

## Smart Eating

We cannot take it for granted that the foods we find in the grocery store are good for us. The food industry is a business interested in profits, not our health. They utilize pesticides to increase crop outputs, insert trans-fats into processed foods to increase shelf-life, employ factory farming methods to meet the demand for cheap meat and dairy products and use dyes and preservatives to make our food colorful and shiny. As national awareness grows, we are discovering that each of these by-products of the food industry can seriously affect our health and fertility. It is possible to eat healthily but it involves educating yourself and making critical choices at the grocery store.

**Step one** is to become an avid reader of food labels. You will quickly get used to the different words you find there and you want to avoid foods that contain long lists of chemicals, preservatives and dyes. Artificial ingredients are never a good substitute for real, nutritious food. You will find that sugars are often one of the first few ingredients in foods and often several different types in one product. Here is a list of the possible code words for 'sugar' commonly seen on ingredient labels:

Corn sweetner	Glucose	Saccharose
Corn syrup	High fructose corn syrup	Sorghum
Dextrin	Lactose	Sucrose
Dextrose	Maltodextrin	Treacle
Fructose	Maltose	Turbinado sugar
Fruit juice concentrate	Malt syrup	Xylose

It is a wiser choice to buy food sweetened with natural sweeteners as these products are not synthetic and they often contain other nutrients in addition to being sweet. Better forms of sugar to look for are:

<b>Agave nectar</b>	<b>Maple Syrup</b>
<b>Barley Malt syrup</b>	<b>Molasses</b>
<b>Dates and date sugar</b>	<b>Brown Rice Syrup</b>
<b>Evaporated Cane juice</b>	<b>Sucanat</b>
<b>Honey</b>	<b>Stevia</b>

**Step two** is to avoid pesticides. These chemicals are extremely toxic to our systems and large exposure to pesticides will impact fertility. It is great to buy organic when possible but if you do not, washing fruits and vegetables when you bring them home is a must. Simply place produce in a bowl and wash with soapy water, using a scrub brush if it seems applicable. Some fruits and veggies are treated with wax, such as apples and cucumbers, which will resist water and trap the pesticides underneath. For these types of produce, you're better off buying organic.

**Step three** is to avoid antibiotics and hormones fed to animals that end up in our meat and dairy products. Organic meat and dairy products are very important. If at all possible, buy meat and eggs from local sources and stick with organic milk, yogurt and other dairy products from the store.