



# FIVE-A-DAY WITHOUT PESTICIDES

*A guide for avoiding pesticide residues*

Getting your five-a-day of fruits and vegetables is important to health. We believe that organic food is the best, most nutritious and safest choice. Unfortunately organic food is not always available to all shoppers and sometimes its price is daunting. That’s why it’s important to know how best to prioritise any organic food purchases or to choose the foods least likely to be contaminated with pesticides. So we have listed fruit and vegetables that are on sale in UK shops in an easy to understand ‘traffic light’ format below according to the amount of pesticide residue contamination found the government’s Pesticides Residue Committee (PRC) and recorded in their yearly reports.<sup>1</sup>

Read the full article [‘Five-a-Day Without Pesticides’](#) at Natural Health News.

## THE RED LIST

	Food	% with residues	% above MRL	% with more than one residue
1	Grapefruit	100%	—	100%
2	Limes	94%	—	44%
3	Cherries	90%	4%	65%
4 =	Pears	89%	4%	79%
4 =	Apples	89%	1%	75%
4 =	Strawberries	89%	—	79%
4 =	Lemons	89%	—	80%
8	Bananas	88%	—	58%
9	Grapes	82%	8%	77%
10	Parsnips	77%	—	67%
11	Pineapple	76%	—	6%
12	Peaches/Nectarines	72%	2%	42%
13	Melon	67%	1%	29%
14 =	Carrots	63%	—	32%
14 =	Cucumber	63%	1%	36%
16	Tomatoes	62%	—	43%
17	Summer Berries	59%	—	33%
18	Raspberries/Blackberries	58%	1%	37%
19	Chilli Peppers	54%	8%	38%
20	Radishes	50%	—	4%

## About the Red List

We wanted to list the worst ones – those where a large number of samples contained levels above the Maximum Permitted Residue Level, or contained more than one residue or where more than 50% of the samples contained a pesticide residue – as “the dirty dozen”.

Worryingly, we found that they were way over 12 in that category and so we’ve called it “The Red List”. Unfortunately many fruits such as apples, pears and strawberries are on this list because supermarkets demand they look ‘perfect’ – thus they get more pesticides.

## THE AMBER LIST

	Food	% with residues	% above MRL	% with more than one residue
21	Peppers	49%	—	19%
22 =	Beans with pods	46%	15%	28%
22 =	Herbs	46%	5.5%	30%
22 =	Celery	46%	—	6%
25	Spinach	45%	2%	22%
26	Kiwi fruit	43%	1%	4%
27	Plums	41%	2%	7%
28	Brussels sprouts	39%	—	17%
29	Courgettes	38%	—	13%
30	Potatoes	37%	2%	11%
31	Lettuce	35%	—	12%
32	Aubergine	33%	—	19%
33	Cabbage	28%	—	8%
34	Salad/Spring onions	27%	2%	23%
35	Specialty vegetables	26%	24%	23%
36	Beans	24%	22%	25%

## About the Amber List

We’ve put in this second category those products we didn’t feel comfortable about giving a clean bill of health. These are where over 25% of the samples contain pesticides and some contain multiple residues.

## THE 'GREEN AND CLEAN' LIST

	Food	% with residues	% above MRL	% with more than one residue
37	Broccoli	24%	—	7%
38	Avocado	23%	2%	2%
39	Onions	21%	—	1%
40	Leeks	16%	—	2%
41	Beetroot	13%	4%	—
42	Peas	10%	—	1%
43	Olives	6%	1%	1%
44 =	Corn on the cob	—	—	—
44 =	Cauliflower	—	—	—
44 =	Asparagus	—	—	—

### About the Green & Clean List

The food we have in the “green and clean category” where residue levels are low, ranging from zero to 25%.

### Reference

1) Pesticide Residue Committee Quarterly Reports for 2009 and 2010. Available online at: <http://secure.pesticides.gov.uk/prc.asp?id=2937>