

Organic farmers have found ways to enhance the nutrient content of foods, delivering benefits much like a fountain of youth.

Tipping the odds toward graceful aging takes discipline on a daily basis and perseverance over time.



Fountain of Youth Found?

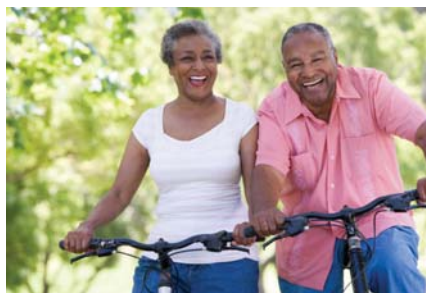
Phytochemicals in Organic Food and Wine Hold Promise in Graceful Aging

Almost no one looks forward to aches and pains, wrinkles, memory loss, and weight gain common to aging. Collectively, we spend several billions of dollars annually on self-help books and courses, potions, pills, and other products promising to

Here's why: researchers have discovered that organic farming methods produce fruit and vegetable crops with higher levels of health protecting 'phytochemicals,' compared to conventionally grown crops.

preserve youthful vigor, keep the mind sharp, and combat weight gain and its attendant health problems, especially Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Unfortunately, when weight-loss and cure-all supplements sound too good to be true, they usually are. Still, healthy lifestyle choices – and lots of discipline during mealtime and when exercising – can tip the odds decidedly in favor of graceful aging. Consuming several servings every day of a diversity of brightly colored organic fruits and vegetables, along with moderate intake of organic red wine, can further improve an individual's odds of staying healthy.



What's good for plants is good for animals

"Phytochemicals" is the term used to describe a variety of natural compounds synthesized by plants to help them deal with stressors in their environment ranging from excessive solar radiation, to insects and plant diseases, and nutrient or mineral imbalances in the soil.

As an example, most conventional fruit and vegetable crops are sprayed multiple times with a variety of pesticides that keep pest populations very low in production fields. As a result, the plants don't have to divert energy to the biosynthesis of defense-related phytochemicals. While a good thing for the plant, the people consuming the crop actually get short-changed because the same phytochemicals that protect plants provide a multitude of benefits to us as well.



The easiest way to increase the phytochemicals in your diet is to eat more nutrient-rich berries, and blueberries are among the most healthful.

Heart of the matter...

The U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services reports that 45 percent of adults age 20 and older have one of the three following conditions: high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes. This means a significant percentage of the population has a condition associated with heart disease, the leading cause of death in the U.S. (NCHS Data Brief; No. 36, April 2010)

Think organic food is too expensive?

The organic price premium ranges typically between 10% and 40%, depending on the food and season. But on average, pound for pound, organic produce contains about 25% more nutrients and it often tastes better too. Moreover, it lacks most of the residues of synthetic pesticides typically found on conventional produce, plus the methods used to grow organic food promote soil and farm worker health, biodiversity, and water quality. A growing share of shoppers agree that these multiple benefits, while hard to quantify, more than justify the organic price premium.

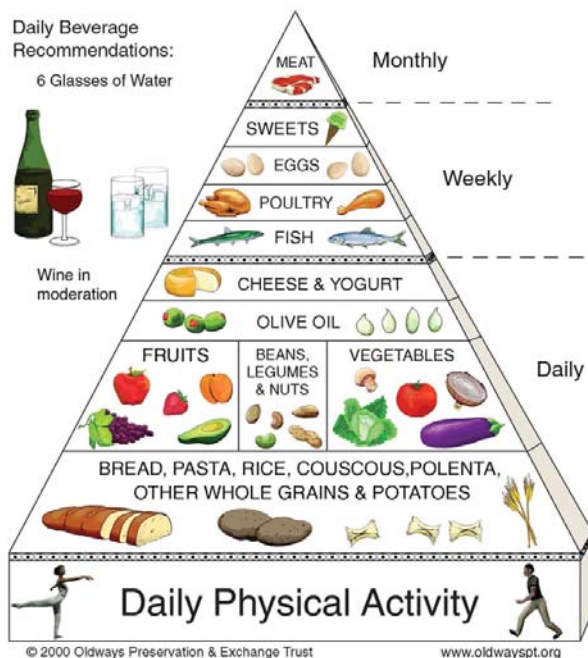


Fountain of Youth Found?

Resveratrol to the Rescue

Most scientists now agree that red wine is the "secret," health-promoting component within the Mediterranean diet that helps explain the relatively low rates of cardiovascular disease among people that have traditionally consumed a Mediterranean diet high in saturated fat.

The Traditional Healthy Mediterranean Diet Pyramid



Resveratrol is the name of the primary phytochemical responsible for wine's heart-healthy reputation. The compound is found in especially high amounts in red grapes, red wine and peanuts.

Resveratrol comes closer than any other known compound to the active ingredient in the "fountain of youth." Both scientists and the food industry are intensely focused on taking full advantage of resveratrol's wide range of disease-fighting potential. For example, the compound has been found to protect against cancer, lower elevated blood sugar, and reduce "bad" cholesterol, blood pressure and inflammation, in both animal and human studies. The compound also helps trigger a sense of satiety or fullness after eating, thereby reducing our desire for second helpings or desert. In addition, resveratrol

shows promise in slowing the aging process, and in some studies has actually reversed some signs of neurological decline associated with aging and memory loss.

How can organic food help promote graceful aging?

BOTTOM LINE

- To tip your odds in favor of graceful aging, eat superior tasting, nutrient-rich organic foods, enjoy exercise every day, get adequate sleep each night, and reduce stress. Hmmm, here's where that glass of organic red wine comes in!
- Learn more: *An organic, Mediterranean-style plant-based diet offers the best protection against a variety of common chronic diseases.* <http://www.oldwayspt.org/mediterraneandiet>



Did You Know?

* Across multiple studies, cultivars, and growing conditions, organic farming boosts resveratrol levels in red grapes by about 30 percent, and sometimes by 300% or even more.

* In mammals, resveratrol turns on a key gene that triggers a series of biological events that can extend lifespan by boosting our body's defense and repair mechanisms.



* As we get older, it becomes even more important to eat a diet rich in antioxidants because our body's ability to synthesize these protective natural compounds declines with age.

Access more information on *reducing the risks from obesity and diabetes* and the Critical Issue Report, "**That First Step: Organic Food and a Healthier Future**" at www.organic-center.org under TOC Reports, or contact Dr. Charles Benbrook, at cbenbrook@organic-center.org.



sometimes the greatest ideas are the simplest.



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