

## **Which foods contain the least pesticides?**

Courtesy of the Environmental Health Association of Nova Scotia (EHANS)

For years, you've been able to choose foods with less fat or fewer additives. Now you can minimize your chemical exposure in the produce aisle.

Of course, the best choice for fruits and veggies is organic. But organic options are not always available, or you may not be able to afford to eat all organic.

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) has developed a food guide featuring the "dirty dozen" fruits and vegetables -- those with the most pesticides and the "Cleanest 12" - conventionally grown produce with the least pesticides.

The differences in pesticide load are striking. Conventionally grown peaches have 100 times more pesticide residue than avocados, potatoes have 58 times more pesticides than onions. Apples have the second highest pesticide load, right after peaches.

Eating the 12 most contaminated fruits and vegetables will expose a person to about 15 pesticides a day, on average. Eating the 12 least contaminated will expose a person to fewer than two pesticides a day.

So its worth that extra effort to find organic options especially for the "dirty dozen."

The ratings take into account how people normally prepare food, assuming that people wash all fruits and veggies, and peel some, like bananas and oranges. Washing and rinsing fresh produce may reduce levels of some pesticides, but it does not eliminate them.

There is growing scientific belief that pesticides in small doses can be harmful, especially exposures during childhood and vulnerable periods of fetal development and childhood.

You can find ratings for 42 fruits and vegetables at [www.foodnews.org](http://www.foodnews.org).

### **Worst - Dirty Dozen**

Peaches  
Apples  
Sweet Bell Peppers  
Celery  
Nectarines  
Strawberries  
Cherries  
Pears  
Grapes (imported)  
Spinach  
Lettuce  
Potatoes

### **Best - Cleanest 12**

Onions  
Avocado  
Sweet Corn (frozen)  
Pineapples  
Mango  
Asparagus  
Sweet Peas (frozen)  
Kiwi  
Bananas  
Cabbage  
Broccoli  
Papaya

Please take note that some of the fruits listed in the "best" category are exotic imported fruits, which should not be purchased regularly by PEI consumers because of the climate change implications of the transportation.

Eat locally, and in season!