

Growing your way to GOOD HEALTH

I don't know about you but when it comes to gardening I don't have much of a "green thumb" — or maybe any at all — but, like a growing number of Americans, I am getting more and more concerned about the foods I'm eating: where they come from, if they're safe to eat, if they are free of contamination and if they are negatively impacting my health.

The more I learn, the more unsettled I feel.

According to the Lindberg International survey released recently, 1,000 Americans were asked if they are concerned about the pesticides in our food supply. Included in the survey were questions about their perception, knowledge and health concerns related to the foods they eat. Lindberg International found 71 percent of Americans are worried about the herbicides, pesticides and synthetic chemicals used in their food and what their children are consuming.

I'm in this group, too: the worriers.

We aren't just worried about all those chemicals put on the foods during the growing season. Now we are worried about the bacteria that comes with the food delivered to our local grocery stores. Some studies indicate we are now eating, drinking and breathing more than 700 chemicals per day. Other studies say these chemical exposures are responsible for some of the chronic illness many of us suffer from.

People seeking peace of mind is fueling the growing trend and popularity of choosing organic foods over conventionally grown foods. It just makes sense, right? The more synthetic chemicals on our food, the less safe the food is for us to eat — the less chemicals, the healthier the food.

To be 100 percent certain of what's going on — and in — your food, the

only solution is to grow your food at home or in a community garden. There are so many benefits to home gardening. Homegrown fruits and vegetables are vitamin- and mineral-rich, they often taste better, it saves money on your grocery bill and growing food is easier to do than ever before. You don't have to have a big backyard (or any yard at all) to enjoy farm fresh fruits and vegetables from your home.

Container gardens are great for beginners. Using small and large containers you can design a beautiful landscape in any size area and they are portable. Bring the containers inside to decorate your home for special occasions.

Portable aeroponic / hydroponic tower gardens are growing in popularity, too. A tower garden grows plants in a 5-foot or taller tower and water circulates up and down the tower, watering the plants periodically. These are very popular because they come with grow lights, which makes it easy to grow fruits and vegetables year round. To learn about tower gardening look to Juice Plus Tower Gardens (www.YourJuicePlus.com) as a resource.

Whether you choose to eat organic fruits and vegetables or not, do choose health for yourself and your family. Even though not everyone agrees organic is best or the chemicals on our food are bad for us, I think everyone can agree that having a diet loaded with fruits and vegetables is not only healthy, but disease preventing.

So, if you're like me and not so much of a gardener, you can always "grow" good health with the lifestyle choices you make every day and leave the gardening to those who are good at it. ♦



ABOUT THE EXPERT



CINDY COHEN RN, BS BA brings with her 35 years of experience in health care from the bedside to CEO of a hospital.

Cohen is recognized as an accomplished author, wellness expert and corporate wellness leader. As a health coach and wellness consultant, Cohen is the guiding force behind the C2 Your Health team that helps others find their way to improved personal and business wellness.

C2 Your Health LLC, through Health-E 4 Life Worksite Wellness, assisted industry leaders with certification. The company also promotes community events such as weight loss clinics, team health challenges, wellness experts seminars and the annual Expo for Women bringing wellness to the community.

Cohen has written several books, the latest "Prevention Benefits Health Employees Cost Less" (Amazon.com), "What's on Your Plate: A Simple Guide to Healthy Cooking Second Edition" (Amazon.com) and "Transform 365 Today," a cleansing and weight loss program.