EVERNORTH

PURITY FOR THE PEOPLE

Quick Reference Series | No. 01

Organic Living at a Glance

Organic living encompasses everything we consume, breathe, wear, use and surround ourselves with. This quick guide offers 50 practical recommendations on what to look for and what to avoid when pursuing an organic way of life.

Food & Nutrition

- Prioritize **certified organic whole foods**.
- When purchasing packaged foods, choose certified organic options, ideally labeled **"100% Organic."**
- Look for **Glyphosate Residue Free** certification when available.
- Review complete ingredient lists, including oils, flavorings and additives.
- Favor retailers and growers that protect the integrity of organic produce throughout handling and storage.

Clothing & Textiles

- Prioritize **certified organic fibers**, such as cotton, linen, hemp and wool.
- Look for **Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS)** certification on finished products.
- Look for **OEKO-TEX® STANDARD 100** certification for harmful substance testing.
- Favor complete material disclosures.
- Favor undyed textiles. Avoid products marketed as wrinkle-free, stain-resistant, water-repellent or antimicrobial when possible.

Kitchen & Food Storage

- Choose uncoated, **food-grade stainless steel** cookware and oven-safe glass bakeware.
- Use glass and stainless steel for food and beverage storage, paying attention to lids and seals.
- Choose nonporous food preparation materials, prioritizing stainless steel and glass, with **food-grade silicone** where flexibility is needed.
- Avoid nonstick coatings and minimize plastic contact throughout food preparation, cooking and storage.
- Review all food-contact components of kitchen appliances, including kettles, blenders and coffee makers.

Home & Furnishings

- Choose **GOTS-certified** organic bedding, blankets, towels, curtains and rugs. Examine rug backing and padding.
- Prioritize certified organic mattresses and pillows, looking for **GOTS and GOLS** certifications where applicable. Choose organic mattress covers when an organic mattress is unavailable.
- Choose plush toys and cushions with certified organic fabrics and fillings.
- Choose untreated solid wood furniture and manufacturers that disclose adhesives, finishes, upholstery and interior filling materials.
- Avoid added flame retardants, stain-resistant treatments and unnecessary waterproof coatings.

Water & Filtration

- Understand your water composition through municipal water quality reports and independent household testing. Test private well water annually.
- Prioritize **whole-home filtration** alongside dedicated drinking and cooking water filtration.
- Look for applicable **NSF/ANSI** certifications and verify which contaminants a system is certified to reduce.
- Follow recommended filter and membrane replacement schedules.
- Choose glass or **food-grade stainless steel** drinking vessels and water storage containers.

Indoor Air

- Remove outdoor footwear before entering your home and store it in a designated enclosed area, ideally outside the living space.
- Change clothing upon returning home to reduce the transfer of contaminants and allergens into living spaces.
- Prioritize filtered whole-home ventilation, such as **Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR)**, and monitor outdoor air quality.
- Choose appropriately sized, ozone-free air purifiers with **HEPA and activated carbon** filtration.
- Use sealed HEPA-filtered vacuums, damp dusting and damp mopping to reduce contaminant accumulation and recirculation.

Laundry

- Prioritize **organic laundry detergents**. Choose fragrance-free formulations with complete ingredient disclosures. Avoid added dyes, optical brighteners, essential oils and masking fragrances.
- Avoid fabric softeners, dryer sheets, scent boosters and fragranced dryer balls.
- Choose fragrance-free stain removers based on plant-oil soaps, hydrogen peroxide or sodium percarbonate, following textile care instructions.
- Always wash newly purchased clothing and washable household textiles before first use to reduce residues from manufacturing, transportation, storage and handling.
- Use enclosed laundry baskets to help contain accumulated dust, allergens and other contaminants on worn textiles.

Household Cleaning

- Prioritize **organic household cleaners** and dishwashing products. Choose fragrance-free formulations with complete ingredient disclosures.
- For homemade cleaning solutions, consider **organic castile soap**, baking soda or organic distilled white vinegar, depending on the surface and application.
- Minimize airborne exposure by choosing non-aerosol formulations and applying cleaning solutions directly to organic cotton cloths where appropriate.
- Avoid fragranced air fresheners, plug-ins, scented candles and fragrance diffusers, including those containing essential oils.
- When disinfection is necessary, choose **EPA-registered**, fragrance-free formulations based on hydrogen peroxide, citric acid or lactic acid, following product instructions.

Personal Care

- Prioritize **USDA-certified organic** personal care products. Look for **NSF/ANSI 305** certification and review complete ingredient composition.
- Choose fragrance-free formulations with complete ingredient disclosures. Avoid added dyes, masking fragrances and intentionally added **PFAS**, particularly in long-wear and waterproof cosmetics.
- Choose deodorants rather than antiperspirants, allowing the body's natural perspiration process.
- Choose non-aerosol products, favoring creams, lotions, sticks and roll-ons. Avoid talc-based loose powders to minimize inhalation exposure.
- Choose broad-spectrum mineral sunscreens with **SPF 30** or higher, containing zinc oxide or titanium dioxide as active ingredients.

Outdoor Living & Gardening

- Prioritize certified organic seeds and plants. Look for **OMRI Listed®** soil amendments, fertilizers and potting mixes.
- Investigate previous land use and test **soil for relevant contaminants** before establishing edible gardens.
- Avoid synthetic herbicides and conventional chemical lawn treatments. Prioritize physical, mechanical and biological pest management methods.
- Choose untreated solid wood or suitable metal for garden beds and outdoor structures. Examine mulches, compost and landscaping materials.
- Stay informed about pesticide applications on surrounding properties and nearby agricultural land, considering potential drift and runoff.

Thoughts to Consider

Many conventional products undergo chemical treatments to provide modern conveniences such as wrinkle resistance, stain resistance, waterproofing and nonstick surfaces. Organic and minimally processed materials often retain more of their inherent properties and may require different methods of care. From clothing and household textiles to cookware and food storage, pay close attention to the recommended use, cleaning and care instructions to preserve the integrity and longevity of your materials.

Explore Further

Expand your understanding of organic living through our comprehensive guides, independent research and educational resources.

Explore Evernorth's Resource Library →

Explore personalized recommendations, materials, products and practices for your home through our free interactive assessment.

From Home to Sanctuary™ →

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