

[IMAGE]

Are You Eating Produce or Pesticides?

By Editorial Staff

Pesticides are a class of biocide intended to attract, seduce and destroy pests, most commonly used to protect plant crops. That's great for the plants and bad for the pests, of course – but what about us? Unfortunately, pesticides are toxins, which means we're not supposed to be anywhere near them if at all possible.

On the flip side, produce is great for our bodies and an essential part of a balanced diet. We need our fruits and veggies! But should some produce be avoided because of its high pesticide residue – and other produce be favored because of its low residue? Let's see what the Environmental Working Group's annual "Shopper's Guide to Pesticides in Produce" suggests:

The Dirty Dozen (Most Pesticide Residue)

1. Strawberries
2. Apples
3. Nectarines
4. Peaches
5. Celery
6. Grapes
7. Cherries
8. Spinach
9. Tomatoes
10. Sweet Bell Peppers
11. Cherry Tomatoes
12. Cucumbers

The Clean 15 (Least Pesticide Residue)

1. Avocados
2. Sweet Corn
3. Pineapples
4. Cabbage
5. Sweet Peas (frozen)
6. Onions
7. Asparagus
8. Mangoes
9. Papayas
10. Kiwi
11. Eggplant
12. Honeydew Melon
13. Grapefruit
14. Cantaloupe
15. Cauliflower

Now here's the kicker: According to the EWG, almost 75 percent of the nearly 7,000 produce samples tested by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2014 (the basis of the latest report) contained pesticide residue, despite the fact that all produce samples had been washed and in some cases, peeled.

The moral to this story: You may want to eat more of the "Clean 15" and less of the "Dirty Dozen" (at least the non-organic variety) to reduce your risk of pesticide exposure / ingestion.

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