

## GMO

A "GMO" is a genetically modified organism. The most widely grown GMO crops include soybeans, corn, canola, and cotton. When a food has been genetically modified it can contain genes from other species that would otherwise not occur naturally. This is usually done to give more "desirable" characteristics like insect resistance or a longer shelf life. The long term effects of GMOs on the environment and health are not yet known. GMO products cannot be labeled as organic.

### Natural vs. Organic

If a product is labeled as "natural" it does not have to be organic. The term "natural" is not regulated for products other than meat and poultry, but typically means a product is free of artificial additives.

### Picking Produce

Some conventionally farmed produce is more contaminated with pesticides than others. If you regularly consume one of the fruits or veggies listed on the most contaminated list, you would benefit from buying organic.

### Most Contaminated

Peaches, apples, sweet bell peppers, celery, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, lettuce, imported grapes, pears, spinach, and potatoes.

### Least Contaminated

Onions, avocados, frozen sweet corn, pineapples, mangos, frozen sweet peas, asparagus, kiwi, bananas, cabbage, and broccoli.

## Spring is Here!

Spring arrives this month...and chances are so will your desire to improve your health and fitness regime. March is National Nutrition Month, and a great time to renew your overall commitment to better health. Rely on us to help in the effort with great savings on nutrition packed natural and organic foods and supplements.

## Tomatoes

A study in The Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry found that organic tomatoes are twice as high in flavanoids as conventional tomatoes. Flavanoids protect against heart disease and other chronic ailments. Researchers analyzed and compared organic to conventional tomatoes over a ten year period. The organic tomatoes not only scored better, but their flavanoid levels actually increased over time. Prior similar studies have found organic foods to have higher levels of a variety of vitamins and minerals. Scientists attribute the higher quality of organic foods to the healthier soil on organic farms.



## Asparagus

The arrival of this delicious vegetable is typically associated with the coming of Spring. In California the first crops are picked as early as February, however, their peak season is generally considered to be March and April.

Asparagus is a member of the lily family, which also includes onions, leeks, and garlic. The plants are a perennial, which means the same asparagus plant will produce spears year after year. In fact, one plant may produce spears for up to 25 years! Asparagus is an excellent source of vitamin K, the B vitamin folate, vitamin C and vitamin A. Additionally, Asparagus is a very good source of numerous B vitamins - including vitamin B1, B2, B3 and B6 - as well as dietary fiber, manganese, copper, phosphorous, potassium and protein. All of this and it contains very few calories.

When selecting Asparagus, look for firm, thin stems with deep green or purplish closed tips. Once they are at home store your asparagus in the refrigerator with the ends wrapped in a damp paper towel.

Stop in and enjoy a little taste of spring!