Regular cheeses: cheddar, mozzarella, Colby, Monterey Jack. Brands w/o growth hormones best.	Organic and/or raw and/or grassfed cheeses, many imported European cheeses will be somewhat grassfed.
Cottage cheese and sour cream with lots of weird additives	Cottage cheese and sour cream with ingredients: cultured milk, cream, etc. (Daisy brand is good)	Organic cottage cheese or sour cream without weird ingredients; grassfed best
Yogurt with lots of added sugar; fat free yogurt	Plain yogurt with live and active cultures, organic optimal	Homemade whole yogurt from a good source of milk; raw even better (but difficult to master)
Fish and Seafood <i>Start by printing a seafood watch list for your locale.</i>		
Some say: all shellfish	Some say: only shellfish caught safely	
Farmed salmon (any “Atlantic” salmon)	Pacific salmon – should check if farmed	Wild Alaskan salmon , canned or fresh caught
Tilapia caught in China, tuna packed in oil	Tilapia caught in Costa Rica, tuna in water	<i>In general, only eat tuna once a week</i>
Big fish like kingfish, swordfish, etc. have high mercury content; eat sparingly	Basics like whitefish, mahi mahi, grouper. Learn your area re: can you eat fish you caught yourself?	Tiny fish like sardines, anchovies and more

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Meat and Poultry <i>As with dairy, these animals concentrate chemicals and may have additional issues like hormones and antibiotics that produce doesn't deal with. Prioritize organic.</i>		
Irradiated beef, beef treated with ammonia, basic fast food and grocery store beef	Corn/grain fed beef (grocery store) that has no antibiotics in the finishing period (like NatureWell, Laura's Lean Beef); local, hormone free beef	Grassfed, organic beef , preferably local
Grocery store chicken: confined, fed who knows what, injected with a "solution" to increase mass	In a pinch, conventionally grown poultry (grocery store) without added salt or "solution" to plump it up. "Vegetarian fed" chicken is only a small step up from other chickens, but better than chickens who may have eaten other chickens.	Locally raised chickens with locally raised grains, allowed to run around outdoors and eat what they choose along with their grain. Organic feed is one more step up, assures no GMO corn or soy. Proper homemade chicken stock .
Processed chicken nuggets, patties, etc. Chicken broth with lots of MSG, other additives.	In a pinch, chicken with the bones from the store. Don't let packaging fool you – FDA outlawed all hormones in chicken. Organic ok, often not worth premium. Make stock from the bones.	Best option: Local, organically grown chickens who are allowed to run outdoors AND follow cattle to eat the grubs from their cow plops. Joel Salatin style farming.
Grocery store lunchmeat, hot dogs, bacon and ham chock full of nitrates and nitrites. (Every so often in the summer? Maybe!)	Preservative or nitrite-free lunchmeat (Hormel, Oscar Meyer sell "naturals", Boarshead is one deli brand, but read ingredients), lower nitrate bacon from local sources.	Farm bacon from pigs allowed to live as pigs ought to live – free to root around in the dirt. Roast your own chicken or beef and slice for sandwiches.
Not eating eggs	Plain old eggs, anything else from the store	Local, free range eggs; pastured; organic, etc.
<p>***Please see this post to help you decipher egg cartons and find "best" eggs.</p>		
<p><i>On pork and turkey: Some say never eat pork of any kind. Some say find sources like described above (hey, hey! column). Turkey follows guidelines like chicken.</i></p>		

Grains

Many grains are protected from chemical sprays landing directly on the edible portion, so they are often lower on the organic priority list. GMO crops a possible exception.

White bread products, white rice, anything with “enriched wheat flour” (aka white flour) as the first ingredient.	Whole grain breads without added high fructose corn syrup or gluten; bread products with at least half whole grains.	Brown rice, whole grain bread products you make yourself, perhaps soaked . Organic or “certified chemical free” best. Super star bread = homemade sourdough!
Pasta mixes with powdered cheese, trans fats, MSG and other additives.	White pasta is a “sometimes” food. Whole grain pasta or brown rice pasta better...maybe.	Soaked, homemade pasta or noodles. Organic best.
Instant oatmeal, quick oats.	Rolled oats, properly soaked and cooked ; steel-cut oats.	Whole oat groats, whizzed briefly in a food processor right before soaking.
Jiffy cornbread mix; “degerminated” cornmeal	Homemade cornbread ; whole corn tortillas without additives	Soaked homemade cornbread; properly nixtamalized masa (corn treated with lime)
Sugary cereals; any cereal with flakes or shapes	Cereal made with whole grains that are not in shapes (not extruded)	Soaked (or at least homemade) granola

Sweeteners

Keep in mind that all sweeteners are still high in calories, raise your blood sugar, and generally aren't necessary in a healthy diet. Use even the highest quality sweeteners sparingly; the price premium will help remind you of that!

White refined sugar (even if it says “cane sugar”), including brown sugar, dk. brown sugar, powdered sugar	Organic cane sugar, Sucanat, evaporated cane juice	Best for your health to avoid sweeteners and focus on naturally sweet foods like fruit
High Fructose Corn Syrup, light corn syrup	Pasteurized honey (grocery store honey)	Local, raw honey ; unsulphured molasses
Fake maple syrup (has one or more of the above in it)	Agave (although controversial)	Real maple syrup
Artificial sweeteners: Nutrasweet (aspartame), Splenda (sucralose), et. al.	Stevia powder (white, highly processed form)	Liquid stevia extract or green dried leaves (this one doesn't have calories or raise blood sugar)

I haven't looked into other sweeteners like erythritol...yet!

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Fats <i>Animal fats concentrate the toxins, so organic is important. For plant oils, organic is one way to ensure it hasn't been processed with toxic chemicals.</i>		
"Vegetable oil"	In a pinch, I might keep a small bottle of Canola oil or safflower oil on hand for a quick liquid oil option	Virgin olive oil – less flavor, higher smoke point than extra virgin olive oil, good for compromise sauté
Anything made with soybean or corn oils	Foods with added omega-3 or that are high in Omega-3s, like salmon and flax	Extra virgin olive oil (see olive oil terms for details)
Partially or fully hydrogenated anything	Refined coconut oil	"Extra virgin" or "unrefined" coconut oil , fermented even better
Margarine , any fake butter	Conventional store butter	Hormone and antibiotic free butter; Grassfed, organic butter or ghee optimal
Hydrogenated lard, vegetable shortening	Storebought lard	Organic, local lard – find a butcher near you! Chicken or bacon fat for frying.
Trans fats	Omega-6s, aka polyunsaturated fats (we eat too many) like grapeseed and sesame oils	Monounsaturated fats , omega-3s, saturated fats (in moderation)
<i>It's worth saying in this section: Don't be afraid of foods with cholesterol. Dietary cholesterol (like egg yolks) doesn't actually translate into blood cholesterol.</i>		
<i>Find a chart of how to use all your healthy fats here.</i>		

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<p align="center">Storage Containers and Cookware <i>The danger with what our food goes IN is always that chemicals can leach from the container into the food.</i></p>		
Bisphenol-A (BPA) in plastic, including canned foods lining	BPA-free plastic, including plastic zippered bags	Non-plastic options like stainless steel or glass
Plastics no. 3, 6 and some 7s (7 is a catch all category; you'd have to call the manufacturer to see if it contains BPA...)	Plastic no. 2 or 5. Number 1 is for single use only. Try to use only for cold, dry foods. Do NOT microwave.	Stainless steel, glass, ceramic (lead-free), enamelware
Styrofoam cups and takeout containers (no. 6 plastic, contains bisphenol-A)	Plastic disposable items	Cardboard containers, or bring your own!
Aluminum pots and pans	Teflon is iffy- use only at low temps if you must use it!	Stainless steel, cast iron (not for acidic foods), enameled cast iron, glass
Aluminum or non-stick baking sheets (could you really have non-stick without scratching it?)	Stainless steel, line with parchment paper or muffin liners	Baking stone or silicone mat
Aluminum foil , easy slide Ziploc bags , plastic wrap	Waxed paper, freezer paper, regular plastic Ziploc bags	Reusable bags made of cloth, cover bowls with their own lids or a plate, bake potatoes without foil, stainless steel grill basket
Phthalates (in plastics)	Read packaging or call manufacturers, especially of children's toys, to find phthalate-free plastic	Wooden dishes or toys, glass, stainless steel, fabric toys
Teflon/non-stick surfaces	If you have Teflon pans or say, a griddle, make sure you don't ever use metal utensils or let it get over 500 degrees F.	Stainless steel (although some even say it leaches), cast iron, enameled cast iron, glass
The microwave		Heat naturally on the stovetop or in the oven

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<p align="center">Personal Products</p> <p align="center"><i>Your skin is your largest organ, and the skin absorbs anything we put on it directly into our systems. You might as well eat whatever your slathering on your skin, so you need to be aware of what's in it.</i></p>		
Triclosan ; antibacterial soaps	Handsoap that isn't antibacterial; the sodium lauryl sulfate is still a culprit	Natural soaps like castile soap, Shaklee's H2 , Cleanwell with tea tree oil, many more
Sanitizers with triclosan	Alcohol-based waterless hand sanitizers . I only use them in emergencies.	Tea tree oil based waterless sanitizers; sold under the Cleanwell brand name
Parabens (found at the end of words like "methylparaben" or "propylparaben")	Products without those chemicals	Products made with only things you could eat, homemade products
Antiperspirants and deodorants with aluminum	Crystal rock, deodorant without aluminum	Homemade deodorant
<i>More on this topic later, especially on sunscreens and toothpaste...</i>		
<p align="center">Cleaning Products</p> <p align="center"><i>Our indoor air quality is affected by anything we spray, plus many surfaces we clean with toxic cleaning products end up in contact with our children or our food. The environment is another consideration when deciding on cleaners.</i></p>		
Bleach in cleaners	Commercial cleaning products w/o bleach	Homemade cleaners with hydrogen peroxide, vinegar and baking soda; natural cleaners with essential oils
Bleach in the laundry	Oxygen Bleach	Lay clothing out in the sunshine
Phosphates (often in dishwasher and laundry detergents)		Natural dishwasher detergents like Biokleen w/o phosphates, bleach
<i>More on this topic later...</i>		