

GREEN

Organic

USDA Organic

The USDA Organic label is the most commonly found label for organic products in the United States. One requirement for USDA certification is that the land on which crops are grown must be clear from prohibited substances for at least three years before an organic product can be harvested. Another requirement for the certification is that genetic engineering, ionizing radiation and sewage sludge must be prohibited from all organic products. I think that both are important, but making sure that toxic chemicals are not added to our crops is especially important. Our mouths are going to directly touch the areas where the toxic chemicals would be sprayed. There is no barrier between the toxins and our bodies. While consuming toxins at all is obviously not good for our bodies, placing the toxins directly on the parts of the food that we eat is almost as bad as putting the toxins directly into our mouths.

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/publications/content/organic-production-handling-standards>

Why Does Organic Matter?

- Eating organic helps support our planet's pollinators. The harmful pesticides that are used in nonorganic farming methods are largely responsible for the death of bees and other pollinators. The fumes kill off these marvelous species. By eating organic we are allowing the bees to live and promoting our planet's biodiversity.
- Eating organic improves our water quality. When rain falls on nonorganic soil, it washes the chemicals in the soil into our rivers, streams, oceans and underground aquifers. Those chemicals are toxic not only to humans, but all animals and plants. By eating organic we are helping keep our water clean.
- By eating organic we are preserving local crops for future generations. When we eat organic crops, they do not get modified. After generations and generations of modification, plants start to change flavor naturally, meaning even if we stop modifying the plants, they no longer taste like the original plants. By eating organic, we help to keep the flavor and color of our plants throughout the multiple generation, which means that our future generations will be able to taste the same foods that we have. By modifying our plants, we sometimes take away their ability to grow on their own. Some modified plants depend on manmade chemicals to survive. By eating organic we are also allowing plants to survive on their own, again supporting biodiversity.

<https://www.organic-center.org/organic-fact-sheets/top-12-reasons-to-go-organic/>

How Can College students shop organically and affordably?

- Shop at a local farmer's market. I know that near my campus, there are three reasonably close farmer's markets that students can use. There is one at the Bicentennial Mall, one on Granny White pike and one on Hillsboro road. All three have a lot of affordable options for produce.
- Shop seasonally. Food is cheaper when it is in season so buy in season.

- Only buy organic when necessary. Buying organic is always better if you have the funds for it, but there are some plants that do not have as many chemicals as other and are not as harmful. Here is a list of the Clean 15:
 - Asparagus
 - Avocado
 - Mushrooms
 - Cabbage
 - Sweet corn
 - Eggplants
 - Kiwi
 - Mango
 - Onion
 - Papaya
 - Pineapple
 - Sweet peas
 - Sweet potatoes
 - Grapefruit
 - cantaloupe

•These products are all relatively clean in terms of the way they are produced and sold in the U.S.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-eating/organic-foods.htm>

My Takeaway

What I have learned from this article is that knowing what you are consuming is extremely important. Reading labels and ingredient lists is a necessity. Another thing I learned is that organic does not mean healthy or pesticide free. I am one of the people who often falls into the trap of reading the word organic and assuming that it means healthy. If I see a bag of potato chips with the word organic, I will probably consider it a healthy snack, when I should still be checking the nutrition content. I also never realized that pesticides are still used in organic farming. However, as long as the pesticides are not dangerous, then I don't mind that they are being used to help grow my food. I also have a list of foods to always buy organic and foods that I can save money on by buying conventionally.

GREENER

Comparing Products

Deceiving Products: *Simple exfoliating facial wipes*



- The packaging of this product is deceiving because it is written in green letters and uses the word “simple,” much like *Simply Organic*’s packaging. It gives the impression that it is also organic.
- Three ingredients I am unfamiliar with:
 - Cetearyl Isononanoate- unknown if product carries into breast milk, however few side effects are associated with this chemical
 - <https://www.webmd.com/drugs/2/drug-32603/cetyl-alcohol-topical/details>
 - Phenoxyethanol-known skin carcinogen, can cause birth defects, kidney damage, dizziness, headaches, nervous system damage, and many other things
 - <https://ohaskin.com/top-10-toxic-ingredients-avoid/>
 - Sodium Citrate- could cause muscle spasms, elevated sodium levels, or metabolic alkalosis (but this is usually all from taking sodium citrate as a medicine and not from using it on your skin)
 - <https://www.livestrong.com/article/461350-relationship-between-low-sodium-levels-low-kidney-function/>
- I conclude that this product is most definitely greenwashed. The packaging is deceiving and the product itself is not organic.

Purex with Natural Elements



- The ingredients were not listed on the bottle so I looked them up on the recommended website
- Three ingredients I am unfamiliar with:
 - Ethoxy sulfate- proven to be toxic in study done on tadpoles
 - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11161691>
 - Biphenyl disulfonate- not expected to be dangerous
 - https://www.ewg.org/skindeep/ingredient/702144/DISODIUM_DISTYRYLBIPHENYL_DISULFONATE/#.W7ppyZNKi9Y
 - Benzoate- carcinogen with combined with certain things, can be okay at extremely low levels and only naturally. When it is added to products such as this one, it is potentially dangerous, although not as dangerous as digesting it
 - <http://naturallysavvy.com/eat/this-is-why-sodium-benzoate-is-so-scary>
- I conclude that this is another greenwashed product. The word “natural elements” are meant to convince consumers that the product is healthy for skin, when it is not.

Kroger's Vegetable Rotini



- This is placed in the healthy section of the pastas. The box again has a natural color scheme and is meant to seem healthy
- Three ingredients I am unfamiliar with:
 - Maltodextrin-possible reduction of good bacteria in digestive system, possible lack of cell response to other bacteria
 - <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/322426.php>
 - Thiamine mononitrate-this is a synthetic form of vitamin B. It is dangerous only in the ways that in-taking excessive amounts of vitamin b is dangerous
 - <https://www.livestrong.com/article/313249-the-side-effects-of-thiamine-mononitrate/>
 - Ascorbic acid- this is another name for vitamin c-much like the synthetic form of vitamin B, the risks come from consuming too much.
 - <https://www.rxlist.com/ascorbic-acid-drug.htm>
- I conclude that this was not a greenwashed product. Although I initially thought it was greenwashed, I changed my mind after looking up the ingredients with which I was unfamiliar. There are risks with some of the chemicals in this product, but they are very small and if you eat an appropriate amount, then the products are safe. It does not say on the box that the product is organic, only that it has vegetables, which is true. The product appears to still be healthy, although it is not organic.

My Side by Side:

 <p>SIMPLE EXFOLIATING FACIAL WIPES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• simple exfoliating wipes contain a toxic chemical known as phenoxyethanol. This chemical is a known carcinogen and can cause several other side effects such as damage to the nervous system. Is this really what you want to put on your skin?	 <p>ACURE COCONUT CLEANSING TOWELETTES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acure Coconut Cleansing Towelettes are not only vegan and free from harmful chemicals, but the oils in these wipes such as argan oil, and sunflower oil help to replenish your skin!
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All of my information was gathered from the packaging on the photo I took earlier or Target's website

<https://www.target.com/p/acure-brilliantly-brightening-coconut-towelettes-30ct/-/A-21402062>

My Instagram Post

