

IS ORGANIC ICE CREAM HEALTHY?



For a food to be called healthy it should help you have good health. In other words it should be good for you. Many people believe that organic foods are better for you because they are natural and are not contaminated by chemicals. But just because a food is organic does not mean it benefits your health. It is also down to the ingredients in a particular food.

Ice cream is usually made from milk and/or cream, eggs and sugar.

Milk

Milk is very important for health because it contains calcium. This is especially important for growing babies and children to build bones and teeth. This is why it is the only food fed to babies in the first months of their lives. Organic cows are allowed to feed on grass and live in fields. The milk from these cows has more nutrients in it compared to regular milk. This is because the nutrients come from the ground into the grass, the cow and then the milk. Organic milk has many more vitamins, minerals and a healthy fat called Omega 3.

So far so good. But ice cream is not just milk. It also contains cream.

Cream

Cream may be delicious but is not good for health. It is very high in fat – even cream from organic cows. Not all fat is bad for us but the fat in cream is called saturated fat. If you eat too much saturated fat it can lead to a type of fat in the blood called cholesterol. One type of cholesterol is bad for health and it can build up in the blood. This can eventually cause strokes and heart attacks.

Eggs

The other ingredient in ice cream is egg. As a rule, eggs are healthy as they provide protein. We need protein to grow and to repair any damage in our bodies. Unfortunately for ice cream lovers, organic or not, the white part of the egg which is better for us is not used in ice cream. Usually the yolk only is used in ice cream. This part of the egg is also high in fat and contains cholesterol as well.

To make matters worse, organic, free range eggs are from chickens that have been allowed to roam free and not in a cage. Because the food these chickens eat is higher quality than that from caged chickens, it leads to even more fat in the eggs. Great for baby chicks but not so great for the ice

Sugar

The final ingredient in ice cream is sugar. Sugar is really bad for health. It can cause you to gain weight, lead to diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. This is because sugar causes inflammation which is like the sore, redness you see on your skin when you cut yourself. If this sore, redness is in the body and is there for a long time, it causes illness, pain and obesity. Sugar is available organically but it has still been refined. Unfortunately refining takes out every single little bit of goodness from the sugar cane.

Summary

The only way to make ice cream healthy is to adapt it. Freezing organic bananas and blending them with organic fruit puree makes a tasty ice cream. Fruit sorbets are also a much healthier option. Organic ice cream will never be healthy per se but you can find 'healthier' alternatives in the supermarket. These are advertised as being lower fat with natural sweeteners. Alternatively, indulge in organic ice cream but in moderation.