



Organic VS Non-Organic... That is the Question!

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The Issue: Does organic food have nutritional benefits over non-organic food? A small research study reviewing previously written articles found benefits of organic food “insignificant for the general public”. Does that mean the benefits of organic food ARE significant for other populations?

Eating organic food for increased nutritional benefit completely misses the point of eating ORGANIC! An organic apple and a “conventional” apple have roughly the same vitamin and mineral content, depending on when they were harvested. An apple, after all, is an apple. Organic food supports healthy, sustainable farming methods. As a “conventional” apple is grown, trees and apples are sprayed with chemicals to kill anything that might hurt the tree or eat the apples, therefore jeopardizing the harvest. Apples are picked before they are completely ripe (before nutrients and flavor develop) and sprayed again to deter ripening before the fruit gets to its destination, usually thousands of miles away. (Our environmental impact would significantly decrease by eating local food.) Finally, to make sure this chemical-sprayed apple LOOKS good enough to eat, it is wax-coated so the peel shines and does not get discolored or blemished. Washing produce can limit the amount of wax and chemicals ingested, but cannot eliminate them completely.

Quiz: Smell a “conventional” apple before you bite into it. Does it smell like an apple? Now smell an organic apple from a local farmers market before your first bite. You will be amazed at the fragrance the apple produces BEFORE the peel is even broken. Imagine the fragrance of a kitchen filled with local organic produce! Another questionable aspect of this article was that the research cited studies from 50+ years ago. Our food industry has completely changed in the last 50+ years, and we are just now seeing those effects with the increase in dis-ease. Developments for speed of food production; chemicals to increase farm output; preservatives to increase shelf life; are all taking a toll on our health. Our bodies can process and eliminate many toxins, but only when properly nourished and rested. A body under constant “attack” by foreign contaminants, in addition to being

malnourished and overworked, can only maintain wellness for so long. Eventually, the foreign contaminants will cause dis-ease.

We are just now beginning to see consequences of “conventional” farming, so citing articles written 50 years ago is not useful research. The focus could be turned to long term effects of modern chemicals and presented to the “general public”, allowing US to decide the significance of organic benefits.

Another reason to “go organic”:

Much of our food supply has been tampered with on a molecular level to become resistant to bacteria and chemicals. These foods are known as Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO), and are rarely denoted on labels...many are not labelled at all. For example, strawberries usually do not list ingredients, so “made with GMO Strawberries” would not appear on the label. Yet, from seed these foods are unnatural and the consequences of eating them are unpredictable.

With these modified foods and chemicals fighting bacteria in our food, our own immune systems are becoming inadequate. We are encouraging the microbial world to evolve and strengthen, while our immune systems weaken. Our only defense will be man-made antibiotics, leaving us with a reactive, rather than preventive, line of defense. Imagine a war against an invincible organism that can morph and adapt. I think Hollywood already has...

Eating organically can be difficult, and that, in and of itself, is a problem. Even if someone WANTS to “go organic”, they may not have the resources or income. Eating organically has become easier and more accessible in the past few years, however, the cost of organic versus fast food hinders many from making the transition.

“If you’re not part of the solution, you’re part of the problem, but the perpetual human predicament is that the answer soon poses its own problems.” - Sydney J. Harris

Thus the vicious cycle begins. Ignoring the issue allows the epidemic to continue. It is not until more people DEMAND better food quality that profound changes will be made. Finding a local organic farmers market from which you can buy your seasonal produce is a fantastic solution. Knowing that you are supporting healthy farming, and putting the freshest, cleanest food on your family table is priceless, not to mention the money you will save because local food has a MUCH longer shelf life! The taste and smell of local food is unbeatable, making your meals even more delicious. Who knows? Your children might start eating their veggies!

Lesson: It is not necessary to reject “norms” and purposely go against the grain, but also do not accept everything as “fact”. Question everything you hear and read, and think for yourself. Think before you speak...and before you act, cook and eat.

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Jan Michelle is also a Certified Personal/Group Fitness Trainer, Level 2 Reiki Practitioner and Thai Yoga Practitioner. Her mission is to bring optimal health and wellness to her community and beyond, making our country’s current health crisis a thing of the past. Jan Michelle serves the NYC and surrounding areas.