



## DIRTY DOZEN/CLEAN 15

Liza Twohill

Did you know that most conventionally grown 'fresh' produce that we see in our supermarkets and green grocers contain several pesticides? Majority of these are used for effective control of weeds, Insects and fungal diseases and Australia currently has approval for use of over 270 different Pesticides, over 80 of these are prohibited for use in other countries.

### **What are pesticides and why should I be concerned?**

A pesticide is a substance that is used to destroy different types of weeds, fungi and organisms that may pose a risk to crops of fruit and vegetables. Other common names include Fungicide, Herbicide and Insecticide. Unfortunately, majority of pesticides contain toxic substances such as organophosphates and are proven to be Carcinogenic which means they promote the growth of cancer within the human body. Many pesticides used in Australia are actually banned for use in the USA, UK and parts of Europe due to the potential for harm and disease to human life. The reason why they are Banned in some countries and not others is due to the laws prohibiting use of products. While these countries can ban the use of products until they are determined to be safe to the population, Australia's law states that products must be conclusively proven to be harmful before they can be prohibited from use.

### **What are the potential health implications?**

While studies have revealed the increased links to cancer there are also other health risks that need to be considered. There are Pesticides used in Australia which are neurotoxins and act in a similar way to nerve agents like Sarin Gas (in acute exposure), however there are also risks associated with long term exposure to smaller amounts of these Pesticides, these include Depression, Parkinsonism, skin disorders such as dermatitis and memory loss. It is also important to note the link between these Pesticides and childhood cancers. Studies on lab mice have concluded that there is also risk posed to Fertility, Thyroid health and birth mortality rates.

### **What should I be looking for when shopping for my fruit and veg?**

Every year the Environmental Working Group (EWG) release a list of fruit and vegetables rated in order of contamination from most likely to least likely, the list is referred to as the 'Dirty Dozen and Clean 15'. When shopping for you fruit and veg, the safest option is to buy organic or grow your own especially for these foods listed in the Dirty Dozen column.



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<b>The Dirty Dozen™</b>	<b>The Clean 15™</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Strawberries</li><li>2. Spinach</li><li>3. Nectarines</li><li>4. Apples</li><li>5. Grapes</li><li>6. Peaches</li><li>7. Cherries</li><li>8. Pears</li><li>9. Tomatoes</li><li>10. Celery</li><li>11. Potatoes</li><li>12. Capsicum</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Avocados</li><li>2. Sweet Corn</li><li>3. Pineapples</li><li>4. Cabbages</li><li>5. Onions</li><li>6. Sweet Peas Frozen</li><li>7. Papayas</li><li>8. Asparagus</li><li>9. Mangoes</li><li>10. Eggplants</li><li>11. Honeydew Melon</li><li>12. Kiwis</li><li>13. Rockmelon</li><li>14. Cauliflower</li><li>15. Broccoli</li></ol>

\* Whilst this list is put together in the U.S., the same applies to Australian produce.

Links:

<https://www.ewg.org/foodnews/dirty-dozen.php>

[http://awsassets.wwf.org.au/downloads/fs025\\_a\\_list\\_of\\_australias\\_most\\_dangerous\\_pesticides\\_1jul10.pdf](http://awsassets.wwf.org.au/downloads/fs025_a_list_of_australias_most_dangerous_pesticides_1jul10.pdf)

<http://www.alphaenvironmental.com.au/7-fast-facts-pesticides-australia/>

<http://www.environment.gov.au/protection/publications/ocp-trade-names>

