

Mindful Mum | Picking and Choosing 5-A-Day

A Mindful Mum's guide to buying organic fruit and vegetables in the UK



Mindful Mum | Fruit & Vegetable Selector



Vegetables

	Buy Organic	Don't Need to Buy Organic	
	Highest % of samples with pesticide residues	Lowest % of samples with pesticide residues	
WORST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celery Pre packed salad Potato Peas Beans (green/speciality) Plantain Lettuce Sweet Potato/Yam Tomato Cucumber 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cauliflower - Corn (cob & baby) Marrow Squash Swede Asparagus Peas (fresh & frozen) Avocado Leeks Broccoli 	BEST

Should I Always Buy Organic?

We should be eating at least 5 portions of fruit or vegetables each day. Organic food can be costly, so its useful to know when its important to buy organic and when its safe to buy conventional produce.

Buy organic when the pesticide residues tested are high. Mindful Mum has highlighted the highest and lowest in pesticides in the guide to the left. Cut it out and keep it in your wallet or grocery shopping.

What about peeling?

Foods marked with an asterisk* are peeled which may remove residues of certain pesticides. However, some pesticides are systemic, which means they are found within the fruit or vegetable. Also the peel of citrus fruit is often used in drinks and cooking.

Testing for Pesticides in UK

The list uses the Pesticide Revenue Committee (PRC) reports (which samples UK retailers) 2000-05 & assessed by the Pesticide Action Network (PAN UK).



Fruit

WORST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oranges, Lemons Limes* Pears Strawberry & Raspberry Apricot Cherry Bananas* Apples Melon* Grapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Star fruit Plum Passion fruit Kiwi* Peach 	BEST
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Overleaf, Mindful Mum reviews the most recent PRC report (Q2,2009) & notes where the percentages of samples with residues in the most recent report have increased ↑ or decreased ↓ since the PAN UK assessment.



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Sources: Govt. Pesticide Residue Committee & PAN UK. For more info go to www.mindfulmum.co.uk



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Mindful Mum | UK Pesticide Residue Reports

40% of all fruit and vegetable samples tested since 2000 contain residues

Comparing PRC report to PAN UK data (2000-05) – Non Organic Samples

Fruit and Vegetables	PRC Report	Samples Analysed	With residues at or below MRL	With residues above MRL	With multiple residues	% with residues in PRC report	% with residue in PAN 00-05 report	Change in % (up, down or no change)
Oranges	2008 Q4	46	46		45	100%	70%	↑
Limes	2009 Q2	14	14		10	100%	87%	↑
Bananas	2009 Q2	44	43		33	98%	70%	↑
Grapes	2009 Q2	36	35		29	97%	59%	↑
Lemons	2009 Q2	33	31		25	94%	99%	↓
Strawberries ³	2007 Q4	48	45		39	94%	70%	↑
Apples	2009 Q2	72	65		59	93%	53%	↑
Pears ¹	2009 Q2	39	36	2	30	92%	72%	↑
Melons	2009 Q2	45	36	1	22	80%	56%	↑
Celery	2008 Q4	17	11		3	65%	69%	↓
Potatoes (Processed)	2009 Q2 2009 Q2	58 48	36 23	1	9 4	62% 50%	39% 48%	↑ ↑
Plum	2006 Q2	32	16	1	3	50%	34%	↑
Lettuce	2009 Q2	25	10		1	40%	37%	↑
Peppers	2009 Q2	73	22		9	30%	10%	↑
Sweet Potato ²	2008 Q4	46	12	10	13	26%	38%	↓
Kiwi	2007 Q4	42	11		2	26%	32%	↓
Avocado	2009 Q2	21	5	1	1	24%	4%	↑
Peas (fresh & frozen)	2009 Q2	35	2		0	6%	4%	↑
Pumpkin & Squash	2007 Q4	39	1		0	3%	0%	↑
Cauliflower	2009 Q2	36	0		0	0	0	↔

About the Data:

PRC The Pesticide Residue Committee (PRC) tests a sample of the food from UK retailers for pesticide residues. In 2009 they tested for 270 pesticides. The PRC main responsibility is to oversee Government's £2 million pesticide residues surveillance programme.

MRL The Maximum Residue Level (MRL) is the legal level of pesticide residue that can be present in food. Foods containing residues that comply with the MRL are "toxicologically acceptable". Exceeding the MRL can indicate over-use of pesticides but it is not regarded as a safety level.

Fruit and Vegetables Exceeding MRL:

¹**Strawberries** 1 sample contained a residue of DDT in the form of DDE. DDT has not been approved for use on any crop in the UK for over 20 years

²**Pears** 2 samples (from Belgium) were found to contain residues above the MRL. An EC Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) was issued. 1 sample from Belgium containing chloromequat at 2.5 mg/kg and resulted in destroying remaining stock and legal action against the grower.

³**Sweet Potatoes** Despite % of samples with residues decreasing, 10 samples (22%) had residue levels above the MRL.

Sources:

Pesticide Residue Committee, Reports 2009. <http://www.pesticides.gov.uk> (Accessed 08/02/10)

Food Standards Agency, Chemical Safety, Pesticides in Food www.food.gov.uk (Accessed 08/02/10)

Pesticide Action Network (PAN UK) Residues In Fruit and Vegetables 2000-2005, <http://www.pan-uk.org/Projects/Food> (Accessed 08/02/10)