

Organics Goes Beyond the Food We Eat Special Report about the Benefits of Going Organic



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Special Report - Organics Goes Beyond the Food We Eat

Smart shoppers search out organic foods in order to provide their families with the absolute best possible food available. However, organics goes beyond the food we eat. Organic products can be found in nearly every sector of manufacturing, often in places we would never think to look.

What exactly constitutes a product earning the “organic” label? There is specific criterion that a product must meet to be labeled organic:

1. It must be grown from all-natural seeds. Genetic engineering or enhancement is not allowed.
2. Protecting crops from harmful insects must be accomplished organically. This means that the farmer must find a “good” bug to decimate the “bad” bugs that might infest their crop. This is often easier said than done.
3. Emphasis is placed on keeping the plants healthy. Healthy plants are more resistant to disease, so there should be no need for fungicides.
4. Chemical herbicides cannot be used around the crops. If there are weed in the field where the crops are grown, any weeding must be done by hand.
5. Pesticides are also forbidden around crops. If a farmer feels there will be a problem with pests, they are encouraged to use other means to combat the pests – poultry, beneficial insects, and traps to capture pests.

Now that we know what an organic farmer must provide in order to maintain that label, what other things are there besides food that would be considered organic or all-natural? Organics can be found in the following products:

- Baby items
- Bedding
- Clothing
- Cosmetics
- Cleaning supplies
- Furniture

BABY ITEMS

Many new parents are particular about the newest addition to their families, especially if it is their first child. They can go to the nearest discount store and purchase items, but they may want something more natural for their little one. If that is the case, there are numerous manufacturers that are producing baby and toddler items that meet this desire for things more natural.

Diapers: Everyone knows that one of the major items you will use with a new baby is diapers. You have several options: disposable diapers that cause landfill problems, cloth diapers that you can purchase at a local store or have delivered to your home, or organic cloth diapers. If you're a natural parent, organic cloth diapers will most likely meet your needs.

The Organic Cotton Baby Love Fitted Diaper is a true one-size-fits-all reusable cloth diaper. The diaper fits babies from 8 pounds to 35 pounds. The fabric folds down in the back of the diaper in order for a newborn to wear it and it will adjust in size as the baby grows. It features Velcro closures that are pinless, ten layers of 100% organic cotton flannelette fabric for maximum absorbency. The inner panel is removable in order for the diapers to take less time drying, and you can purchase extra padding for overnight.

The 100% unbleached organic cotton fabric allows air to circulate better than fleece lined diapers and will help your baby avoid diaper rash problem. There are no synthetic fabrics to irritate your baby's skin. They come in natural, light beige only.

You will probably be able to find other manufacturers of organic diapers if you search online. Prices on organic diapers vary greatly, depending upon the design and manufacturer of the diaper, but prices start around \$4 per diaper and increase from that point.

Baby wipes: If you use diapers, you'll need baby wipes eventually. You can purchase reusable, 100% organic cotton flannelette baby wipes, as well.

Teethers and toys: Organic teething toys can also be purchased. Green Lion Eco Toys has developed all-natural teethers and toys that do not have the harmful chemicals found in many plastic toys. These toys are perfect for those babies that need to chew but have concerned parents. Made from 100% organic cotton, these teethers and toys are washable and can be easily tied to a car seat or stroller so they won't be easily lost.

Baby carriers: Quite often mothers that use organic products also prefer to wear their babies instead of carrying them. Luckily there are many baby carrying products made from organic materials. One such product is the Karma Baby organic Harmony pouch. This product is made from organic hemp. It is a light weight sling that features leg padding and has just the right amount of stretch in the fabric. A toy ring is also included on this natural sling. It comes in a variety of sizes to fit any mother, but men can use them as well. Prices range from around \$85 to over \$100 depending upon the type that you purchase. You may also purchase organic cotton slings beginning around \$60 and up.

Clothing: It is quickly becoming more important for parents preferring natural fabrics to be able to find 100% organic clothing. Conducting an online search will

provide you with nearly 4 million hits. If you can't find what you're looking for in that many options, the item probably hasn't been made yet.

Baby bedding: If you're going to put organic diapers and clothing on your child, of course you'll want to use organic bedding, as well. There are numerous manufacturers of 100% organic bedding with everything from sheets to pillows to comforters. In fact, you can even find a natural crib mattress to give your child a better start.

Natural crib mattresses are becoming popular among parents of newborns. Not only are they free of toxic chemicals used for pest control as the fibers grow, they are free of the dyes and solutions used in manufacturing. While all-natural crib mattresses aren't easy to find locally, you can purchase them online and have them shipped to your front door. Just make sure that if this is important to you, you purchase the mattress early.

BEDDING

Natural mattresses and bedding aren't just for babies, however. In fact, if you search online you would probably be able to find something to fit your current bedroom suite. Perhaps you'll find one of the new natural latex mattresses that have been so popular in Europe.

Mattresses: Major mattress manufacturers such as Sealy are beginning to make the new natural latex mattress. It provides a firm, but comfortable, night's sleep. Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Indonesia are the providers of the natural latex material that is used in the mattresses.

Hevea Brasiliensis is the tree grown on large plantations which provides the latex. Harvested by removing thin strips of bark from the trees, the latex substance flows down the stripped out areas and then into collection cups. The process is somewhat similar to tapping maple tree for sap.

It won't be easy to find these natural mattresses yet, however. Most mattresses are currently made by combining natural and synthetic latex because the manufacturers feel it produces a more resilient core. Manufacturers of all-natural latex mattresses disagree with this assessment. They think the difference is in favor of the natural latex over the synthetic/natural mixed mattresses. In either case, the cost of these mattresses is considerably higher than a traditional mattress, so they are made to be durable.

Experts state that the 100% natural latex mattress will last much longer than the mixed latex mattress, some even believing they will be around nearly indefinitely. The firmness of the mattress is achieved by placing pincore holes in the latex. The larger the holes placed in this dense material, the more soft the mattress.

When searching for a natural latex mattress, begin your search online. Locally owned businesses will likely have mattresses made with the blended latex. Be sure to ask if the mattresses are 100% natural latex. The price will seem steep, but this mattress could stand the test of time so well that it can be handed down to your children. If it holds together that well, they will probably be glad to receive it.

Mattress pads: After you have found a natural mattress, your next purchase will likely be a natural mattress pad. Organic wool mattress pads might be just what you're looking for to help you have a good night's sleep. If the natural latex mattress isn't soft enough, consider the wool mattress pad. It gives an added layer of softness because the wool is tufted, quilted, and then sewn into an organic cotton duvet-type cover.

The benefits of an organic wool mattress pad are varied. They include, but are not limited to:

1. Wicking away moisture from the body which enables you to sleep more comfortably. The moisture is then released into the air in your room after you get up and throughout the day.
2. Acting as a natural climate control. If you need heat, the wool traps hot air which will help you remain warm. In the summer, it traps cool air to help your body stay cool.
3. Providing a safer sleep environment. Wool is naturally resistant to mold, dust mites, and mildew. You will, however, need to keep it covered to protect it from moths.

Besides being all-natural, organic wool mattress pads are environmentally smart. Wool is biodegradable and is one of the few fibers that cannot be synthetically reproduced. Wool is a renewable source, as sheep produce an abundance of hair over their life times, and can even be recycled and reused.

You might be able to find organic wool mattress pads locally at your better bedding stores; however you may need to search online. Expect to pay around the same amount as you would for any other mattress pad, but you can expect the benefits to far outweigh any other mattress pad you might find. The choice between the two will be easy to make.

Sheet sets: You have the right foundation, an all-natural latex mattress. You have it covered with an organic wool mattress pad. Now all you need are some luxurious organic cotton sheets to slip into before drifting peacefully off to sleep.

Finding 100% organic cotton sheets might be as hard as finding the proverbial "hen's tooth." Most bedding stores will stock 100% cotton sheets, but the chances of finding the organic sheets locally are slim. Your best bet would be to check online for the best sources of organic sheets and bedding.

100% organic cotton sheets require special care. They will need to be washed once you receive them, and if you hope to get them onto your bed, you will likely have to iron them. The difference in the feel will make you a believer, however, and you won't mind the extra hassle.

The cotton used to make the organic sheets have had no chemicals involved in the growing or manufacturing process. They are entirely chemical free. You may find that you are breathing better with the organic sheets than you do with the 50/50 blend, or the 100% cotton sheets, you are currently using.

CLOTHING

Organic clothing today is much different from the organic clothing that made an appearance during the 1990s. Then most of the clothing was created from hemp. Today, organic clothing can be made from a variety of fibers and can be made into almost any piece of clothing and for every member of your family.

Most people think of organic clothing for babies, particularly in regard to diapers. They help keep babies free from diaper rash, help them breath easier, and don't irritate their delicate skin. There are organic clothes for babies, toddlers, children, and adults. You may even be able to find something organic for the four-footed "children" if you look in the right places.

Cotton is currently one of the most chemically treated crops on in the US. The pesticides used on cotton make it hard to find 100% organic cotton, but it can be done. You can also make organic clothing from hemp that is comfortable and very nice to look at. The prices aren't totally outrageous when compared to some non-organic clothing. However, you may have a little bit of trouble finding organic cotton and hemp clothing locally. Your best bet will be to look online to find what you're looking for.

Why would anyone care about what their clothing is made from? There are many reasons to be concerned. First, as mentioned above, cotton is sprayed heavily with pesticides both during the time it grows and when it is about to be harvested. These chemicals can cause skin irritations at the very least, and may possibly be responsible for some of the health issues Americans now face.

Synthetic fabrics are made from petroleum products, which are just as bad if not worse than the pesticides. Yes, it's true that synthetic fabrics are cheaper to manufacture than are organic crops for clothing, but why would anyone want to take a chance with their health or the health of their loved ones? And if the pesticides aren't bad enough, all cotton goes through a bleaching process prior to being dyed and manufactured.

Organically grown cotton can be used to make a multitude of fabrics – jeans, t-shirts, underwear, bath towels, and robes. Organically grown hemp can be used in most clothing manufacturing processes, and silk has been organically grown for centuries. Surely if there was more of a demand for organically grown and manufactured clothing, they would be easier to find locally.

COSMETICS AND SKIN CARE

Cosmetics have been around for centuries. They were used in ancient Egypt, during Medieval and Renaissance times, and are used extensively today. For many years, cosmetics were made from animal products such as whale fat and natural products such as berries and milk. However, as time passed, more and more products were made from unnatural sources. It's about time that the cosmetics industry has begun to create cosmetics and skin care products that are organic and safe for the public to use.

Your skin is the largest organ of your body. It acts as a two-way membrane allowing toxins to pass from the body in perspiration, but also allows toxins to enter the body the same way. It is for this reason that there should be more regulations on organic cosmetics.

It is not uncommon for cosmetics to bear the "organic" label, but the label doesn't always mean what it says. In fact, beauty products are not regulated but they definitely should be held to the same standards as organic foods. With the push for other organic products, however, the cosmetic industry may have to change, adapt, and begin to meet tougher standards in order to earn the "organic" moniker.

Organic cosmetics are using pure and natural minerals. They can also be made with nourishing seeds, nuts, and fruit oils. Jojoba oil, shea butter, beeswax, and safflower oils can also be added to create organic cosmetics. Synthetic ingredients won't find a place in organic cosmetics or beauty products. They may be a little more expensive than conventional cosmetics; however, your skin will thank you for purchasing them.

It may take a while for the large cosmetic companies to begin making organic cosmetics and for the prices to come down. In the mean time, you can find this type of make up online or offered on television.

Organic skin care products are also becoming more popular. Cleanser ingredients may include orange peel oil, calendula, geranium, chamomile, witch hazel, and burdock. Exfoliants are made with organic lemon and orange. Jojoba and lavender may also be used.

CLEANING SUPPLIES

There are many cleaning supplies that can be found on store shelves. However, most of them have chemicals or hazardous materials in them. If you would rather not clean your home with all these cleaners, you have the organic cleaners you need right in your home already.

Vinegar and baking soda can be used to make homemade cleaners that are just as good as the chemically-laden cleaners you buy at the store. In fact, they're really better. Not only do they clean as well, they are much better for your home.

Use vinegar to remove unpleasant odors rather than using commercially available products. You can place a couple of cups of vinegar on a pot. The vinegar absorbs odors, in fact if you add a few drops of vinegar to cabbage while it's cooking to remove any odors.

Vinegar can also be used as a disinfectant. Reports indicate that a five percent solution of vinegar kills 99 percent of bacteria. Mold and germs are also susceptible to the strength of vinegar. Since vinegar is a food item, the makers can't claim that it is also good for disinfecting.

Baking soda can be mixed with vinegar to unclog drains much better than anything currently on the market. Pour a cup of baking soda into the drain. Follow the baking soda with a cup of vinegar, then run hot water down the sink for several minutes. Not only will your drain be unclogged but you will have kept chemicals from your home and kept the chemicals from getting into the water system as well.

Add a few tablespoons of vinegar to soapy dishwater to help cut the grease from pots and pans. Put a cup of vinegar into an empty dishwasher to clean it once a month. If your microwave is covered in food splatters, put a microwave-safe bowl filled with two cups of water and half a cup of vinegar and then place into the microwave. Set the microwave on full power and run it for several minutes. Leave the microwave closed for several minutes and then carefully remove the bowl. When you wipe the microwave out the food will come out much easier than if you use chemicals.

Commercial cleaners for no-wax floors are filled with ingredients that are not safe for your family, or the environment. Mixing one gallon of water with ½ cup vinegar will clean and shine your floors. If you have stuck on messes, add a couple of tablespoons of baking soda with vinegar to create a scouring powder.

Baking soda has many uses, as well. Clean silver with a homemade paste of 3 parts baking soda and one part water. Rub the paste onto each piece of silver and then rinse. Buff with a soft, dry cloth.

Have you burned food in the bottom of a pot? Sprinkle baking soda into the bottom of the pot and then add hot water to cover the area that is burned. Leave the mixture in the pot overnight. In the morning the mess will come out much easier.

Remove odors from carpets without adding chemicals to your home. Sprinkling baking soda onto the carpet and leave it for at least fifteen minutes. Vacuum the baking soda and repeat if necessary.

Clean children's toys with ¼ cup baking soda and 1 quart warm water. Although Clorox and Lysol both claim to kill germs, this mixture is healthier for your children and the rest of the family to be around. Rinse the toys with clear water and then allow them to air dry.

Organic items are becoming more and more popular. Organic items go beyond food. Soon you'll be able to find them on every aisle of the local discount store. Until that time, however, you may have to do some searching to find exactly what you're looking for. From baby items to bedding, cosmetics to cleaning supplies, if you ask for more organic products manufacturers will have to supply what consumers desire.

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