

Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce



When you're grocery shopping, it's easy to find labels and pick foods that help you reduce cholesterol and saturated fat, avoid antibiotics, or steer clear of artificial colors, flavors and sweeteners. But when it comes to pesticides, consumers have been left in the dark. Now there's help.

The *Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce* lists the 12 popular fresh fruits and vegetables that are consistently the most contaminated with pesticides and those 12 fruits and vegetables that consistently have low levels of pesticides. If you are concerned about pesticides in your diet, this handy wallet card can help you choose produce that lowers exposure to pesticides for you and your family.

For the most contaminated items, we suggest substituting organically grown produce whenever possible. When this is not an option, we still recommend eating lots of fresh fruits and vegetables but use this guide to buy those that typically have fewer pesticides.

Why Should You Care About Pesticides?

There is growing concern in the scientific community regarding the subtle ways in which small doses of pesticides affect people, especially during critical periods of fetal development and childhood when they can have long lasting adverse effects. Because the toxic effects of pesticides are worrisome, not well understood or in some cases completely unstudied, shoppers would be wise to minimize exposure to pesticides whenever possible.

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 help reduce pesticide residues, it does not eliminate them. Peeling 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.

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Highest in Pesticides

These 12 popular fresh fruits and vegetables are consistently the most contaminated with pesticides—buy these organic.

Apples	Peaches
Bell Peppers	Pears
Celery	Potatoes
Cherries	Red Raspberries
Grapes (imported)	Spinach
Nectarines	Strawberries

Lowest in Pesticides

These 12 popular fresh fruits and vegetables consistently have the lowest levels of pesticides.

Asparagus	Kiwi
Avocados	Mangos
Bananas	Onions
Broccoli	Papaya
Cauliflower	Pineapples
Corn (sweet)	Peas (sweet)

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How This Guide Was Developed

The produce ranking was developed by analysts at the not-for-profit Environmental Working Group (EWG) based on the results of more than 100,000 tests for pesticides on produce collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration between 1992 and 2001. 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, EWG's companion site to the Shopper's Guide.

Stonyfield Farm, the nation's largest organic yogurt manufacturer, provided a grant to EWG to create this informative guide for consumers.



EWG is a not-for-profit environmental research organization dedicated to improving public health and protecting the environment by reducing pollution in air, water and food. For more information please visit www.ewg.org.



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