



What is the Difference Between Natural & Organic?

Everyone is looking for natural and organic foods to promote health and wellness, and manufacturers are keeping up with this demand. But what do these buzz words really mean? Many people believe natural and organic mean the same thing, when in fact, they do not.

Natural: This label is not regulated except for meat and poultry. Therefore, "natural" can mean a number of different things from foods that are minimally processed to foods without artificial sweeteners. However, because the term is not regulated by the FDA for most foods, it can be free to interpretation by manufacturers.

Organic: The "organic" label is regulated and refers to the food itself and how it was produced.

Key characteristics of Organic Foods:

- Organic farming methods must be used and crops must be grown without synthetic pesticides and sewage-based fertilizer.
- Livestock must not be given any antibiotics or growth hormones.

Healthier or more nutritious? Whether or not organic foods are healthier or more nutritious is still up for debate. However, a recent review of earlier studies found increased levels of antioxidants in organic fruits and vegetables. Antioxidants may reduce risk for diseases.



Roasted Red Peppers

Ingredients

- 4 red bell peppers, halved or sliced and seeded
- 2 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt
- Ground pepper

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Place peppers, cut side up, on a rimmed baking sheet.
3. Drizzle olive oil.
4. Sprinkle salt and pepper.
5. Roast until flesh is tender or for approximately 30-35 minutes.
6. Remove from baking sheet and serve!

Be a Food Label Detective

RD (Registered Dietitian/Detective) Tips:

1. Read the ingredient list. Don't rely on labels from food companies. Do the detective work yourself! The more ingredients that are listed usually tells you that the food is less "natural" or healthy and more processed.
2. If you can't buy organic, it is STILL important to eat fruits and vegetables. The health benefits greatly outweigh any risks of contamination.
3. If you want to buy certain organic foods, choose foods that are most susceptible to contamination with pesticides.

12 Susceptible Foods: Peaches, Apples, Sweet Bell Peppers, Celery, Nectarines, Strawberries, Cherries, Pears, Grapes, Spinach, Lettuce, Potatoes

Be part of a Nutrition Counseling research study! Is your weight more than expected for your height and age? Are you between 9-17 years of age? Do you want to lose weight and learn how to eat healthier? Contact Vanessa Wissing at 718-920-7394 or vwissing@montefiore.org

Ask Endo-Nutrition

Send your questions to alkaplan@montefiore.org and look out for answers in next months issue!

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