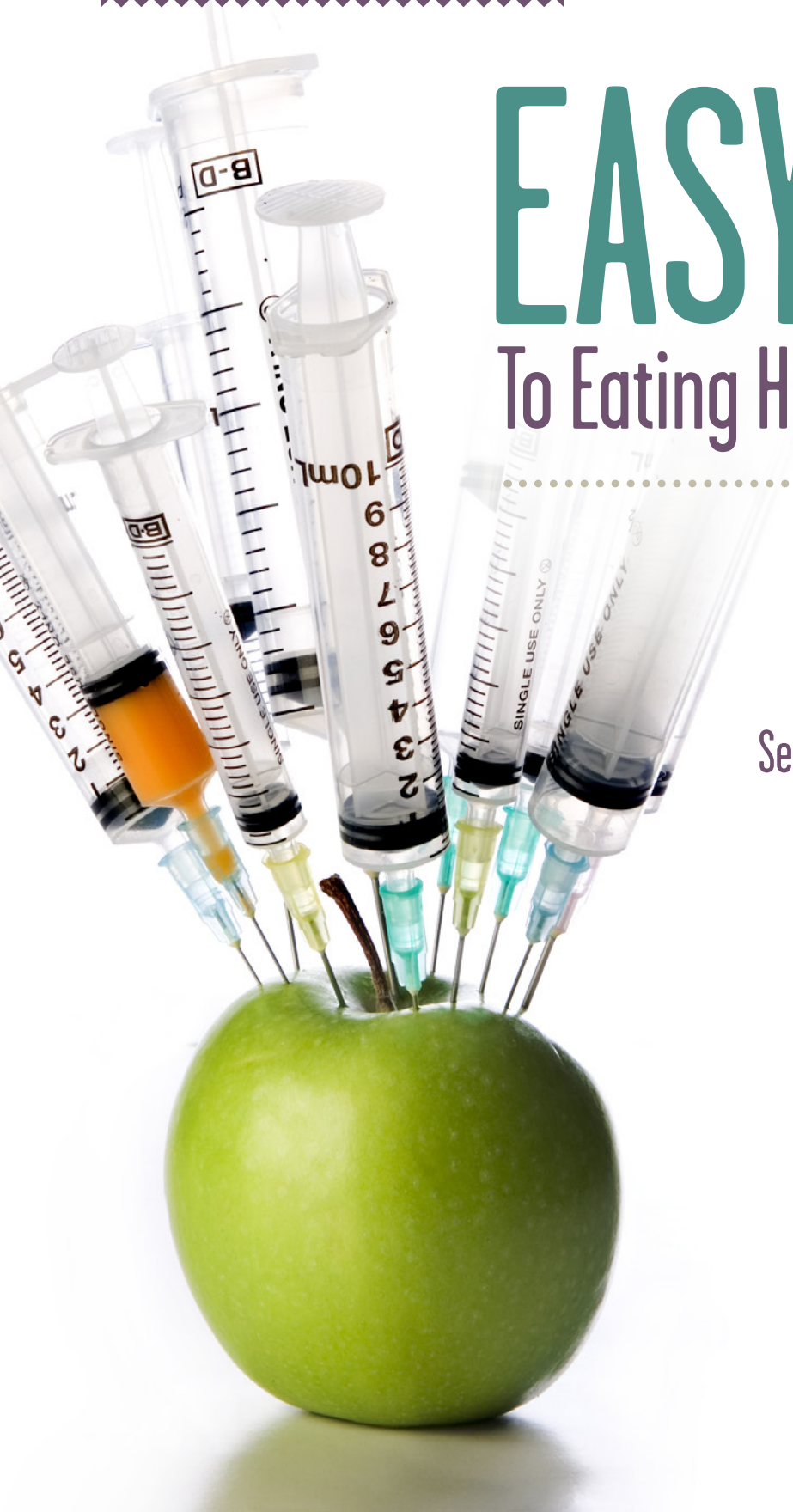
Healthy Child HEALTHY WORLD®



EASY STEPS

To Eating Healthy & Safe Foods

- A Snapshot of Our Modern Diets
- A Guide to Safer Produce
- Avoiding Food Additives & GMOs
- Selecting Safer Dairy, Meat & Seafood
- Organic on a Budget
- Navigating the Farmer's Market
- Where to Shop

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"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food." ~ Hippocrates

If you're reading this, congratulations and kudos! You've decided to take control of the food your family eats and there's almost no greater or more important commitment when it comes to health. Perhaps, it's more important than ever with food related diseases on the rise and the increasing manipulation and contamination of food.

You are what you eat, right? But, you might not even know what you're eating these days. Pesticide residues, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), chemicals from food packaging - toxics have become unwelcome guests at the family dinner table, hiding in the foods we consume on an everyday basis. We're going to help you kick them to the curb.

Because no one can realistically shift their entire family diet overnight, and some actions are more difficult than others, we've formatted this e-book like a road map. You'll start by learning more about the problem. PHASE ONE (GETTING STARTED: THE BASICS) outlines very basic steps for those just beginning the journey to a cleaner diet. PHASE TWO (FEELING CONFIDENT: READY FOR MORE) offers steps that are a bit more challenging and may take additional time and/or budget to make happen. Then PHASE THREE (NO TURNING BACK: EMBRACING THE LIFESTYLE) is for the advanced healthy foodie who is ready to totally reclaim her family's diet (without actually buying her own farm). You decide what stage you are at.

Of course, your journey shouldn't end with what's recommended in this e-book. There are tons of other easy steps you can take to continually increase the health and sustainability of your family's food sources. Plus, there's no shortage of resources to help get you there, so we've shared some of our favorites on page 50.

Good luck, good health and bon appétit!

KEEP IN MIND...

For the purposes of this e-book, we're trying to keep things concise and understandable. Before diving in, there are three basic concepts to understand:

• We'll be highlighting the presence of many chemicals in our modern diets, but we recognize that all of life is made of chemicals. (Plants, people and even water are made of chemicals). Our focus is on synthetic chemicals and novel combinations of chemicals that humans have not been exposed to until recently.

• The term "processed food" can technically apply to food that's been manipulated by almost any method - including someone making homemade pickles. Our focus and concern is regarding mass processed foods from factories that strip foods of vital nutrients using harsh chemical processes and then add countless chemical additives and preservatives.

• The above two points are not all-inclusive indictments of synthetic chemicals, processed foods and our modern diets. Sometimes synthetics can be safer than naturally-sourced elements. Some additives, like folate and other vitamins have helped reduce disease. And, preservatives have done much for preventing foodborne illnesses and deaths.

TOXIC FOOD: CHILDREN AT RISK FROM CHEMICALS IN THEIR DIETS

Children's Unique Vulnerability

For most of human history, people have eaten relatively simple diets. Food came from whatever you could catch, kill, pick, or grow - from nature. The only manipulation was via mixing those ingredients and then either cooking, curing, drying, pickling or some other type of basic preservation.

These days, the picture is much more complicated. So complicated, in fact, that we can't even fully uncover the story of many common foods. Many ingredients may have started on a farm, but they're increasingly modified and manipulated in factories and laboratories. Other additives and residues from manufacturing are entirely synthetic and have only recently been introduced into the human diet.

So, what are you really eating? More importantly, what are our children eating?

Not only do children have unique nutritional demands for their rapid growth and development, their bodies are also uniquely vulnerable and place them at higher risk compared to adults.

- **Pound-for-pound, children drink more and eat more food than adults.** For example, the US Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) reported that "children in the first six months of life drink seven times as much water per pound as average American adults. Children one through five years of age eat three to four (or more) times as much food per pound body weight as average American adults." Children also tend to consume more of certain foods than do adults, such as fruit juice, fruit and cow's milk. Because children's diets are less varied and they consume more food than adults in proportion to their body weight, they may be exposed to higher levels of contaminants in food.

- **From birth through childhood, children differ from adults in their ability to absorb, metabolize, and excrete contaminants.** For example, they are less efficient at excreting some contaminants via the kidneys or bile, so those contaminants may have toxic effects on a child, but not an adult.

- **Children's bodies are rapidly growing and developing.** The unique developmental stages that are part of childhood make children more vulnerable to the harmful effects from exposures to certain hazards than adults. As an example, during brain development, lead and methylmercury exposures can result in permanent, deleterious impacts on a small child while having no measurable impact whatsoever on an adult.

Today's children are predicted to be the first generation to live sicker and die younger than their parents. It's already well-established that poor diets play a role in that prediction. We believe there's still much more to uncover and much more risk lurking in our grocery stores than the food industry would like the public to know.

The ultimate root of the problem lies in the fact that our modern food system is an elaborate experiment and our children are the guinea pigs. It's time to open our eyes and try to understand what we've done - and start taking action to fix it.

"People are fed by the food industry, which pays no attention to health, and are treated by the health industry, which pays no attention to food."

~ WENDELL BERRY

A SNAPSHOT OF OUR MODERN DIETS: FROM FARM TO FORK

Walk any grocery store aisle or page through a magazine and look at the images of farms on food packaging and advertisements. They're all rolling green hills, contented cows, and general bucolic bliss. A pretty picture of our wholesome past and a place we'd like to think our food comes from, but the reality is starkly different. Those small, sweet farms are a dying breed. Currently 80 percent of our food and fibers come from only 10 percent of the over 2 million farms in the U.S. These are massive factory farms associated with significant environmental and health impacts whose final products are of questionable quality to say the least.

Consider the typical confined animal feeding operation (CAFO), which can house tens of thousands of animals (and in the case of chickens, 100,000) under one roof, in inhumane, filthy, disease-ridden conditions. **What's being fed to the animals you eat?**

For decades, producers have been adding things like chocolate bars, gummy worms, ice cream sprinkles, marshmallows, bits of hard candy and even powdered hot chocolate mix to animal feed in order to cut costs.

Currently, 80 percent of all antibiotics sold in the U.S. (over 29 million pounds annually) go to farm animals.

• A cocktail of drugs to make them grow faster, produce more milk, and treat diseases associated with poor living conditions. Currently, 80 percent of all antibiotics sold in the U.S. (over 29 million pounds annually) go to farm animals.

• U.S. law allows for the following additions to standard animal feed: same species meat; diseased animals; feathers, hair, skin, hooves, and blood; manure and other animal waste; and even plastics because they are cheap and filling feed.

• For decades, producers have been adding things like chocolate bars, gummy worms, ice cream sprinkles, marshmallows, bits of hard candy and even powdered hot chocolate mix to animal feed in order to cut costs. (Corn can cost about $315 a ton and ice-cream sprinkles can be purchased for as little as $160 a ton.)

Our croplands are seeing the same type of synthetic, unnatural and downright toxic inputs, as well.

• According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), nearly 900 million pounds of pesticides are applied to farms every year.

• Since the 1990s, millions of tons of potentially toxic sewage sludge have been applied to millions of acres of America's farmland as food crop fertilizer.

• Experimental genetically modified seeds are increasingly being used for major U.S. crops like canola (about 90 percent of U.S. crop), corn (about 88 percent of U.S. crop), and soy (about 94 percent of U.S. crop). These crops are a primary source of animal feed and found in 70 percent of all processed foods.

This is just the beginning. Most of our food goes from farm to factory where further inputs and chemical processing occur. For example, it's estimated that nearly 6,000 additives and chemicals are used by food companies to process our food. Soybeans are soaked in hexane (a byproduct of gasoline refining) to cheaply and efficiently separate the soybeans' oil from protein. In order for wheat to become the white flour used in popular baked goods, it undergoes bleaching with various chemical agents, including oxide of nitrogen, chlorine, chloride, nitrosyl, and benzoyl peroxide mixed with a variety of chemical salts.

Included in this estimation are the over 3,000 ingredients in the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) database of approved additives. Some of these include things like sugar, baking soda, and salt, but many are synthetic, petroleum-derived additives and even leachates from packaging. (Chemicals used to make plastics sometimes migrate into food and the FDA considers these migrants as "indirect food additives.") A few of the toxic chemicals that have been found in various foods due to leaching from packaging include fire retardants in butter; polyvinyl chloride in margarine, mayonnaise and processed cheese; styrene in instant noodles; and nonylphenol in apple juice and baby formula.

Add in trace contaminants from environmental pollution and toxics created during at-home preparation (like acrylamide and PAHs) and suddenly you have a recipe with far too many questionable, unwanted ingredients. Since it would take an entire book to detail a comprehensive list, we've only highlighted 25 of the most common chemicals of concern with established scientific evidence of risk on pages 8 and 9.

TOP TOXICS

Snapshot of 25 Toxic Offenders Commonly Found in Food

Acesulfame-K
Artificial sweetener used in baked goods, chewing gum, gelatin desserts, and diet sodas. Preliminary studies show links to cancer and thyroid impacts.

Acrylamide
Formed by cooking starchy foods at high temperatures: chips, fries, chicken tenders, biscuits, bread, cereal, cookies, and crackers. Known carcinogen.

Aluminum Additives (Sodium Aluminum Sulphate and Potassium Aluminum Sulphate)
Used in processed cheeses, cheese spread, baked goods (cookies, muffins, cupcakes, etc.), macaroni and cheese, microwavable popcorn, and instant pancake/soup mixes. Capable of causing adverse effects related to reproduction, neurological behavior, and neurological development.

Antibiotics (i.e. Aminoglycosides, Cephalosporins, Ionophores, Lincosamides, Macrolides, Penicillins, Sulfas, and Tetracyclines)
Found in beef, dairy, eggs, poultry, pork, turkey, and farmed fish. Linked to E. coli outbreaks and antibiotic resistant bacteria.

Artificial Food Coloring/Dyes: Red 40, Red 40 Lake, Blue No. 1, Blue 1 Lake, Blue No. 2, Blue 2 Lake, Yellow No. 5, Yellow No. 6.
Used in a wide variety of processed foods, candy, medication, and more. Linked to neurological impacts and ADHD.

Bisphenol-A (BPA)
Found in canned foods and beverages. Linked to breast and prostate cancer, regional decline in sperm counts, abnormal penile/urethra development in males, early sexual maturation in females, increasing neurobehavioral problems, and increasing prevalence of obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and immune system effects.

Brominated Vegetable Oil (BVO)
Used in fruit flavored drinks, sodas, and sports drinks. Studies suggest that BVO could be building up in human tissues. In animal studies, high doses led to reproductive and behavioral problems.

Butylated Hydroxyanisole (BHA) / Butylated Hydroxytoluene (BHT)
Preservative used in processed foods like chips, red meat, baked goods, snack foods, chewing gum, cereal, and butter. Identified as a carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). Also suspected to disrupt hormones and impact male fertility.

Diacetyl
Used as an artificial flavor in microwavable popcorn, snack foods, candy, and baked foods. Linked to respiratory problems and lung disease with chronic inhalation.

Dioxins
Contaminant found in fatty meats, fish/shellfish, poultry, and eggs. Linked to cancer, liver damage, disruptions to the endocrine system, weakened immune system, and birth defects.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)
Found in about 70 percent of processed foods that include ingredients derived from corn, soy, cottonseed oil, canola, and sugar beets. Animal studies show organ damage, gastrointestinal and immune system disorders, accelerated aging, and infertility.

Heterocyclic Amines (HCA)
Created by cooking meat, poultry, or fish at very high temperatures. Linked to various types of cancer.

High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS)
Sweetener added to most processed foods including baked goods, sauces, dressing, cereal, snacks, cookies, and more. Genetically modified with potential toxic mercury contamination and obesogenic properties.

Hormonal active growth promoters ("hormones")
Found in beef and lamb products. Linked to hormonal imbalance, developmental problems, reproductive problems, and increased cancer risk.

Inorganic Arsenic
Contaminant found in meat, poultry, many rice products, and apple juice. Known carcinogen.

Methylmercury
Heavy metal contaminant found at concerning levels in fish including albacore tuna, shark, swordfish, King Mackerel, tilefish, and trout. Impacts brain and kidney function in adults and can cause permanent nervous system damage in fetuses and children.

Perfluorochemicals (PFCs)
Contaminant from food packaging used for fast food, microwave popcorn, and other non-stick coatings. Linked to smaller birth weight and size in newborn babies, elevated cholesterol, abnormal thyroid hormone levels, liver inflammation, and weaker immune defense against disease.

Pesticides
Found in conventionally grown produce, dairy products and more. Wide range of chemicals linked to neurotoxicity, developmental and reproductive toxicity, cancer, and more.

Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs)
Contaminant found in meat and dairy products. Linked to thyroid and hormone disruption, neurodevelopmental deficits, and cancer.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)
Contaminant found in fish, meat, poultry, and eggs. Linked to acne-like skin conditions in adults and neurobehavioral and immunological changes in children. PCBs are known to cause cancer in animals.

Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs)
Created by cooking meat, poultry, or fish at very high temperatures. Linked to various types of cancer.

Recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH/rBST)
Found in milk, cheese, ice cream, and yogurt. Milk from rBGH-treated cows contains higher levels of IGF-1 (Insulin Growth Factor-1) and elevated levels in humans have been linked to colon and breast cancer.

Sodium Nitrite/Nitrate
Used in processed meats like bacon, hot dogs, sausages, and cold cuts. Linked to various types of cancer.

CHILDHOOD DISEASES ON THE RISE

What are the health implications of consuming these chemicals on a daily basis? The answer is unknown.

What we do know is that today's children are predicted to be the first generation to live sicker and die younger than their parents. We know that Americans rank among the lowest of industrialized nations in terms of life expectancy. We also know that more than 30 years of environmental health studies have led to a growing consensus that chemicals are playing a role in the incidence and prevalence of many diseases and disorders.

- One in three children born in 2000 will develop Type-2 Diabetes, a disease previously unknown among children that has become epidemic.

- One in three babies are overweight or obese by nine-months-old. Childhood obesity has more than doubled in the past 10 years.

- Childhood leukemia and brain cancer have increased sharply in incidence. Between 1975 and 2004, primary brain cancer increased by nearly 40 percent and leukemia by over 60 percent among children 14 years and younger. Cancer is now the second leading cause of death in childhood in the U.S., exceeded only by deaths from injury.

- Asthma is now the leading cause of emergency room visits, hospitalizations, and school absenteeism - doubling in frequency since 1980.

- Autism Spectrum Disorders now impact one in every 88 children - the diagnosis of which has increased more than 10 times in the last 15 years.

- Food allergies have increased in prevalence nearly 20 percent in the last 15 years and now impact four out of every 100 children.

While many factors play into these increases, the nearly ubiquitous presence of novel and toxic chemicals in our everyday diets certainly play one of the most significant roles.

"Over the past 30 years we have experienced epidemic rises in a variety of childhood conditions. These include asthma, childhood obesity, certain developmental disabilities, and even certain cancers. Evidence is increasingly suggesting that environmental and chemical factors have contributed to the epidemic we have experienced. We know that lead, mercury, certain pesticides and even certain flame retardant chemicals are known to affect brain development in children. Increasingly evidence is suggesting chemicals found in the environment affect our hormones and may contribute to health problems as a result and so it's important for families to take some safe and simple steps to limit unnecessary and potentially hazardous chemical exposures in food."

- DR. LEO TRASANDE, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR IN PEDIATRICS, ENVIRONMENTAL MEDICINE AND HEALTHY POLICY AT NYU SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

TAKE ACTION

The laws created to regulate food production and safety are outdated and ineffective. Our scientific understanding of how chemicals impact health has exploded since the creation of them —as has the manufacture and use of chemicals in food products. Still, wealthy special interest groups and the food industry spend millions of dollars obstructing the wheels of progress and fighting regulatory reformation.

Meanwhile, in countries like Canada, the European Union (EU), and Japan, more stringent and protective laws are being passed. Interestingly, their leadership has impacted manufacturers in the U.S. who export products to these countries. But, despite being required to make safer products for other countries, many companies are not making safer products available to their U.S. customers. They make the same product—with two separate formulations—and we get the short end of the stick. Take Nestle, for instance. In 2012, the company announced it would discountinue the use of artificial food additives from its entire confectionary line in the United Kingdom—but not in the U.S.

- **Take action in your community.** Talk to the leadership at your child's day care facility or school and see what you can do to improve foods being served to the children. Ask teachers to stop using candy and junk foods as incentives and rewards for good work. Contact food manufacturers to demand safer ingredients. (Join us in asking Kellogg's to stop using risky food dyes! Sign-on by clicking here.) Find what you're passionate about and help create a healthier community!

- **Tell elected officials to take action.** At the end of this e-book, you'll find a wide range of non-profits working on a variety of issues at the state and national level. Plug yourself in wherever it feels right to you! Healthy Child is currently a part of a national effort to pressure the U.S. FDA to not approve genetically-engineered salmon.

Visit HealthyChild.org to learn more and join the campaign.

Healthy Child Healthy World has been fighting for tougher regulation and safer products for over 20 years. To learn about our latest efforts and how you can help, visit HealthyChild.org.

The U.S. food system is making a few corporations a lot of money and the rest of us sick. It's time to take action in our homes, communities and the halls of Congress to create a healthier future for our children.

- **Take action at home.** Take precautions at home to prevent unnecessary exposure to chemicals. You shouldn't worry that a little exposure is going to permanently damage your child, but there are tons of simple, affordable actions you can take - like those outlined in this e-book.

3 RULES TO REMEMBER

Feeding a family is no easy business - especially when you're juggling work, crying babies, toddler tantrums, cleaning house, and all the other chaos and responsibilities of parenthood. We understand. That's why we've created the following 3 rules to remember - just in case you forget the more specific recommendations in this e-book or don't have access to it when you're grocery shopping.

1 GET TO KNOW YOUR FOOD

Whatever you grab, read labels to see where foods come from, what's in them, and whatever else the label might reveal. Even if you don't understand all of it, the simple practice helps you become more aware and eventually more informed about what you're eating.

2 GO BACK TO BASICS

Choose whole foods as much as possible. The fewer processed, convenience foods you eat, the lower your exposure to questionable additives, preservatives, and chemicals that leach from packaging.

3 EAT LOWER ON THE FOOD CHAIN

Some of the most persistent and toxic chemicals in food are found in animal fats. By eating less meat and dairy and more produce, beans and nuts, you'll avoid exposure to these contaminants.

SIGN THE PETITION:

TELL KELLOGG'S TO REMOVE RISKY FOOD DYES FROM FRUIT SNACKS

Each year in the U.S. at least 15 million pounds of dyes are used in everything from candy and fruit snacks to pickles, bread, snack foods, sodas and dessert.

In Britain, a warning label is required on all foods containing artificial food dyes. Kellogg's Fruit Winders Snacks sold in Britain are made without food dyes, yet the U.S.' equivalent still contains artificial colors. Several of the dyes used in the Kellogg Company's fruit snacks, such as Yellow 5, Red 40, and Blue 1 are known to cause allergy-like effects. Another dye, Red 3, is a known carcinogen and has been linked to cancer.

CLICK HERE
TO SIGN THE PETITION

PHASE 1 GETTING STARTED: THE BASICS

As they say, every great journey starts with one small step! No matter what your pantry looks like, be proud of yourself for making a commitment to a cleaner, greener diet. The following steps are some of the easiest you can start with, but they still deliver big results.

Your Checklist

- ☐ Eat More Produce
- ☐ Prep Your Produce
- ☐ Be Aware of BPA in Cans
- ☐ Avoid Food Dyes, Preservatives, Additives & Sweeteners
- ☐ Invest in the Best Dairy
- ☐ Make Safe & Healthy Meat Choices
- ☐ Select Safer Seafood

EASY STEPS

1. EAT MORE PRODUCE

Not only do most Americans fall short on eating the recommended servings of produce (FYI - it's five a day), but according to government nutritional data, we're also lacking in variety. Sixty-nine percent of Americans don't get enough green; 78 percent don't get enough red; 86 percent don't get enough white; 88 percent don't get enough purple or blue; and 79 percent don't get enough yellow or orange. What this means is that we're not benefiting from the unique nutrients and phytochemicals each color offers.

What does this have to do with toxics? Healthy diets help your body battle them.

While we're a long way from understanding the direct correlations, the body of research is growing. For example, a preliminary study done by Duke University researchers found that increasing consumption of methyl-donating substances (folic acid, choline, vitamin B12 and betaine) negated the effects of bisphenol-A (BPA) in pregnant mice. What foods are good sources of these substances? Spinach, turnip greens, celery, broccoli, to name a few. Good reason to eat your veggies!

When you're loading up on a rainbow of fruits and veggies, be sure to buy organic or at least avoid produce that has higher levels of pesticide residues. According to the Environmental Working Group, you can lower your pesticide intake substantially by avoiding the 12 most contaminated fruits and vegetables and eating the least contaminated produce (see below).

ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING GROUP SAFE PRODUCE GUIDE

DIRTY DOZEN: 12 MOST CONTAMINATED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

apples, strawberries, grapes, celery, peaches, spinach, sweet bell peppers, imported nectarines, cucumbers, potatoes, cherry tomatoes and hot peppers

CLEAN FIFTEEN: 15 LEAST CONTAMINATED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

sweet corn, onions, pineapples, avocados, cabbage, frozen sweet peas, papayas, mangos, asparagus, eggplant, kiwi, grapefruit, cantaloupe, sweet potatoes and mushrooms

2. PREP YOUR PRODUCE

The Food & Drug Administration (FDA) says that all fruits and vegetables, including those that are organically grown, could benefit from a thorough washing to remove soil, surface microbes and pesticide residues.

Here are some quick tips for prepping your produce:

- **Wash your produce right when you bring it home.** It's easiest and most efficient to wash everything at the same time.
- **Skip the soap.** The U.S. FDA advises skipping soap when washing produce since fruits and veggies are porous and can absorb soaps or detergents. Most experts agree that a quick water rinse works just fine. Or make your own wash by filling a spray bottle with 1 tablespoon lemon juice or white vinegar for every 2 cups of warm water. (Vinegar washes are not ideal for soft skinned produce like peaches or apricots.) Spray, scrub (or rub briskly) and rinse.
- **Use a scrubber for produce with firmer skin.** Think carrots, potatoes and squash.
- **Wash foods with inedible peels.** Even though you don't eat the rind, it comes in contact with your cutting board and knife, which will touch the fruit that you will eat. Also, don't assume that pre-cut fruit is any safer. Who knows where employees' hands have been?
- **Consider tossing the outer leaves of leafy greens before washing.** The outer leaves of leafy greens like lettuce and cabbage have had the most exposure to contaminants. Also, even if you purchase greens that say "pre-washed" or "triple-washed," it doesn't mean it's free of pathogens. Wash it again for good measure.

3. BE AWARE OF BPA IN CANS

Our most significant exposure to BPA currently comes from eating canned foods and drinking canned beverages. Look for fresh, frozen or dried options of your favorite canned goods. You can also seek out products in glass jars, tetra paks or cans that are labeled "BPA-Free."

Two important caveats:

- There is currently no third-party certifier or government regulation of the "BPA-Free" claim. (Though, to date, no one's been caught making the claim illegitimately.)
- Many times we don't know what is being used as a replacement. Some canned manufacturers are switching to PVC, which is considered the most toxic plastic. Others are using BPS, which isn't much better than and has similar health concerns as BPA. Call the manufacturer and ask what they're using and do a little research to see if it's a better option for you.

4. AVOID FOOD DYES, PRESERVATIVES, ADDITIVES AND SWEETENERS.

Processed foods are loaded with dyes, chemicals, and other unwanted, unhealthy additives.

Here are some basic guidelines for what to look out for:

- Artificial Colors – Avoid anything that begins with FD&C (e.g. FD&C Blue No. 1).
- Artificial Flavorings – Especially diacetyl, which is used most often in microwave popcorn.
- Risky Additives – All sorts of chemicals are added to processed foods to help thicken, stabilize, and simply make these heavily manipulated foods more appealing. Look out for alum and other aluminum-based additives often used in processed cheeses and baked cheese snacks and brominated vegetable oil (BVO), used in citrus soft drinks and sports drinks (to help evenly distribute flavor).
- Chemical Preservatives – Food manufacturers have worked hard to make sure foods have a long shelflife. That's not always a good thing. Avoid butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA), sodium nitrate, and sodium benzoate.
- Sweeteners – Avoid both artificial options (like aspartame, acesulfame-K, and saccharin), as well as added sugars (like high fructose corn syrup (HFCS), corn syrup, dextrose, etc).

BAD-DITIVES

Additionally, according to the Center for Science in the Public Interest, some of the following additives have been associated with negative health impacts:

- Propyl Gallate
- Sulfites (Sulfur Dioxide, Sodium Sulfite, Sodium and Potassium Bisulfite, Sodiumand Potassium Metabisulfite)
- Potassium Bromate
- Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)
- Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil
- Partially Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil
- Potassium Bromate
- Olestra (Olean)
- Heptylparaben

"Leave chemistry lab projects in chemistry class. When the body recognizes what it's taking in (food, supplements, skincare) it runs efficiently and is effective. When it doesn't recognize (think square peg trying to fit in a circular hole) it struggles, gets irritated, and starts to run less efficiently. This is the start of intolerances and disease. Avoid GMOs, artificial colors, dyes, sweeteners, and other chemically processed ingredients as often as you can."

- ASHLEY KOFF RD, CELEBRITY DIETICIAN & AUTHOR OF *MOM ENERGY*

BETTER BABY FOOD TIPS

Just like the majority of our food system, baby food has become increasingly processed and adulterated. And that seemingly benign and customary first food, boxed rice cereal, which is the first bite of solid foods for an estimated 98 percent of babies in the U.S., is not at all what it seems. In fact, that heavily processed white rice has a similar impact on a baby's metabolism as table sugar!

Many pediatric resources are acknowledging the fact that avocado, banana and sweet potato make great first foods for baby. Even the American Academy of Pediatrics says, "For most babies it does not matter what the first solid foods are. By tradition, single-grain cereals are usually introduced first. However, there is no medical evidence that introducing solid foods in any particular order has an advantage for your baby."

If you do want to start with rice, Consumer Reports released a study last year revealing concerning levels of inorganic arsenic (a known carcinogen) contamination in rice. The lowest levels were found in Basmati rice, but you can also choose to start with other whole grains like oatmeal or barley.

Making your own baby food is easy and economical. If you choose organic ingredients, you're also protecting your baby from exposure to pesticide residues, among other undesirable toxic ingredients. All you need is a blender or food processor (although often a fork will do the trick), and some stainless steel ice cube trays or freezer-safe glass containers handy for freezing small portions for future use.

Here's how:

- Start with local, seasonal, organically-grown produce.
- Peel and pit fruit as necessary.
- Peel and cook vegetables and hard fruits like apples. Preserve the maximum vitamins and minerals by steaming, baking, or broiling.
- At first, purée or mash food thoroughly. You may also add breastmilk or formula to the purée, both to give it a thinner consistency and to make the flavor more familiar to your baby. Over time, add less liquid and mash the food less to let your baby experience the different textures of food.
- Only portion out what you think your baby will eat and refrigerate or freeze the rest of your delicious, homemade organic baby food.

Resources:
Weelicious.com
FeedingBabyGreen.com
WholesomeBabyFood.com

"It's no wonder kids are hooked on junk food. For the past 50 years, the majority of babies in the U.S. have been given white rice cereal for their very first bite of solid food. We call it cereal, but it's processed white flour with added iron. It's a refined carb babies don't need, and there are better ways for baby to get iron than by adding it to junk food."

- DR. ALAN GREENE, PEDIATRICIAN AND CREATOR OF "WHITEOUT" CAMPAIGN

5. INVEST IN THE BEST DAIRY

Milk, cheese, yogurt, and butter — they're staples in almost every child's diet, so what should you be looking for to be sure you're buying the best? Here are two easy steps:

• **Look for rBGH-free.** rBGH (recombinant bovine growth hormone, also known as rBST) is a genetically engineered growth hormone administered to dairy cows to increase milk production. Food safety officials in many other countries—including Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and all 25 nations of the European Union—have refused to approve its use, but the FDA considers it safe here in the U.S. Due to increasing consumer demand over the past few years, many manufacturers have stopped sourcing milk from cows treated with rBGH (which, unfortunately, means all of that milk gets dumped on hospitals and schools). Look for dairy products labeled "No rBGH or rBST," or "artificial hormone-free." Also, visit NonGMOShoppingGuide.com for a full list as some states do not allow any rBGH-free related labeling.

• **Go organic.** USDA certified organic is hands-down the best option since cows raised organically cannot be treated with rBGH or unnecessary antibiotics (a practice leading to bacterial super-bugs and antibiotic resistance) or be fed foods grown using pesticides. There's a premium price tag, but as a daily staple for your child, we encourage you to invest in the best! (Find tips for going organic on a budget on page 30!)

"Sometimes when we're trying to get our children to eat healthfully, we make the perfect the enemy of the good. For example, my kids just don't like brown rice but I realized that if I mix equal parts steamed brown and white rice together in a serving bowl, they'll gladly eat it. Or if I feel like they're not eating enough fruit, I'll make a fruit-filled cobbler for dessert one night. Of course, I'd rather they naturally gravitate all the time toward whole grains and fresh fruits, but then I have to remind myself that every little bit helps!"

BETTINA ELIAS SIEGEL, 2012 MOM ON A MISSION FINALIST AND FOOD ACTIVIST BEHIND "PINK SLIME" USDA PETITION

6. MAKE SAFE AND HEALTHY MEAT CHOICES

Meat and poultry can be part of a healthy well-balanced diet. They are good sources of protein, iron, calcium, vitamin D and other nutrients. However, these foods can also contain varying levels of toxic pollutants, including dioxins, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), flame retardants, antibiotics, pesticide residues, inorganic arsenic, and more. If your diet is largely based on meat, it's time to start cutting back, and making safer, healthier choices to protect your kids.

The same chemicals that accumulate in animal fats are transferred to our own when we eat them. Then they linger there for years quietly causing damage. When you buy meat, poultry or dairy, look for low fat options. Pastured or grass-fed animals produce very lean meat. You can get the unsaturated fats your body needs from plant sources like walnuts, flax seeds, and avocados. Trim all fats and skins and broil meats and fish so that the fats (and fat-loving chemicals) drain away. You can also do your body a favor by reducing how much meat you eat. Making even one vegetarian meal a week can make a big difference.

7. SELECT SAFER SEAFOOD

Eating seafood is the primary way we are exposed to methylmercury, a potent neurotoxin. Fish can also be contaminated with PCBs, which the IARC and the EPA have declared a probable carcinogen. Use the Environmental Defense Fund's (EDF) Safe Seafood Selector to find species that are lowest in chemical and heavy metal contamination and that are fished sustainably in ways that are not harmful to our oceans.

Another popular online guide is the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch, which offers a useful consumer guide to sustainable seafood. You can access their information easily when standing in front of a seafood case by using their free iPhone app (see next page).

TIPS FOR SHOPPING:

1. Avoid farmed fish, which is higher in PCBs & GMOs than wild fish.
2. Lessen your consumption of larger, predator fish, which are highest in mercury levels (i.e. King Mackerel, shark, swordfish, tilefish, albacore tuna & trout).
3. Stick to smaller fish, which have lower mercury levels (i.e. shrimp, tilapia, salmon, Pollock, catfish, scallops, halibut, and bass).

TIPS FOR PREPARING:

1. Trim the fatty areas and dark meat prior to cooking. This is where the mercury and PCB's are stored.
2. Remove/puncture the skin prior to cooking, so any additional fat can drain off during cooking.
3. Cook fish on a rack so the fat can drain off while cooking.
4. Avoid frying fatty fish (i.e. salmon & bluefish).

CLICK IMAGE TO DOWNLOAD
THE FREE SEAFOOD WATCH IPHONE APP

PHASE 2: FEELING CONFIDENT: READY FOR MORE

Well done. If you're starting to consider Phase Two, you're well on your way to significantly eliminating toxic ingredients from your family's diet. Now that you're regularly following the steps in the first phase, here are a number of additional changes you can begin to make to continue improving your dietary habits.

Your Checklist

- ☐ Avoid GMOs
- ☐ Opt for Organic
- ☐ Buy in Bulk
- ☐ Understand Food Labels
- ☐ Avoid Acrylamide

EASY STEPS

1. AVOID GMOs

It's estimated that nearly 70 percent of processed foods in your local supermarket contain GMOs. However, there's no way to be sure of the percentage because no labels are required to inform consumers about the presence of GMOs in food. Check your pantry. Do you have any cereals, crackers, cookies, snack bars, soy milk or baby formula in there? How about anything with corn syrup or processed food made from corn on your shelves? If yes, you're likely eating food containing GMOs.

GMOs have had their DNA altered in a laboratory by genes from other plants, animals, viruses or bacteria in an effort to increase yield and to make them disease or insect-resistant. Research links GMOs to allergies, organ toxicity, and other health issues, though the FDA does not require safety testing for GMOs.

"Today, our food supply contains new ingredients. So while our food still looks the same, it now contains new, genetically engineered ingredients that had not yet been invented when we were kids. And with the escalating rates of food allergies we are seeing in our loved ones, it begs the question: are we allergic to food or these new ingredients and what's been done to it? The answer is 'We simply do not know.' And since we aren't yet able to test a child to see if he is allergic to the soy we grew up eating or genetically engineered soy, introduced in 1996, there is no way of knowing."

-ROBYN O'BRIEN, FOUNDER OF ALLERGY KIDS
AND AUTHOR OF *THE UNHEALTHY TRUTH*

4 EASY STEPS FOR AVOIDING GMOs

1. KNOW WHAT FOODS

as well as the products made from them - are most likely to have been the result of genetic engineering. Here are the top 7 genetically modified crops: corn, soy, cotton (cottonseed oil is used in margarine, shortening, and for frying foods like potato chips), alfalfa (fed to conventionally-raised dairy cows), papaya, canola, and sugar beets. The organization True Food Now has a list of foods currently being tested for genetic modification, as well as those foods that are approved but not yet sold in the U.S.

2. LOOK FOR THE LABELS

"non-GM" or "GMO-free" with third-party certification from a credible organization such as the Non-GMO Project. These can be hard to find, but if you are able to support manufacturers that produce foods that are not genetically engineered you encourage other manufacturers to follow their lead.

3. BUY WHOLE, FRESH FOODS

rather than processed ones because they're less likely to be genetically modified. Many whole foods may still contain GMOs – think corn – but by removing the additives from processed foods in your diet, you limit your exposure to genetically modified ingredients.

4. BUY FOODS LABELED "100% CERTIFIED ORGANIC

Buy foods labeled "100% certified organic" with the USDA National Organic Program seal. Laws in both the U.S. and Canada do not allow food labels that say "100% certified organic" to contain any genetically engineered food, including animals that have been fed genetically modified feed. Be aware, however, that if the food is simply labeled "organic" – without the USDA certification label – it can still contain up to 30 percent genetically modified ingredients.

2. OPT FOR ORGANIC

USDA-approved organic farms cannot use conventional pesticides, ionizing radiation, synthetic fertilizers or sewage sludge. Organically raised animals cannot consume unnecessary antibiotics or growth hormones and must eat organic food and have access to the outdoors. In addition, genetically modified organisms are not allowed.

Sounds like a healthy choice, right?

You'll find a number of different types of organic labels on the foods you purchase. Here's what they mean:

- **100% organic** – The food must contain (excluding water and salt) only organically produced ingredi

- **Organic** – The food must consist of at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients (excluding water and salt). The USDA seal may appear on the packaging.

- Made with organic ingredients – These foods must contain at least 70 percent organic ingredients and list up to three of the organic ingredients or food groups on the principal display panel.

- Contains organic ingredients – Foods in this classification contain less than 70 percent organic ingredients.

If you can't go completely organic, prioritize what your child eats most. Start with dairy and meat plus the fruits and vegetables that typically have the highest pesticide residue. Visit whatsonmyfood.org to learn about pesticides in all types of foods.

ORGANIC ON A BUDGET

Think organic foods have to cost an arm and a leg? Think again. With our insider tips, you can definitely squeeze them into your budget.

- **Buy in bulk.** Ounce for ounce, buying in bulk is often cheaper than buying conventional-sized products (and much cheaper than buying single-serving sizes). Just remember, the key to saving money with bulk food is buying what you'll actually eat.
- **Buy house brand organics.** Think Target organics, Safeway organics and the like. Co-op diehards cringe at this advice, but for a family on a budget, house brand organics are a boon.
- **Visit the farmers' market just before closing.** Farmers don't relish the idea of hauling goods back to the farm, so they'll generally accept less money for those last piles of produce.
- **Buy frozen.** Find organics in your frozen section - the produce especially can be significantly cheaper.
- **Watch for deals and dig for discounts** (and then freeze, freeze, freeze). Take some time before you go shopping to find deals and discounts. You might not find a lot in your local circulars, but you can find a ton of deals and printable coupons online. Also, watch for manager's specials and clearance deals at the store.
- **Keep it seasonal.** Whether organic or not, seasonal, locally grown produce is both affordable and sustainable (and it tastes better!).
- **DIY.** Skip convenience foods as much as possible and make your own staples like soups, mac-n-cheese, granola bars, etc.

3. BUY IN BULK

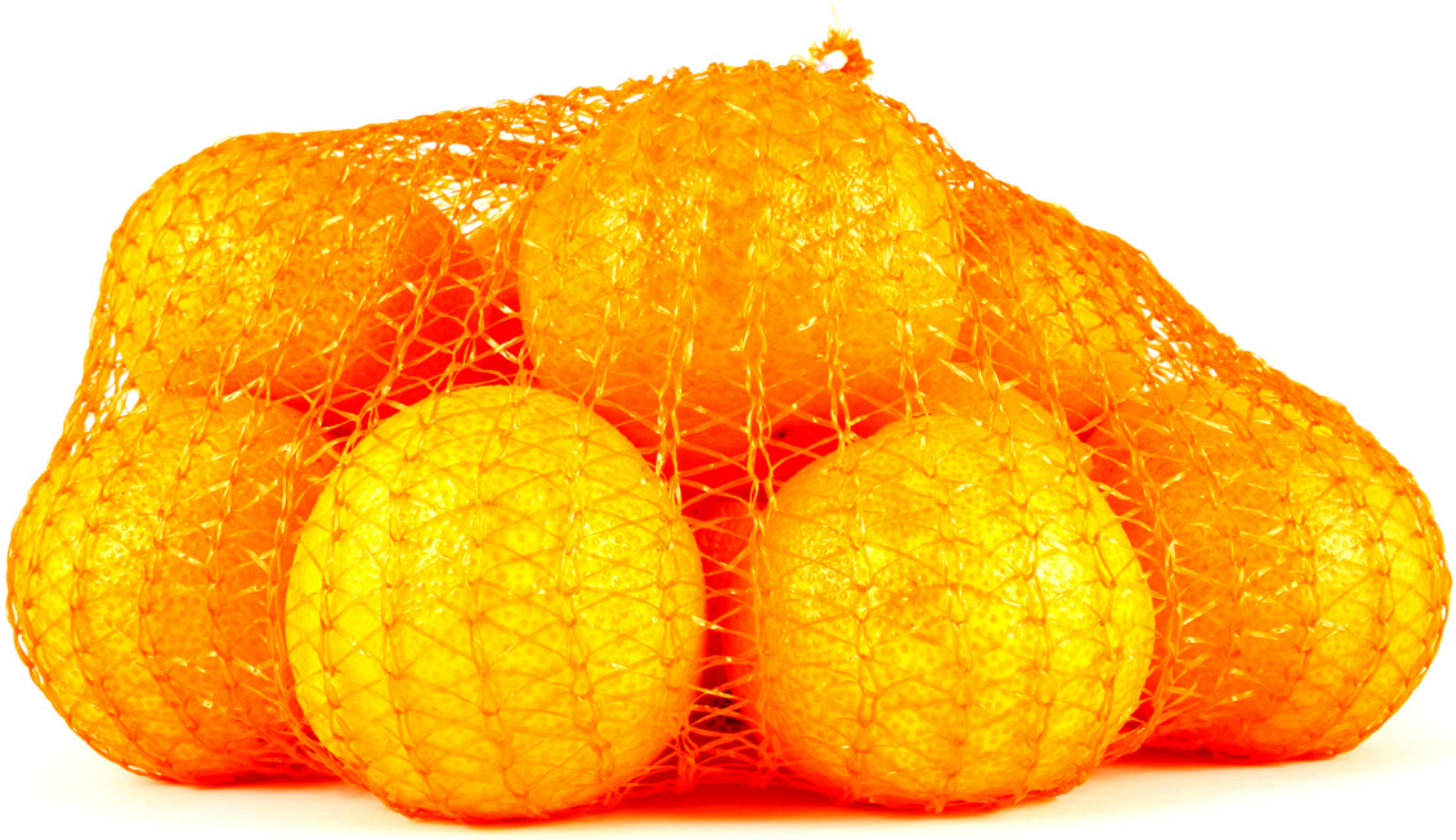
Heavily processed foods, like many of the packaged convenience foods you find in the center shelves of the grocery store, are stripped of much of their nutritional value and have a lot of synthetic additives and preservatives in them (not to mention all the extra sugars and salt). Buying whole foods, opting for healthy snacks, and making meals from scratch is much healthier for you and your family. It may sound difficult at first, but you'll soon find that there are many easy recipes out there that are quick, delicious, and nutritious.

Buying whole foods in bulk is more affordable and it's easier than ever before since bulk sections are springing up in most major food stores across the country. Plus, the variety of healthy foods you'll find in them is growing, too!

Here's how to do it:

• Take a tour of your local supermarket's bulk section and make a list of what they offer. Go home and hit the recipe books to find things your family would like to eat using these ingredients. Some will be items you already buy frequently like flour. Others may be new to your menu, like lentils or couscous. The key to saving money with bulk food, is buying healthy foods you'll actually eat.

• When you get home, make sure you put your newly-purchased healthy food in airtight containers or in the freezer and clearly label them with their name and the date of purchase.



4. UNDERSTAND FOOD LABELS

Heading to the grocery store? Don't forget your glasses. There's a lot of label reading to be done. Sadly your glasses can't help you figure out which product packaging marketing claims are legit, and which are not. From so-called natural pasture-raised chicken to sustainable dolphin-friendly tuna, it's a jungle out there. Still, decoding food labels doesn't require a PhD … though it sometimes can feel like it should.

The only logo that is both strictly defined and regulated by the government and requires third party certification is USDA organic. Though even here there are shades of organic-ness and categories. As mentioned, some organic products may only contain 70 percent organic ingredients. If you want 100 percent, look for the symbol.

Beyond USDA organic, the first thing any shopper needs to know is that most terms found on food product packaging have no legal definition or regulation. That bears repeating, especially when it comes to the word natural. Anyone can stick it on a product. Beyond "natural," phrases like "free-range," "fair trade," and "environmentally-friendly" can largely mean anything manufacturers want them to mean.

There are exceptions. The most helpful for conscious consumers are terms and logos representing defined standards and certifications maintained by third parties, like Animal Welfare Approved or Certified Humane Raised and Handled—both found on animal products. To find out how meaningful any claim is, check out Consumer Reports' excellent eco-label guide.

When shopping, ferret out frauds by checking a product's claims against its ingredients panel. Use your instincts. Does that "natural" soup contain unpronounceable additives, chemical colors and preservatives? Is that "sugar-free" cereal sweetened with sugar-laden fruit juices? Is that "nitrate-free" sausage preserved with another chemical? Does that fruit snack have more corn syrup than fruit? Is your "whole-grain" cracker mostly made of trans-fats? You get the picture.

Choose better alternatives by following these tips:

- **Eat more whole foods.** You won't have to read ingredient lists on unprocessed, unpackaged foods; there are no labels on apples.
- **Less is more**. On the packaged foods you do choose, the very best have fewer than 5 ingredients. You should be able to recognize what they are.
- **If something doesn't look natural … it isn't.** There is no such think as natural shocking pink unless you're a flamingo. Avoid purchasing food items that don't appear natural.
- **Really read labels.** Sell by dates and things like country of origin labels can tell you a lot about a packaged food. Most food is perishable without very strong preservatives.

- **Consider packaging.** If you have a choice between buying beans in a can (might be lined with the hormone disrupting chemical BPA) or in a glass jar (inert), go for the glass. And if you have the choice between a material that can be recycled in your municipality (like cardboard) versus a plastic that isn't, go for the former.

Spend the time to read labels and ask questions as you shop and you'll wind up with the best products your market sells. It's easier said than done when you're speed shopping with cranky kids. Keep in mind that there's a lot less reading required—and some tasty, fresh food—at the farmers' market.

5. AVOID ACRYLAMIDE

Acrylamide is a carcinogen that typically forms in starchy foods during high-temperature cooking including frying, baking, and roasting. The top five to be aware of are: french fries and potato chips, crackers, toasted breakfast cereals, cookies, and bread. It's important to note that since this is a by-product of the process, it's standard for conventional and organic products.

The darker the starch, the more acrylamide it contains, so you can try to avoid it by simply cooking things differently. Like, lightly toasting breads and cutting off the crusts (yes, kids now have a legitimate health reason for this perennial request!).

The U.S. National Toxicology Program offers these additional tips for reducing acrylamide exposure:

- Fry foods at 338 degrees Fahrenheit or lower.
- Cook potato strips, such as French fries, to a golden yellow rather than a golden brown color.
- Soak raw potato slices in water for 15 to 30 minutes before frying or roasting. Drain and blot dry before cooking.
- Raw potatoes should be stored somewhere cool and dry, but not in the refrigerator. Putting them in the fridge can increase the amount of sugar they contain, leading to higher acrylamide levels when they are roasted, baked or fried at high temperatures.

GET YOUR KIDS IN THE KITCHEN

There are so many benefits to getting kids in the kitchen we don't even know where to start. But, the short list includes:

- Kids eat better when they are involved with the preparation.
- Teaching kids to cook empowers them to be lifelong healthy eaters.
- Cooking together is quality family time.

Decide what works for your family and get cooking together - once a week, once a day - on a schedule. If you have a baby, let her sit somewhere nearby where she can experience the sights, sounds and smells of the kitchen. If you have a toddler, find easy ways to help (pushing a button on the blender, putting lettuce in bowls, stirring). Kids can also help create the menu for the week, grocery shop, and even clean up!

Every little bit of shared kitchen time helps teach your child invaluable skills for healthy living.

"Cook as a family as often as possible! Allowing kids to have a hand in the food they're going to eat inspires them to become better eaters. By picking or choosing whole foods together, you're teaching your children valuable lessons of togetherness, working as a team and in turn teaching them about fresh fruits, vegetables and foods that will make their bodies grow strong!"

-CATHERINE MCCORD, FOUNDER OF WEELICIOUS.COM

WANT OTHER COOL TIPS ON MAKING FOOD FUN FOR KIDS?

VISIT WEELICIOUS.COM AND CLICK ON "VIDEOS" FOR COOKING HOW-TOS.

PHASE 3
NO TURNING BACK: EMBRACING THE LIFESTYLE

You're in the final stretch! Are you feeling it? Eating healthier has such a tremendous impact on your everyday health and happiness. Most parents can see immediate shifts in their children, too. And, that's just the start - the long-term impacts are myriad and marvelous. Here are more steps to take your journey to the next level!

EASY STEPS

1. PURGE PROCESSED FOODS

Nearly 90 percent of the average household food budget is spent on processed foods, most of which are laden with sweeteners, salts, artificial flavors, factory-created fats, colorings, chemicals that alter texture and artificial preservatives. The trouble isn't just what's been added, but also what's been taken away. Processed foods are often stripped of nutrients designed by nature to protect your heart, such as soluble fiber, antioxidants and "good" fats.

All in all, it's a recipe for health problems. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), our increasing consumption of processed foods is partially responsible for the increasing levels of obesity and even heart disease.

Start purging processed foods from your kid's diet by shopping the perimeter of the grocery store, where you will find fresh, whole foods. Keep in mind that while shifting to "natural" and "organic" processed foods is a step in the right direction, organic junk food is still junk food. We still need fun, playful foods in our lives but these items should be a treat.

We're so unaccustomed to making many kitchen staples like condiments and soups from scratch, that most of us don't even consider it. But for many items, it's easier than you think. In the end, your kids will be safer and healthier if you opt to feed them healthy snacks and whole foods.

2. FIND SAFE SUPPLEMENTS AND VITAMINS

Did you know that unlike drug products, the FDA does not "approve" dietary supplements for safety or effectiveness before they are sold?

As with many other products and regulatory agencies, the FDA only has the authority to act after people get sick or some other risk reveals itself. While there are some regulations, they are weak and flawed. Case in point: the rules do not set limits on many toxic contaminants and questionable ingredients.

A Congressional study from 2010 found trace amounts of lead, mercury and other heavy metals in nearly all supplement products tested, plus a number of illegal health claims. The levels of heavy metal contaminants didn't exceed established limits, but investigators also discovered disturbing and possibly unacceptable levels of pesticide residues in 16 of 40 supplements.

Find safe supplements and vitamins by following these tips:

• **Look for the USP Verified Mark.** Seeing the USP Verified Mark on a label indicates that the dietary supplement product does not contain harmful levels of specific contaminants. (Check the current regulated levels to identify if you are comfortable with the "acceptable" exposure levels and feel that individual products qualify as safe supplements.)

• **Look for local.** Be extra cautious about supplements manufactured outside the U.S. Herbal products from some European countries and elsewhere are highly regulated and standardized, but toxic ingredients and prescription drugs have been found in supplements manufactured elsewhere, particularly China, India and Mexico.

• **Avoid artificial dyes.** As with any other food or beverage, avoid synthetic dyes linked to asthma, allergies, hyperactivity, and more. There are nine certified color additives approved for food use in the U.S. and they are classified as either dyes or lakes. Dyes are water soluble and lakes are the water insoluble form of the dye. They will be listed on the label as follows:

1. with 'FD&C' preceding the color (e.g. FD&C Blue #1)
2. abbreviated, with just the color (e.g. Blue 1)
3. the color followed by 'Lake' (e.g. Blue 1 Lake)

• **Skip those made with GMOs.** If you take a look at the label on your children's vitamin and you see corn syrup, glucose syrup from corn, high-fructose corn syrup, soybean oil or soy lecithin, the odds are these ingredients have been derived from genetically modified corn and soy. Over 90 percent of the soy in the U.S. and over 80 percent of the corn in the U.S. are now produced using genetically modified seeds.

• **If possible, opt for organic ingredients!**

Warning: Make sure to keep vitamins and all other medicines and supplements out of the reach of children. Overdosing can be fatal. This is not a comprehensive list of safety qualifications, nor is it meant as professional medical advice. Please consult your doctor before taking any vitamins or supplements.

"There is no better way to connect with our planet than to eat what it provides naturally - simple, organic (when possible), unprocessed, real food. Clean food is free of artificial preservatives and colors, pesticides, and growth hormones and are not genetically modified. Through many years of trial and error in the kitchen, I learned that what you eat will determine how you act and feel. Eating junk food and processed fast food is just a recipe for emotional and physical disaster. So choose wisely when you sit down to your next meal."

-MARIEL HEMINGWAY, ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATED ACTRESS, AUTHOR, ECO ACTIVIST, HEALTHY LIFESTYLE ADVOCATE

NO TURNING BACK: EMBRACING THE LIFESTYLE

3. VISIT THE FARMERS' MARKET

You can find a farmers' market near you by visiting sites like FarmersMarket.com or LocalHarvest.org. When you're there, ask questions to get to know your food! Ask when things were picked, how animals are raised, if pesticides were used – and take your time. If you can, walk the entire market to see what's available to compare prices and products.

"When you don't cook the food yourself, you really don't know what you are eating, but you can bet that it will be higher in fat, salt and sugar. Of course, it's also about how we are eating as well as what we are eating. When you eat in front of a screen, well, that's fattening. When you eat standing up or in the car, chances are you're not eating well. Moreover, when you do dinner right, screens turned off conversation turned on, you almost always eat healthier portions and more nutritious food."

- LAURIE DAVID, PRODUCER, ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE AND AUTHOR OF *THE FAMILY DINNER*


GARLIC
2/$1.50

5 FRUGAL FOOD TIPS FOR THE FARMERS' MARKET

Your local farmers' market can be a treasure trove of affordable, organic fare. Even if it's not certified organic, many of the farmers who sell food at the farmers' market often have relatively small scale operations and are less likely to use synthetic inputs like toxic pesticides and sewage sludge fertilizers. You won't know unless you ask questions. Sometimes the produce is less expensive than it would be at a grocery store because you're buying directly from a farmer. Extra costs involved in commercial food production (processing, inspection, packing, and shipping) are avoided.

Here are 5 tips to get the most bang for your buck at the farmers' market:

1. **Make friends. Talk to the farmers.** Often the same people that grow the food sell the food. Ask questions about the farm, their growing practices and their business. Small farmers are usually very passionate about their work and will talk your ear off if you get them started. Befriend farmers to build trust and a lasting relationship. You might even reap the rewards of the secret deals only loyal customers receive (like when you can't get to the market before the first of the season asparagus sell out, a bunch will be put aside for you). Go the extra mile by bringing your favorite farmer a loaf of zucchini bread you made from his produce. And remember, flattery will get you everywhere. If their berries make you go bananas, say so! Everyone loves a compliment.

2. **Be flexible.** Skip the shopping list and look for what's inexpensive. Less popular veggies may cost less, especially if they're odd or a specialty food (like heirloom, ethnic or rare vegetables). If you're flexible, you can save money as well as expand your palate – perhaps finding new favorites you never knew existed. If you're unsure about what something might taste like or how to prepare it, just ask! Farmers usually have cooking secrets to share or even printed recipes for you to take home.

3. **Barter.** Money isn't everything. After you've established a relationship with a farmer, offer your time in exchange for food. If you have a certain skill – like accounting, web design, mechanics, or carpentry – your time may be a valuable asset to a farmer. Likewise, you can offer to be an extra farm hand – weeding, cleaning barns or whatever might be mutually beneficial.

4. **Volunteer.** Find out if there's a community organization that coordinates your market. If so, they almost certainly need volunteers. Becoming a volunteer will help you get to know the farmers better and likely earn you discounts and even freebies for your service.

5. **Go late.** If you want the best selection, go early. If you want the best bargains, go late. Vendors would rather sell off their stock than haul it back to the farm (especially if it's something with a short shelf life like lettuce or herbs). Again, try to build a real relationship and offer to buy up the days-end goods on a regular basis. Then you'll be saving money by buying in bulk with the added savings of getting the rock bottom price.

4. GROW YOUR OWN

Eating organic doesn't have to mean buying organic. You can grow your own. Seriously! And it's cheaper than anything you'll find at the store. A $2 tomato seedling can give 10 pounds of tomatoes over a season. Even if you've never done it before. Even if you think you don't have the time. Even if you don't have a yard. Even if you have a brown thumb. You can do it.

Here are five tips for getting started:

1. **Pick a pot and a place.** You don't need green acres or a plow to have a healthy harvest. You don't even need to have a yard. You can grow a wide variety of herbs, vegetables, and even fruits in containers (on your roof, fire escape, patio, or windowsill). R.J. Ruppenthal, author of Fresh Food from Small Spaces: The Square-Inch Gardener's Guide to Year-Round Growing, Fermenting, and Sprouting, even has tips for using closets and empty bathtubs. (Note: Many old bathtubs were glazed using lead. If you're concerned about yours, get an EPA approved test kit. You can find a list at epa.gov/lead/testkit.html.)

2. **Find safe soil and seeds.** Just like you're avoiding contaminants and opting for organics elsewhere, look for the safest soil, seeds and other inputs for your gardening endeavors.

3. **Start simple.** Ensure immediate success by beginning with surefire winners like herbs, sprouts, and lettuce. Take it up a tiny notch by growing a pizza garden (basil, oregano, cherry tomatoes) or a salsa garden (cilantro, onion, tomatoes, peppers). There are specific varieties of vegetables and fruits that fare best in containers. You can find a list of them and the specific size of container they need at GardenGuides.com.

4. **Get some help.** Pick up some books from your library, like Organic Crops in Pots by Deborah Schneebeli-Morrell. Join the growing community of home gardeners online. Call your local extension services with questions.

5. **Make it a family affair!** Get kids involved in planning, picking seeds, growing, watering, weeding, harvesting and all the gardening goodness involved. It's not only a great way for them to learn about where food comes from, they'll also be more likely to try the end rewards. And, it's fun!

5. EAT BETTER WHEN YOU'RE EATING OUT

When you're home, you are master of your domain. You control what comes into the kitchen and what lands on your children's plates. But what happens when you're not at home – when you're traveling, fighting traffic, waiting at the airport, running late or stuck at the mall and your child is starving?

The fear of drive-thru and fast food restaurants has been drilled into many parents, but sometimes there's no avoiding a meal out at a less than healthy establishment. So here are some easy steps for healthier eating when you're out and about.

1. **Find all of your options.** Plan ahead. Visit www.eatwellguide.org, enter your zip code, and you'll get a list of local, sustainable, organic restaurants, bakeries, farmers' markets and more.

2. **Drink water.** Soda, sweetened iced tea and lemonades, energy drinks and most juices are loaded with high fructose corn syrup and empty calories. Make H2O the beverage of choice for everyone, and skip the plastic bottles and Styrofoam cups by carrying and refilling your own BPA-free container, like a stainless steel water bottle with filtered water.

3. **Avoid the "cream," opt for the "color."** Meal choices with the words Alfredo, a la crème, au gratin, or described as "creamy" will likely be smothered in a heavy, artificially enhanced sauce. On the other hand, foods that reflect the colors of the rainbow are usually a healthier, safer choice. Just make sure they're colors from nature and not a laboratory.

4. **Make substitutions.** Don't be afraid to speak up about the ingredients or preparation of your food if it will make it healthier. Ask for meat to be grilled "light" to avoid PAHs. Ask to have a side salad or fruit instead of fries to avoid acrylamide. Substitute produce from EWG's Clean Fifteen list (found on page 15). The extent to which servers will go to make you happy might surprise you.

"Even though it may seem stressful to hear about all the toxicity in our food, eating and cooking shouldn't cause anyone anxiety. Choose real food not out of fear, but because it supports how you want to feel -- energetic, positive, healthy and beautiful. The best advice is the simplest: Eat a wide variety of seasonal, locally-grown, whole, unprocessed, close-to-the-source foods as much as possible. It's what you do most of the time that matters."

-PAMELA SALZMAN, NATURAL FOODS COOKING INSTRUCTOR AND BLOGGER AT PAMELASALZMAN.COM

TAKE ACTION

Our toxic food system isn't something we can individually shop our way out of. We need to take collective action to protect our food, our health, and our planet. Our kids deserve it!

Check out the following organizations to find oodles of ways to get involved:

The Center for Food Safety
CFS works to protect human health and the environment by curbing the proliferation of harmful food production technologies and by promoting organic and other forms of sustainable agriculture. CFS engages in legal, scientific and grassroots initiatives to guide national and international policymaking on critical food safety issues.
truefoodnow.org

Non-GMO Project
The Non-GMO Project is a non-profit collaboration of manufacturers, retailers, processors, distributors, farmers, seed breeders and consumers. Their goal is to ensure everyone can make an informed choice about whether or not to consume genetically modified products, and mission is to ensure the sustained availability of non-GMO choices.
nongmoproject.org

EcoFarm
Ecological Farming Association nurtures healthy farms, food systems, communities and environment by bringing people together for education, alliance building and advocacy. Through educational conferences, training programs, on-farm events and communications initiatives, they pursue a safe and healthful food system that strengthens soils, protects air and water, encourages diverse ecosystems and economies, and honors rural life.
eco-farm.org

The Organic Center
The Organic Center aims to convert conventional agriculture to organic methods to encourage improved health for the earth and its inhabitants, and greater awareness of and demand for organic products. organic-center.org

Rethinking School Lunch
The Center for Ecoliteracy program advocates food as the focus for a curriculum that teaches the values, skills, and knowledge to change present practices toward sustainable solutions. It offers a guide to transforming our connection to food and farming, beginning with school lunches.
ecoliteracy.org

Union of Concerned Scientists
UCS is an independent nonprofit alliance of more than 100,000 concerned citizens and scientists. They aim to augment rigorous scientific analysis with innovative thinking and committed citizen advocacy to build a cleaner, healthier environment and a safer world.
ucsusa.org

PANNA
PANNA (Pesticide Action Network North America) works to replace pesticide use with ecologically sound and socially just alternatives. As one of five PAN Regional Centers worldwide, they link local and international consumer, labor, health, environment and agriculture groups into an international citizens' action network.
panna.org

Food and Water Watch
Food & Water Watch works to ensure the food, water and fish we consume is safe, accessible and sustainably produced.
foodandwaterwatch.org

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
IATP works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems. iatp.org

WHERE TO SHOP

Finding healthier food options is getting easier by the day with the help of the natural and local food movement. Even major grocers like WalMart and Kroger are introducing robust organic produce sections and natural specialty aisles thanks to growing consumer demand.

To help push that cart in the right direction, we put together a list of retailers nationwide that offer safer, healthier food options to support a cleaner diet.

NATURAL FOOD RETAILERS

Henry's Farmers Market. With dozens of locations throughout California, this health food store offers a nice variety of fresh, organic produce sourced locally, whole grains in bulk bins, natural supplements, and baked goods. **Visit Henrysmarkets.com**

Sunflower Shoppe. Sunflower Shoppe is family-owned and operated with locations in Texas. Aside from the fresh produce, supplements, and health products, Sunflower has a café and certified nutritionists on-staff. **Visit Sunflowershoppe.com**

Whole Foods. Scattered all over the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom, Whole Foods maintains strict quality standards to control what foods are available on their shelves. It tends to be on the pricier side, but you pay for the convenience of one-stop shopping and a better level of transparency. **Visit Wholefoodsmarket.com.**

Kroger/Ralph's. The natural food department at Kroger food chain stores has a stellar selection of vegan and organic food items.
Visit Kroger.com or Ralphs.com.

Sprouts Farmers Market. Embracing the feel of an old-fashioned farmers' market, this family of 150 stores is scattered throughout Arizona, California, Colorado, Mexico, Nevada, Oklahoma, Texas and Utah. **Visit Sprouts.com.**

Mother's Market & Kitchen. Based in Southern California, Mother's focuses on organic, GMO-free, vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, low-fat, and low-sodium products. **Visit Mothersmarket.com.**

Bristol Farms. With an emphasis on freshness and quality, Bristol Farms appeals to the gourmet eater with higher standards. **Visit Bristolfarms.com.**

Trader Joe's. One of the nation's most beloved neighborhood markets, Trader Joe's has a plentiful selection of healthier products, but you do need to invest in extra label reading. Their focus is more on price and supporting local farmers, but their guidelines aren't as stringent as some of the natural health retailers like Whole Foods.
Visit Traderjoes.com.

Back to the Land Natural Foods. Serving Brooklyn since the early 70s, this small natural foods store can get crowded, but expect to find organic whole foods, nutritional supplements, and body care products all under one roof. **Visit Backtothelandnaturalfoods.com**

Yes! Organic Market. With seven organic markets in the greater Washington D.C. metro area, Yes! has been catering to the health-conscious consumer for decades with vegan and gluten-free products.
Visit yesorganicmarket.com.

ONLINE

Shoporganic.com. An online one-stop shop with rigorous quality standards for high-quality, GMO-free, organic foods.

Vine.com. Shop thousands of organic snacks, cruelty-free and fair trade grocery items from the team behind Diapers.com. Free 2-day shipping or faster for orders over $35.

Truefoodsmarket.com An online health store that delivers natural and organic foods to your door.

Naturalgrocers.com. An online health food and supplement chain store with an organic heart, over 13,000 products, and the ability to buy in bulk. Free shipping for orders over 24 pounds, and $5 flat rate for orders up to 24 pounds.

Greenpolkadotbox.com. An online buying club for organic non-GMO produce that can save you up to 60 percent off the retail price (just need to cough up the $50 annual club membership fee). Free shipping for orders $75 or more.

Organickingdom.com. An online health food store, with approximately 3,900 items to pick from, including organic pet food.

Vitacost.com. Specialty items, vegetarian, cruelty-free, kosher and vegan at super sale prices daily. Free Shipping for orders $49 or more.

Abesmarket.com. An online marketplace for natural food items and more. Free shipping for orders over $49.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BOOKS

- *The Unhealthy Truth: One Mother's Shocking Investigation into the Dangers of America's Food Supply--* and *What Every Family Can Do to Protect Itself* by Robyn O'Brien with Rachel Kranz
- *Feeding Baby Green: The Earth Friendly Program for Healthy, Safe Nutrition During Pregnancy, Childhood, and Beyond* by Alan Greene
- *Food Matters: A Guide to Conscious Eating with More Than 75 Recipes* by Mark Bittman

WEBSITES

- **EatWellGuide.org** - Eat Well Guide® is a free online directory for anyone in search of fresh, locally grown and sustainably produced food in the U.S. and Canada. The Guide's thousands of listings include family farms, restaurants, farmers' markets, grocery stores, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, U-pick orchards and more. Users can search by location, keyword, category or product to find good food, download customized guides, or plan a trip with the innovative mapping tool, Eat Well Everywhere.
- **LocalHarvest.org** - Use this website to find farmers' markets, family farms, and other sources of sustainably grown food in your area, where you can buy produce, grass-fed meats, and many other goodies.

APPS

- **Dirty Dozen by Environmental Working Group** - The health benefits of a diet rich in fruits and vegetables outweigh the risks of pesticide exposure. Use EWG's Shopper's Guide to Pesticides™ to reduce your exposures as much as possible.
- **Whatsonmyfood.org** - *What's On My Food?* is a searchable database designed to make the public problem of pesticide exposure visible and more understandable. How does this tool work? It links pesticide food residue data with the toxicology for each chemical, making this information easily searchable.
- **Non-GMO Project Shopping Guide** - Designed to support consumers in knowing what's in their food and avoiding GMOs, this app features a list of the brands and products that are enrolled in the Non-GMO Project's Product Verification Program.

OUR SPONSORS

This e-book is just one resource from our Healthy Nursery Toolkit - made possible, in part, by these conscious companies who provide safer products for the home:

Clover Organic Farms is a third-generation family-owned and operated sustainable dairy company based in Northern California's idyllic Sonoma County, one of the country's premier milksheds. We work with a select group of local family dairy farmers to make the best-tasting, cleanest, and most sustainable milk available. We produce full branded lines of Clover Organic and Clover Stornetta fresh pasteurized milk and other dairy products, distributed in conventional, natural, and specialty markets throughout California.

Visit cloverstornetta.com

A grab-and-go system for today's busy parents, Sage Spoonfuls provides all the tools you need to make homemade baby food with ease. Their award winning products include: a recipe book, immersion blender and food processor, cooler bags, freezer packs, storage trays, pocket nutrition guide, labels and baby food storage jars (both BPA-free and glass). Sage Spoonfuls is the only brand to offer a complete homemade baby food kit with eco-friendly glass jars! All products are BPA-free and made with non-toxic materials.

Visit sagespoonfuls.com

A trusted resource for parents for more than 20 years, Healthy Child Healthy World is a California non-profit public benefit corporation with a mission to empower parents to take action and protect their children from harmful chemicals. By working with manufacturers and supporting policy initiatives, Healthy Child Healthy World provides access to critical information that encourages smarter lifestyle choices that reduce chemical exposure in homes and communities. Healthy Child Healthy World's vision is a world where every child has the opportunity to grow-up in a healthy and safe environment. **To learn more, visit HealthyChild.org**

To see the full list of sources used to compile this guide, visit the Easy Steps Resource Guide on HealthyChild.org.