A Guide to Reducing Pesticide Exposure in Your Diet

Pesticides are chemicals used to reduce the effects pests and diseases can have on your fruits, vegetables and grains. While they help grow food, they can sometimes remain on fruits and vegetables, potentially affecting our health. For people with Parkinson's, reducing exposure to these chemicals is particularly important.

This guide will provide practical steps you can take to reduce how much pesticide is found in your food, while continuing to enjoy the benefits of a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables and wholegrains.

Wash your produce thoroughly

Washing your fruits and vegetables under running water is a simple but effective way to remove dirt, germs, and some pesticide residues. Here are some key tips for washing produce:

Use water
Hold produce under running water rather than dunking it in a bowl. This method helps remove more residues.

Scrub firm produce
Use a clean brush for fruits and vegetables like melons, potatoes, or carrots to help scrub away residues.

Rinse fragile produce
For soft fruits like berries or grapes, use a colander and gently rinse them while turning the colander for an even wash.

Peel when possible
Removing the peel from items like apples, peaches, or cucumbers can reduce pesticide exposure.



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Soak in salt water for extra protection

Soaking fruits and vegetables in a salty water can further reduce pesticide residues:

- **Prepare a 2% salt water solution:** Mix 4 teaspoons of table salt into 4 cups (1 litre) of water.
- **Soak for 10 minutes:** After soaking, rinse the produce under tap water to remove any excess salt.
- **Best for raw produce:** Use this method for fruits and vegetables you plan to eat raw, such as salad greens or raw fruits.



Cook produce when possible

Cooking fruits and vegetables can also help reduce pesticide levels.

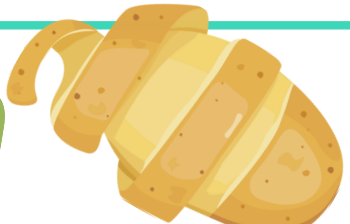
Boiling for at least 5 minutes (depending on the vegetable) is highly effective, removing up to 99% of some pesticide residues. Some vegetables like brocolli are best not to overcook. Root vegetables can be cooked for longer. Other cooking methods, such as steaming or blanching, can also reduce pesticide exposure.

However, cooking can sometimes reduce the nutrient content, so balance this with your nutritional needs.

Peel and throw away outer leaves

For some produce, peeling or discarding outer layers can help lower pesticide exposure. Peel root vegetables like potatoes, carrots, or sweet potatoes. Remove outer leaves from leafy vegetables like cabbage or lettuce.









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Prioritise organic for certain foods

Organic produce is grown without synthetic pesticides, making it a good choice when your are keen to reduce exposure. However, organic can be more expensive, so focus on buying organic versions of produce that typically has higher pesticide residues.

For produce with thick peels or those less likely to have pesticide residues (such as bananas, avocados, onions), conventionally grown options may be fine.

Foods typically higher in pesticide residues	Foods typically lower in pesticide residues
Strawberries	Avocados
Spinach	Sweetcorn
Kale, collard and mustard greens	Pineapple
Grapes	Onions
Peaches	Papaya
Pears	Frozen sweet peas
Nectarines	Asparagus
Apples	Honeydew melon
Peppers	Kiwi
Cherries	Cabbage
Blueberries	Mushrooms
Green beans	Mangoes
	Sweet potatoes
	Watermelon
	Carrots





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Consider organic grains and cereals

Grains, especially oats, can also be a source of pesticide exposure due to how they are treated during harvesting. Consider choosing organic options for grains and cereals when possible, especially if you regularly eat foods like porridge or cereal bars.

Grow your own produce if possible

If you have space and the ability, growing your own fruits, vegetables, and herbs helps you make sure you can control what goes on your produce. Start small with easy-to-grow options like tomatoes, salad greens, or herbs.

Key Takeaways:

- Wash all produce thoroughly under running water.
- Soak produce in salt water for added protection.
- Choose organic for items with higher pesticide residues, like berries and leafy greens.
- Peel and cook produce when possible to reduce pesticide exposure.
- Focus on maintaining a varied, nutritious diet that supports your overall health.



Do remember, the overall health benefits of eating fruits and vegetables far outweigh the potential risks of pesticide exposure.

If you have specific concerns, speak with your healthcare provider or dietitian for personalised advice.