

Ask the Expert:

Are Organic Foods More Nutritious Than Non-Organic Foods?

Written by Emma Araya, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics '26



Organic foods in the United States are steadily increasing in popularity. There could be many reasons for choosing organic foods. Some people may claim that organic foods are healthier, but what science is there to support this claim? The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines organic produce as “crops that are produced on farms that have not used most synthetic pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizer for three years before harvesting the food”. Farmers also need to follow guidelines about growing crops far enough away from land where these chemicals are used. In addition, genetic engineering, ionizing radiation, and sewage sludge may not be used for organic certification. For livestock, the animals must live on organic land, must eat organic feed, and must not be given routine antibiotics or hormones. Because of these practices, organic foods may cost 50% more than non-organic foods. Farmers must take care of pests, weeds, and disease without using pesticides, making it take more time and effort to create the same amount of food product.

In terms of nutrition, organic foods are not more nutritious or healthful compared with the same type of food that is not organic. You will still get the same nutrients from foods grown with both methods. Nutrients like vitamins, minerals, and macronutrients like carbohydrates, fats, protein, and fiber are similar between food products raised or grown in an organic and non-organic way. Yet, it could be healthful to choose organic to reduce the amount of pesticides or other synthetic substances that are in the food, but the nutrients in the foods are not different.



Sources: <https://extension.sdstate.edu/hormones-beef-myths-vs-facts>, <https://health.ucdavis.edu/blog/good-food/are-organic-foods-really-healthier-two-pediatricians-break-it-down/2019/04>, <https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/product-safety-information/steroid-hormone-implants-used-growth-food-producing-animals#:~:text=All%20approved%20steroid%20implant%20products,calves%2C%20pigs%2C%20or%20poultry>

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Food Safety: Picnic Food Safety

Written by Emma Araya, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics '26

As summer is almost here, it is quickly becoming prime time for picnics and enjoying food outdoors. While you are spending time with your family and friends, take a little time to reduce the risk of foodborne illness using these tips:

- Make sure to wash your hands before cooking, eating, or serving food.
Scrub your hands with clean water and soap. Carrying hand sanitizer can be a good alternative if there is no running water, but it shouldn't replace hand washing.
- Separate food that you bring along to picnics and outdoor events to avoid cross-contamination.
Do not mix food types, especially meat and poultry, with other foods to keep bacteria from spreading. Juices from the meat can drip into the cooler and create a dangerous environment for bacteria to grow. Sanitize the cooler and reusable bags for food.
- Don't let food sit out for more than 2 hours.
When food is in the temperature danger zone (between 40-140F), bacteria can double every 20 minutes. Make sure to use a well-insulated cooler with ice to prevent temperatures above 40F.
- Don't repurpose ice.
If you bring ice, make sure it's only used for one purpose. For example, do not use ice from the cooler to also be added to drinks. Using ice for more than one purpose could transfer bacteria and put you and your family at risk for foodborne illness.

Source: <https://www.eatright.org/food/planning/away-from-home/how-to-prevent-7-picnic-food-safety-mistakes>

Apple Coleslaw

Directions

1. Cut the cabbage into fine shreds.
2. Peel the carrot and grate it.
3. Cut the green pepper into small pieces.
4. Remove the core and chop the apple.
5. In a medium bowl, add in all the chopped ingredients and stir together.
6. In another bowl, add in the yogurt, mayonnaise, lemon juice, and dill weed. Stir to make a dressing.
7. Add the dressing to the chopped vegetables. Toss to mix and add salt and pepper to taste.

Ingredients (4 servings)

- 2 cups shredded cabbage
- 1 medium carrot, grated*
- 1/2 medium green pepper, chopped
- 1 medium apple, chopped*
- 5 tablespoons yogurt, low-fat
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise, low-fat
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon dill weed



Nutrition Facts (per serving)

Calories: 61
Protein: 2g
Carbs: 11g
Fat: 2g

***foods included in the
TEFAP (The Emergency Food
Assistance Program)**

Sources: <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/apple-coleslaw>

Eating Right:

Creating a Grocery List

Written by Emma Araya, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics '26

Having a grocery list can help make grocery shopping easier and quicker. It can also motivate you to stick to only what you need to save money and meet your nutrition goals. Follow these tips to build a successful grocery list:

- Check your fridge and freezer before you head to the grocery store
Looking at what you already have at home can help you buy only what you need and limit overbuying.



- Organize your list in sections
Putting certain food groups in sections can help you shop based on the store layout. It can help avoid “impulse” buys and help you stick to the items on your list.

- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables
When you make your list, choose 2-3 fruits and vegetables of different colors. Fruits and vegetables can be fresh, frozen, and/or canned (choose lower sodium/sugar alternatives if canned).

- Try to mainly choose whole-grain versions of foods
If you are buying any grains, try to buy only the whole-grain types of these foods. For example, try brown rice, whole-wheat pasta and bread, and oatmeal. Whole grains are rich in fiber which can help you to stay full for longer.

- Write down meals for the week
Writing down recipes or meals you’d like for the week. With additional snacks, it can help you stick to your budget goals and make it easier to get what you need quickly at the store.

Try to use the MyPlates grocery meal planning template (https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2020-12/Create%20a%20Grocery%20Game%20Plan_Weekly%20Calendar.pdf)

| CREATE A GROCERY GAME PLAN WEEKLY CALENDAR | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
| BREAKFAST | | | | | | | |
| LUNCH | | | | | | | |
| DINNER | | | | | | | |
| SNACKS | | | | | | | |
| NOTES: | <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> | | | | | | |

Sources: <https://www.eatright.org/food/planning/smart-shopping/creating-a-grocery-list>, <https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/healthy-eating-budget/make-plan>, https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2020-12/Create%20a%20Grocery%20Game%20Plan_Weekly%20Calendar.pdf

Send comments and/or change of address to:
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Purdue University
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West Lafayette, IN 47907-2059
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This newsletter is edited by Emma Araya and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

In The News: June is National Fruit and Vegetable Month!

Written by Emma Araya, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics '26



June marks the beginning of summer and national fruit and vegetable month. This month serves to encourage Americans to eat fruit and vegetables since according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the current intake among Americans is low. Adults should consume 1.5-2 cup-equivalents of fruits and 2-3 cup-equivalents of vegetables daily.

If you are not eating the daily amount for fruits and vegetables, you can work to change by starting simple:

- Add in a fruit like grapes or clementines during your afternoon snack and/or include a vegetable like zucchini or broccoli in your dinner.
- Using the MyPlate App can help you track your fruit and vegetable intake.
- Don't think you have to stick to only fresh produce, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables are good, affordable choices too! Look for low-sodium and sugar options.

