

The Most Effective Way to Wash Fruit and Vegetables

The use of chemicals in the growing of fruit and vegetables raises concerns and questions, and rightly so. Choosing organic produce dramatically decreases our exposure to pesticides and herbicides, but when organic is too expensive, not readily available, or of poor quality, what can be done to reduce our contact?

It's also important to mention that consuming organic produce is no guarantee that there will be no exposure to these chemicals. As Michael Greger, MD notes in his video on the subject, cross contamination from neighboring fields, the continued presence of very persistent pesticides like organochlorine compounds such as DDT in the soil, and/or accidental or fraudulent use of prohibited pesticides on organic farms could affect the purity of our organic foods. However, he goes on to explain, "there is a consensus in the scientific community that the health benefits from consuming fruits and vegetables outweigh any potential risks from pesticide residues in fruits and vegetables."

Recent studies tested the effectiveness of commercial fruit and vegetable washes as well as dish soap. The surprising conclusion reached by the researchers was that neither the commercial products nor dish soap performed any better than holding the produce under running water. Simply holding produce under running water and rubbing the produce while under running water were both very successful at removing chemical residues.

However, these methods weren't as effective with the more persistent pesticides such as organochlorine compounds such as DDT. The researchers tested vinegar on these chemicals and found it to be up to 100% effective at removing them. However, the solution that was tested was not diluted. They used undiluted vinegar which could become very expensive. Unfortunately, vinegar diluted in water was only marginally better than water alone.

Luckily, another even more effective and inexpensive solution was found. Salt water!!! Yes, you read right. A 10% salt water solution was the most effective option that worked as good or better than 100% vinegar. How do you make a 10% solution? 1 part salt to 9 parts water. Just make sure to rinse well before eating. It's that simple.

As for the pesticides in animal products, it's not that simple. Think you'll just clean them off like the plants? Washing meat, poultry, or eggs is considered to be one of the top ten dangerous food safety mistakes. Besides, chemical residues are stored in fat and biomagnify as one eats up the food chain. When we eat the standard American diet, we are eating at the top of the food chain. To make matters worse, some exposure increases when the animal products are cooked.

Play it safe. Stick with plants and buy a lot of salt!

Source:

How to Make Your Own Fruit and Vegetable Wash, www.NutritionFacts.org, 5/4/15

Content copyright Tracey Eakın 2015. All rights reserved.

Tracey Eakın, Plant-Based Nutrition Counselor, traceyeakın@gmail.com, 724.469.0693, www.traceyeakın.com