

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service



## **Produce Benefits Outweigh Risks**

Do you take care of children? Giving them plenty of fruits and vegetables is one of the most healthful diets that you can provide. People who eat more produce have a reduced incidence of disease.

Recent research found that among 1,100 children ages 8 to 15 years, most (93 percent) had no to very low levels of a commonly-used pesticide in their urine. However, children with the highest levels of the organophosphate pesticide in their urine were much more likely to have been diagnosed with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, also called ADHD, than children with no traces of the pesticide in their urine.

To decrease your family's exposure to pesticides, follow these tips when selecting and preparing fresh fruits and vegetables:

- Grow your own. Container gardening on a patio can be fun, and tasty too.
- *Eat a variety.* You're less likely to repeatedly eat residue from the same pesticide if you eat many different kinds of produce.
- Shop for locally grown produce at farmers markets or roadside stands. Ask vendors if any chemicals have been sprayed on their produce.
- Select produce that is free of cuts or other damage.
- Wash your hands before and after preparing foods or eating.
- Rinse fruits and veggies well, using clean running water. If you do this before putting them in the refrigerator, you and your kids can just grab and go!
- *Trim or peel your produce.* Fruits and veggies with outer leaves (such as sweet corn, cabbage and lettuce) or with skins or rinds (such as cucumbers, onions, melons, bananas, avocados, eggplant, citrus fruits, carrots, peaches, apples and potatoes) that you can peel off before eating provide less pesticide residue.
- Consider buying organic for 14 kinds of produce. Organic food typically is not free of pesticide residues, but it has about one-third less residue than conventional produce, especially for these fruits and vegetables: apples, celery, cherries, collard greens, domestic blueberries, imported grapes, kale, lettuce, nectarines, peaches, potatoes, spinach, strawberries and sweet bell peppers.

Sources (Accessed 7/13/10): 1. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and urinary metabolites of organophosphate pesticides, MF Bouchard et al., *Pediatrics* 2010;125;e1270-e1277, *http://pediatrics.aappublications.org* 2. Should I purchase organic foods? MV Gold, USDA's Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, *www.nal.usda.gov/afsic* 3. *EWG*'s Shoppers Guide to Pesticides, *www.foodnews.org/sneak/EWG-shoppers-guide.pdf* 

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## **Reduce Your Exposure to Toxins**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency must determine the risks and precautionary steps needed for certain man-made, food-related contaminants.



Dining on a Dime featured ways that you can reduce your family's exposure to one of these types of chemicals, bisphenol A or BPA, in its July/August 2009 issue (online at http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/humannutrition/Dining.htm). In keeping with that tradition, this issue summarizes two additional chemicals of concern. They are commonly found in the kitchen and have made their way as contaminants into the blood of the general population living in the U.S., but you can take steps that may help reduce your family's exposure to them.

**PFOA** — <u>Perfluoroctanoic acid</u>. PFOA is used to make non-stick surfaces on cookware and to make waterproof clothing and thousands of other products. PFOA is also produced by the breakdown of the substances that provide a product with soil, stain, grease, water and fire resistance. To reduce your exposure to PFOA, it may help to:

- Use metal (such as stainless steel or cast iron) cookware without a non-stick surface for some or all of your cooking and baking.
- If using non-stick cookware, use only low or moderate heat. Toxic gas may be released when it is heated to very hot temperatures.

PBDEs — Polybrominated diphenyl ethers. PBDEs are flame-retardant chemicals. They are added to a variety of consumer products (such as plastics in televisions and computers, wire insulation, back coatings for draperies and upholstery, and furniture foam) to make them difficult to burn during a house fire. These products shed PBDEs over time, which collect in dust. PBDEs may get into our bodies through air contact or by swallowing this dust. In addition, PBDEs are a concern in our food and water supply. PBDEs can leach out of the products in which they are used, entering the air, water and soil. Once inside the body, PBDEs collect in fat tissue. The main source of exposure to PBDEs may be through foods, particularly those with a high fat content. To reduce your exposure to PBDEs, it may help to:

- Buy products made without PBDE flame retardants.
- Wipe or sweep up, and discard, dust regularly.
- Wash your hands before preparing or eating food.
- Eat less animal fat.

Sources (Accessed 7/13/10): 1. Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) and Fluorinated Telomers, Environmental Protection Agency, www.epa.gov/oppt/pfoa 2. Five toxics that are everywhere: Protect yourself, DS Martin, www.cnn.com/2010/HEALTH/05/31/chemical.dangers/index.html 3. Polybrominated diphenylethers, Environmental Protection Agency, www.epa.gov/oppt/pbde 4. Public Health Statement for Polybrominated Diphenyl Ethers (PBDEs), Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/phs68-pbde.html

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Food Assistance Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-888-369-4777.

# **Processing "Processed Food" Labels**

We know that the best sources of dietary fiber and vitamins are fresh fruits and vegetables, and whole grains. So why do processed, fortified, packaged "junk" foods scream for our attention? Food marketers tweak the truth in many ways to get our food dollars. Be aware of three major ways, described below.

#### Whole grain versus "Made with" whole grain.

Look for ingredient lists showing whole wheat, oats or another whole grain first. This assures that you're getting whole grain foods and the valuable nutrients they provide. A whole grain food gets more than half of its weight from one or more whole grains.

Ingredients: Whole wheat flour, refined wheat flour, water, soybean oil, honey, yeast, salt, wheat gluten

(By definition, "whole" means that all three parts are present — the bran, germ and endosperm). Food labels list the ingredients in order of weight.

A food labeled as being "made with" whole grain or multi-grain gets less than half of its weight from whole grain. "Refined wheat flour" will likely be the first ingredient on the list.

**Added Sugars.** It's very difficult to calculate how much added sugar you eat. Did you know that the average American eats 22 teaspoons of added sugars each day? That far exceeds the six to nine teaspoons a day recommended for adults. Food products are not required to list how much sugar is added. Ingredient lists use a variety of names for added sugars. When all of the different forms of added sugars are combined, you may find that sugar, in some form or another, is the main ingredient of a product. Regular (not diet) soft drinks are the main source of added sugars in the U.S. To reduce your intake of added sugars, drink 36 or fewer ounces per week of all sugar-sweetened beverages.

**Dietary Fiber.** Fiber is associated with lower blood cholesterol and blood sugar levels, with improved "regularity," and with weight loss, to name just a few benefits. Many health experts recommend increasing dietary fiber intakes. However, many products on the market advertise a higher fiber content because of added isolated fibers, mostly purified powders called inulin, polydextrose and maltodextrin. Isolated fiber that's added to foods that are not traditional sources of dietary fiber (such as ice creams, yogurts, juices and drinks) does not have all the health benefits of natural dietary fiber.

**Bottom line:** People living in the U.S. spend 90% of their food dollars on processed foods. Yet processed foods provide less nutrition and fewer health benefits than fruits, vegetables and whole grains. By decreasing our intake of processed foods, we could save money. We'd save on our healthcare costs, too.

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office.

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# Dining on a Dime's Cooks' Corner Egg Salad (Makes 2 servings, about 1/2 cup each)

Serve as a salad or as a filling for sandwiches. It's tasty, quick, and making it won't overheat your kitchen!

### Ingredients

- 1/4 cup fat-free cottage cheese
- 1 tablespoon skim milk
- 1 teaspoon mustard
- 1 hard-boiled egg yolk
- 2 tablespoons chopped onion
- 2 tablespoons chopped celery
- A dash of curry powder (optional)
- 4 hard-boiled egg whites, diced

#### **Directions**

- 1. In a blender, whip cottage cheese and milk until smooth.
- 2. Add remaining ingredients, except egg whites. Whip until mixed thoroughly.
- 3. Stir the diced egg whites into the cheese mixture.
- 4. Serve cold.
- 5. Cover and refrigerate leftovers within two hours.

Nutrition Facts per 1/2 cup serving: 90 calories, 2 g fat, 4 g carbohydrate, 12 g protein, 110 mg cholesterol, 260 mg sodium and 0 g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 6% vitamin A, 2% vitamin C, 4% calcium, 2% iron.



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