

Breakthrough common nutrition myths, see what's trending, catch up on latest research, and get great tips from our team of Registered Dietitians.

MYTH

Organic foods are the safest and healthiest choice for you.

FACT

Both organic and non-organic foods are nutritious and safe for you to eat when you're making healthy choices. Many factors affect a food's nutritional value, such as where and how it was grown, stored, shipped and even how it was cooked. Organic foods may have more, about the same, or less nutrients than non-organic foods. And both organic and non-organic foods are grown and produced under strict regulations to make sure they are safe for you to eat. Like any food purchase, buying organic food is a choice.



The Dirt of Farming: Part 1 – Hormone and Antibiotic Use in Food and Eating Locally

How are growth hormones used?

In Canada, growth hormones are only approved for use in cows used for beef. They help to produce leaner beef at a lower cost to consumers by helping cows convert the food they eat into muscle more quickly and easily. Before going to market, the acceptable level of synthetic hormones left in beef must be zero. However, hormones also occur naturally in all animals, people and plants. So there is no hormone-free beef. Growth hormones are not used in cows that produce milk. They are also not used poultry and pork production.

How are antibiotics used?

Keeping livestock healthy is a top priority. Antibiotics are used (with veterinary supervision) to treat sick animals, prevent or manage disease or promote growth in some animals. Antibiotics are approved for use in beef, dairy cattle, chicken, laying hens, turkey, pork and fish. They may also be sprayed on fruit and given to honey bees. Milk cows who are on antibiotics are still milked but their milk is discarded for a certain period during and after antibiotic use. Antibiotic use must meet strict standards for human and animal safety.

Are there hormones and antibiotic residue left in food?

Health Canada sets maximum levels of hormones and antibiotics that can be left in food. These limits are set at levels far below the amount that could pose a health concern. Test results from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency show that hormone and antibiotic levels are rarely found to be above the recommended levels.

How are growth hormones and antibiotics regulated?

Health Canada highly regulates the use of growth hormones and antibiotics in Canada. To protect human and animal health, and the safety of our food supply, Health Canada:

- Reviews hormones and antibiotics for safety before approving them.
- Monitors the safety, quality and effectiveness of growth hormones and antibiotics.
- Sets rules for the proper use of hormones and antibiotics.
- Sets limits for hormones and antibiotics that can be left in food.

How are growth hormones and antibiotics monitored?

It's the job of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to monitor the use of growth hormones and antibiotics. Food produced in Canada and other countries is regularly and randomly tested to check the safety levels of hormones and antibiotics. If the standards are not met, the food can be removed from the food supply.

<https://www.dairynutrition.ca/facts-fallacies/product-quality/cows-and-hormones>

<https://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Articles/Farming-Food-production/Hormones-and-antibiotics-in-food-production.aspx#.V1644Rbrx0g>

<http://health.beefinfo.org/en/questions/basics/default.aspx>

<https://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Articles/Farming-Food-production>

What does it mean to eat locally and why do it?

"Eat Local" is a movement which aims to minimize the distance between production and consumption. The top reasons most people eat local are for freshness, to support local economy and to know where the product came from. Although definitions of "local" vary, the University of Guelph, defines local being within 250 km from where the food is produced. Some people who only eat local foods call themselves locavores or localvores.

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sustainability/living-green/eating-green>



How can I eat local?

For foods that are produced in Ontario, look for the Foodland Ontario sticker when shopping in the grocery store. You can also check out the Environment Hamilton

www.environmenthamilton.org and the Harvest Ontario www.harvestontario.com for farms in your area.

Where can I grow my own produce?

Hamilton offers community gardening throughout the city. The different types of community gardens, locations and costs can be found on the Hamilton Community Garden Network website: <http://hcgcn.ca/garden-directory/>

Talk to your Registered Dietitian for more information.

Recipe of the Month

Hummus Pizza *(Kate Park, RD)*

Ingredients

Hummus:

1 can of chick peas
1/4 cup of olive oil
juice from one lemon
1-2 cloves of garlic diced
salt and pepper to taste

Salad:

Grape tomatoes cut in halves
Spinach (washed)
Balsamic dressing (2 parts olive oil to
1 part balsamic dressing)
Greek style whole wheat pitas



Instructions

- 1) Drain and rinse chick peas. Blend all ingredients for hummus in food processor until smooth. Add salt and pepper as needed.
- 2) Spread hummus onto top of pita.
- 3) Top with spinach and tomatoes.
- 4) Add balsamic dressing.