



Tip Sheet

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS)



Eating Organic on a Limited Budget

Empowering Community and Removal of Barriers (ECRoB)

Eating organic on a limited budget can be challenging, but with some smart choices and planning, it is possible to incorporate organic foods into your diet. Organic foods are grown without synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and they are often considered healthier and more environmentally friendly options. Here are some tips for eating organic on a limited budget:

Prioritize the "Dirty Dozen":

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) identifies the "Dirty Dozen" fruits and vegetables with higher pesticide residues when conventionally grown. These include strawberries, spinach, kale, nectarines, apples, grapes, peaches, cherries, pears, tomatoes, celery, and potatoes. Consider purchasing these items as organic to reduce your exposure to pesticides. In addition, choose organic when buying root vegetables such as carrots.

Shop seasonally and locally:

Organic produce can be more affordable when purchased in-season and sourced from local farmers' markets or community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs. These options often offer competitive prices and may provide additional benefits such as fresher produce and supporting local farmers.

Compare prices, explore discounts, and buy in bulk:

Check prices at different grocery stores or online retailers to find the best deals on organic products. Look for sales, coupons, or loyalty programs that can help you save money. Additionally, consider joining a co-op or subscribing to a delivery service offering discounted organic options or purchasing in bulk.

Grow your own food:

Consider starting a small organic garden, even just a few herbs or vegetables in pots. This effort can be a cost-effective way to enjoy fresh organic produce and connect with nature.

When it comes to non-organic foods, some conventionally grown produce tends to have higher pesticide residues. In addition to the "Dirty Dozen," the EWG also identifies the "Clean Fifteen" - fruits and vegetables with lower pesticide residues. These include:



- avocados
- sweet corn
- pineapple
- onions
- papaya
- sweet peas (frozen)
- eggplant
- asparagus
- broccoli
- cabbage,
- kiwi
- cauliflower
- mushrooms
- honeydew melon
- cantaloupe

While it's still a good idea to wash and peel these items, choosing conventional options from the "Clean Fifteen" may be a more budget-friendly choice if organic is not available or affordable.

Remember, the most important thing is to eat a varied and balanced diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables. Washing produce thoroughly, irrespective of its organic status, can also help reduce pesticide residues.

References:

Environmental Working Group. 2023. www.EWG.org