

S'MORGANICS

to make the purchase and use of healthy, sustainable products as easy and enjoyable as eating your favorite fireside food

by Katrina Mayer, Ph.D.

It's a pretty safe bet that no one you know starts their day saying, "Hmm—today I think I will have a nice bowl of genetically modified corn flakes with pesticide-laden strawberries and milk filled with hormones and antibiotics." But isn't that exactly what so many of us do? Think about what you have eaten in the past 24 hours and chances are good that you got a few uninvited chemicals on your plate.

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Gone are the days when we can assume that the foods we put on our tables are fresh off the farm with nothing more than a little dirt or a stray bug to wash off. These days, our fruits and vegetables are modified in test tubes, grown with chemicals and sprayed with wax and coloring to make them look pretty. If you eat animal products, you need to be concerned with growth hormones and antibiotics. Then, as if that isn't enough, we need to watch out for irradiation. It's enough to make your head spin.

So how do we avoid ingesting these foods, or at least minimizing our exposure to them? One of the answers is to buy organic. Most supermarkets now carry organic options for many fruits and vegetables. And several health food stores around Long Island have organic produce to offer. While the prices may be slightly higher, in the long run it is worth buying organic.

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Another great way to get organic veggies in your diet for nine months out of the year is to join an organic CSA

(Community Supported Agriculture).

Green Thumb Farms out on the east end of Long Island have been supplying the organic community for many years. You can buy a share at the beginning of the season and then pick up your weekly allocation in Huntington. Every week brings a new organic surprise and the taste of veggies fresh-picked can't be beat.

More and more people are coming to realize that organic foods make the most sense for our bodies, but there is another reason to avoid non-organic products—our environment. Supporting healthier land, air and water is imperative to the sustainability of our planet. The chemicals in pesticides kill far more than the one or two pests that they were intended to target.

By killing off beneficial insects, we set a very dangerous precedent. In addition, fertilizers get into our drinking water and contaminate surrounding streams and ponds. The impact of these actions has ramifications we may be dealing with for decades to come. The sooner we support organic agriculture, the sooner we get a healthy planet back.

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Organic is now also available in products other than food. We can buy organic clothing and cosmetics. The cotton that is grown for clothing is one of the greatest culprits in pesticide pollution. It takes one pound of chemical fertilizers and pesticides to conventionally grow the three pounds of cotton needed to make a T-shirt and a pair of jeans. By supporting the organic cotton industry, we are saying yes to a healthier environment. You might want to take a trip out to Jet's Dream in Greenport. They have a wonderful

selection of stylish organic clothing for men and women.

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And, let's not forget our cosmetics. Conventional cosmetics contain ingredients that are harmful to our planet and to our bodies. Choosing organic is kinder and gentler to both. One brand that has been around for years is Aubrey Cosmetics. They use ingredients that are natural and organic. They offer shampoos, conditioners, soaps, creams and make-up. Give them a try the next time you run out of shampoo.

It is no wonder that other countries have banned the use of genetically modified foods and called for strict labeling on food packaging. It is time that we demand the same strict standards in our country. Let's encourage healthy bodies, healthy environment and healthy consciousness. Support the organic movement as much as possible and know that you can feel good about those choices.

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