



Nutrition Nibbles

Organic: What's in a Name?

With almost 3 out of 4 Americans buying organic food and beverages at least on occasion, confusion abounds about the term “organic.” What does it really mean? What are the top stated reasons for buying organic? Do organics provide any additional health benefit? For the skinny on organics (and I do mean skinny—this is a BIG topic), read on...

Organic generally refers to farming methods that do not use pesticides, synthetic chemicals, sewage sludge, antibiotics, hormones, genetic modification, or irradiation. Organic foods are monitored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and certain criteria must be followed in order for farmers and food manufacturers to use the terms *100% Organic*, *Organic*, and *Made with Organic Ingredients*.

Here is a quick reference guide to the latest in organic terminology:

- ⚙️ **100% Organic:** The food product must contain *only* organically produced materials, excluding water and salt. Use of the USDA seal is permitted. (See photo above.)
- ⚙️ **Organic:** At least 95% of the ingredients must be organically grown and the remaining ingredients must be on the USDA's approved list of ingredients not available commercially in organic form. These foods may also use the USDA organic seal.

[More Details on page 2](#)



Favorite Food

Everyone always asks me “So, what does a dietitian eat?” Lately, I have been gobbling up raspberries. This summer fruit is a good source of fiber and packed with cancer-fighting antioxidants. One cup of fresh raspberries contains 60 calories, 8 grams of fiber, 50% of the recommended amount of vitamin C for the day, plus a good source of folate. Eat them by themselves, or throw them on top of your morning cereal. Make a nutrient-rich, refreshing smoothie by blending frozen raspberries with some chocolate soy milk.

College Corner: Nutrition, Bar None



Nutrition bars come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and flavors and offer a quick, convenient fuel source to the busy college student. However, not all bars are created equal. Here is an opportunity to learn about the different types of bars and how to choose the best one for your personal nutrition situation.

- ☐ **Energy Bars, also known as granola bars, snack bars, or sports bars:** These bars can be pretty varied—some are higher in calories, fiber, protein, and fat than others. Some offer whole grains and vitamins, others do not. Read the nutrition label and ingredients list carefully to see just what nutrients you are receiving.
- ☐ **Meal Replacement Bars:** Designed to do just that—replace the main entrée of your meal. These bars are the most calorie-dense, typically providing 200-400 calories, a good amount of protein (15+ grams), at least 30 grams of carbohydrate, and up to 10 grams of fat. Many contain a variety of vitamins and minerals. If a quick meal-to-go is your aim, this bar will help fit the bill. Try pairing it with some fiber-rich fruits and vegetables.
- ☐ **Protein Bars:** Similar to energy bars in terms of calories, these bars are packed with the most protein (usually 15-35 grams).
- ☐ **Weight Loss Bars:** Also known as designer diet bars, these contain a varying amount of carbs, protein, and fat based on the diet plan they are intended for.

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Organics continued...

- ☼ **Made with Organic Ingredients:** These foods contain at least 70% organic ingredients. The remaining ingredients may be grown conventionally or come from the USDA's special list. Use of the USDA seal is *prohibited*.

While consumers can expect to pay up to double the price for organic foods, many do so to protect the environment, lower their personal pesticide intake, and for improved taste and peace of mind. Organics seem healthier, but are they? While organic farming does not use pesticides, organic foods are not necessarily pesticide-free. Pesticides and chemicals can drift from nearby non-organic farms or leach into groundwater, thereby “contaminating” organic fruits and vegetables with the pesky chemical residues buyers are trying to avoid. The organic label does not describe if the food was grown locally or shipped from halfway around the world, thereby creating a much larger eco-unfriendly impact. From a nutrient-standpoint, the research is mixed on the health benefits of organic food. Some studies find organic foods to be higher in vitamins and minerals, while other research finds no difference between conventionally grown produce and organic. Generally, the more processed the food (i.e. cereals, crackers, etc), the fewer health benefits that term “organic” provides. Remember, organic foods are not clean or bacteria-free—they still need to be washed and handled appropriately.

Is there ever a time when buying organic makes health and budget sense? According to the Environmental Working Group (EWG), a non-profit group independent of the USDA, there are 12 different fruits and vegetables that even when washed, have higher pesticide levels. The EWG recommends buying these “dirty dozen” in organic form when possible to lower one’s risk of pesticide exposure. See sidebar for list.

Keep an eye on the organic trend; the reasons and ways consumers purchase food are continuously changing.

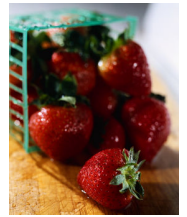
When a Bar Won't Do: Quick Fuel Choices

- Whole grain crackers and string cheese
- Apple with natural peanut butter
- Dried fruit and nut mix
- Vegetables and hummus
- Corn tortilla with beans, salsa, and avocado

“Dirty Dozen”

| | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Peaches | Cherries |
| Apples | Pears |
| Bell Peppers | Imported Grapes |
| Celery | Spinach |
| Nectarines | Lettuce |
| Strawberries | Potatoes |

Source: www.foodnews.org



Nutrition Bars continued...

How do you know which nutrition bar to choose? Try this step-by-step approach:

1. **How hungry are you?** Are you going to use this bar as a snack or as a meal? Your answer will help determine the calorie range you are looking for. For a snack, choose a bar with less than 200 calories. For a meal, look for a bar with a higher number of calories.
2. **Check out the protein.** Once again, the amount of protein you are looking for depends on the purpose of the bar. If you are looking for a tasty, satisfying snack try choosing a bar that offers whole grains and at least 5 grams of protein. If you are looking for a meal, shop for a higher protein content.
3. **Try for high fiber!** Aim for at least 3 grams of fiber per bar. The whole grain variety tends to have more fiber, which is good for digestive and heart health.
4. **Scout out the fat.** Try for 5 grams of total fat or less, with little saturated fat and no trans fat. Both saturated and trans fats are considered heart unfriendly in large amounts.
5. **Watch out for sugar.** Many bars contain sugar or high fructose corn syrup as the first ingredient. Look for a bar with those words further down on the ingredients list. Happy chewing!

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