Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables is essential for developing and maintaining a healthy body. Californians lead the nation in meeting their daily-recommended rates for consuming fruits and vegetables. The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) plays an important role in ensuring these fruits and vegetables do not contain illegal pesticide residues.

As part of DPR’s responsibility to protect human health, the department operates the largest and longest-running state program for testing fresh produce for illegal pesticide residues. Pesticides are widely used in agriculture for controlling pests. Nationally,
Collected samples are analyzed at the California Department of Food and Agriculture’s Center for Analytical Chemistry for over 400 pesticides and breakdown chemicals.

Sampling results over the years show about 95 percent of samples tested have either legal residues (below the federal tolerance) or no pesticide residues detected.

In the few samples with illegal pesticide residues, DPR quarantines and prohibits selling the illegal lot of produce. A residue is illegal if either the measured amount on the sample is greater than the U.S. EPA tolerance or no tolerance is set. The overall rate of detection of illegal residues is low. The majority of illegal residues are found on imported produce.

**Tips to reduce pesticide residues at home**

**Peel.** Throw away outer leaves, skins or rinds. Peel fruits and vegetables when possible.

**Wash.** Thoroughly wash all produce, under running water. Scrub firm fruits and vegetables, like melons and root vegetables. Washing will remove some residues, along with most dirt, and reduce bacterial contamination.

**Go for variety.** Eat a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables to reduce your likelihood of exposure to any one pesticide.

DPR’s Pesticide Residue Monitoring program is a backstop to California’s comprehensive approach to regulating pesticide use in the state. For more information about this program and to view past years’ testing results, please visit DPR’s webpage and enter “residue” into the search bar [www.cdpr.ca.gov](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov).

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Food safety experts agree that any small risk from the trace levels of pesticides found in fresh produce should not keep you from the health benefits of a diet rich in fruits and vegetables.

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**dpr**

Single copies of this handout are available by calling your County Agricultural Commissioner’s office, from DPR at 916-445-3974, or can be downloaded from DPR’s website, [www.cdpr.ca.gov](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov), “Consumer Fact Sheets.”

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DPR: A Department of the California Environmental Protection Agency

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