

# The Wellness Express™

Jump on the train to good health

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## Benefits of Eating Organic

Presented by:

### Introduction

Choosing to eat organic foods - foods grown without the use of pesticides and other chemicals and using natural methods - is a personal choice driven by several key factors or considerations. According to a 2003 study published in the journal *Appetite*, the purchase and consumption of organic foods is most strongly associated with a person's perceived benefit for their own health, though the desire to perform environmentally friendly actions and consideration for animal welfare are other factors that significantly influence people's decision to go organic.<sup>1</sup> The benefits of eating organic foods are now better understood, though more research will shed valuable light on the far-reaching impact of this healthful practice.

### Nutritional Value

Increased nutritional value is a common perceived benefit of consuming organic foods. Research studies investigating the nutritional content of organic foods versus conventionally grown foods have produced conflicting results. Some studies, such as one published in 2010 in the journal *Agronomy for Sustainable Development*, report that non-organic and industrialized food production methods lead to reduced nutrient and flavor contents and that organic plant products contain more minerals and antioxidant micronutrients, including phenols.<sup>2</sup>

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Other studies, including one published in 2002 in the journal *Critical Review in Food Science and Nutrition*, state that, with the possible exception of nitrate content, there is insufficient evidence that the concentration of various nutrients differs between conventional and organic foods.<sup>3</sup>



### Reduced Pesticide Consumption

Concern over pesticide ingestion or exposure is a common reason people choose organic foods over conventional foods. Conventional growers use pesticides to reduce the likelihood of molds, insects, and diseases destroying their crops. Pesticide residue may linger on produce after it is harvested. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, the potential health effects of pesticides include nervous and endocrine system problems and skin and eye irritation. Some pesticides, notes the EPA, may be carcinogens, or cancer-causing agents.<sup>4</sup> A 2006 study published in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives* states that an organic diet provides a significant protective effect against organophosphorus pesticides - pesticides commonly used in conventional agriculture production.<sup>5</sup>

### Exercise of the Week

#### Back Extensions on Exercise Ball

(Consult your chiropractor before starting this or any other exercise.)

Difficulty: Low

Lie on ball face down with feet on floor, legs straight. Feet together or apart (feet apart is easier). Back in resting, curled position. Hands positioned on ball for support.

The exercise:

Use low back muscles to bring body into a straight-spine position, shoulders back. Use arms to push (if necessary). Do not hyperextend low back. Stop when body is straight. Look at floor while keeping neck in a neutral position. Hold for 1-2 counts.

Repeat 5-10 repetitions.



## Food Additive Avoidance

Organic regulations either ban or severely limit the use of common food additives, including colorings and flavorings, artificial sweeteners, preservatives and monosodium glutamate, or MSG. According to the World Health Organization, food additives and contaminants caused by food manufacturing and processing can have a significant negative effect on your health.<sup>6</sup> A 2006 study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* notes that boosting your consumption of processed meat - a foodstuff well-known for its inclusion of various additives - may increase your risk for stomach cancer.<sup>7</sup>



## Decreased Environmental Impact

Organic farming methods and practices reduce the environmental impact associated with food production. Organic farming practices require less water, produce less air pollution and conserve soil quality and organic farming techniques may have a beneficial effect on biodiversity too. According to a 2005 review article published in the *Journal of Applied Ecology*, organic farming often has positive effects on both species richness and abundance.<sup>8</sup>

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The maintenance of natural areas within and around organic fields helps create wildlife habitat and encourages a re-colonizing of the organic area by plants and animals, notes the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.<sup>9</sup>



## Summary

Eating organic foods has long-lasting health and environmental implications, and this practice can be considered an important part of ensuring a positive health legacy for future generations. Your chiropractor understands that healthy dietary practices involve seeking out and consuming the most nutrient-dense and safest foods possible and he or she can further counsel you on the full health benefits of this health strategy. When you choose organic foods you are choosing to invest in your long-term well-being as well as the sustainable farming practices that protect our natural resources.



## Quote to Inspire

*“Life’s field will yield as we make it; a harvest of thorns or of flowers “*

*Johann von Goethe*

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