

As you consider what's in the package, consider the packaging itself.

All kinds of materials - both toxic and benign - are used for the shipment and storage of food products. While labeling offers a thorough (if sometimes mystifying) description of what goes into the contents of a package, the ingredients of the package itself are not always as clear, yet may have a significant impact on what comes back out with your food.

"Leaching" is a term used to describe the process whereby a material degrades into its environment. With latex paints or carpeting, this is called "off-gassing" into the air. Plastics and other materials in which food are stored leach into the food. The degree to which this happens is variable, based on the material itself and the substance in contact with the material. Oil, for example, degrades plastic faster than water, so oils stored in many kinds of plastic are toxicated as the plastic container leaches into the oil.

In general, it is not advisable to use plastic for the storage of food items. There is a notable exception: when you look on the bottom of a plastic package, there is usually a recycling number to indicate the type of plastic it is. #2 (HDPE) and #4 (LDPE) are considered the safest plastic for food storage: they reportedly release only one part per million, even into oils, and become more stable over time - with the exceptions of exposure to heat or UV radiation from the sun, which will accelerate the degradation of any plastic. Never microwave food in plastic.

In addition to the health-food store shelf is the ubiquitous Tetra-Pak. You may not recognize the name, but you certainly recognize the package: nicely rectangular in shape, with a satisfying squeezability, the Tetra-Pak is what keeps your soy and rice milks, vegetable broth, and other liquids preserved at room temperature almost indefinitely. While it gives the impression of a paper-based milk carton, the Tetra-Pak is actually lined with both plastic and aluminum: not only does the plastic leach, but the aluminum penetrates through the plastic and can be detected in the beverages you enjoy. These materials are convenient for the food industry, but risky for your long-term health. Why these materials are allowed in the marketplace likely has more to do with industry lobbying than it does with public health issues. Western attitudes towards health are substantiated only by direct cause-and-effect: the rationale is, if something does not make you sick immediately, then it must be safe. Many materials are proliferating your health-food store that can be connected to long-term health problems anecdotally, but have not been systematically studied over a long enough time-frame to determine their true effects. It is possible that the studies that will give consumers the most information will never make it out of corporate laboratories into the public sphere.

But not all hope is lost, one of the oldest manufactured materials is still widely available: Glass. It is safe to say, is inert: it does not react with nor degrade into its contents. When selecting food products at the store or storing them at home, it is advisable to use glass as much as possible. As an added benefit, glass is often reusable and easily recyclable.

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A terrific food supplement, providing nutrition, enhancing flavor, and adding taste to your favorite meals and drinks. An excellent source of protein (52%), containing essential amino acids. Rich in vitamins, especially the B-complex vitamins. An excellent source of folic acid, which is important for formation, growth, and reproduction of red blood cells.

The kiwi originated in China and was known as the Chinese gooseberry until New Zealand fruit growers renamed it for their national bird and began exporting it. Today, kiwi fruit is also a commercial crop in California. Kiwi is bursting with vitamin C. One kiwi has 120 percent of the RDA for this disease-protective vitamin, says Dr. Barry Sears in his book *The Top 100 Zone Foods*. Besides helping to boost your immune system, vitamin C is an antioxidant that can protect your arteries from the damaging effects of free radicals. Kiwi is also rich in dietary fiber, and a good source of potassium, copper, magnesium, vitamin E, and manganese.

For the sweetest, fullest flavor, choose plump, fragrant kiwi fruit that yield to gentle pressure, like ripe peaches. Unripe fruit has a hard core and a tart, astringent taste. If only firm kiwis are available, ripen them for a few days before eating them. Reject shriveled or mushy fruits, or those with bruises or wet spots.

To ripen firm kiwis - according to the website Wholehealthind.com - leave them at room temperature, but away from heat or direct sunlight, for a few days to a week. Hasten ripening by placing them in a paper bag with an apple, pear, or banana. Once a kiwi fruit is ripe, however, store it far from other fruits, as it is very sensitive to the ethylene gas they emit, and tends to overripen even in the refrigerator. Ripe kiwis should keep for about one to two weeks.

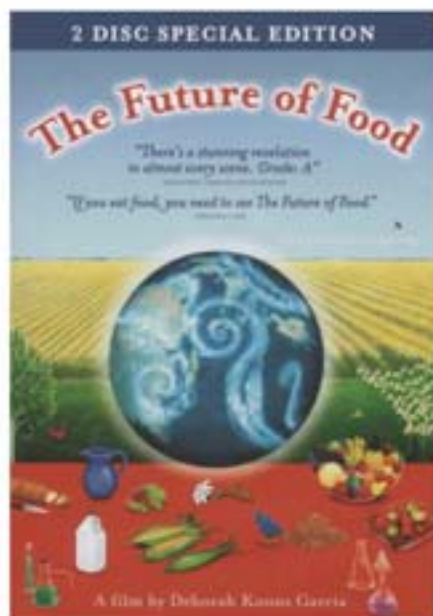
Volunteer of the month



Tom Miller - currently in job transition, moved here 8 months ago from Ann Arbor, MI, with his family - Jana (see haiku), and their son Tristan. He first got involved with the food coop through the Food Basket program (for information on that, please see our website). He volunteers about eight to twelve hours a month, mostly as a cashier for the shop; which he thinks is a great way to meet other Coop members. His favorite local product is Hito's Homemade Liver Whippin' Kombucha.

Why is Reno cool
The Great Basin Food Coop
Get involved today!

Haiku by Zane Vanderhaar



The Future of Food Video Screening, Discussion, and Potluck!

Saturday February 3rd @ 5pm @ Mary and Joe's House - 269 Wonder St.

Join the Great Basin Community Food Coop members in the celebration of food! Bring a dish to share and check out the educational forum as we view *The Future of Food* with local organic farmers Marcia and Steve Litsinger and discuss food security and nutrition in our community.

The Future Of Food DVD - Deborah Koons Garcia (Director)

There is a revolution happening in the farm fields and on the dinner tables of America -- a revolution that is transforming the very nature of the food we eat.

The Future Of Food offers an in-depth investigation into the disturbing truth behind the unlabeled, patented, genetically engineered foods that have quietly filled U.S. grocery store shelves for the past decade.

From the prairies of Saskatchewan, Canada to the fields of Oaxaca, Mexico, this film gives a voice to farmers whose lives and livelihoods have been negatively impacted by this new technology. The health implications, government policies and push towards globalization are all part of the reason why many people are alarmed by the introduction of genetically altered crops into our food supply.

Shot on location in the U.S., Canada and Mexico, *The Future Of Food* examines the complex web of market and political forces that are changing what we eat as huge multinational corporations seek to control the world's food system. The film also explores alternatives to large-scale industrial agriculture, placing organic and sustainable agriculture as real solutions to the farm crisis today. 88 Minutes.

Special 2 disc set, with special features including: Take Action Toolkit; Community Supported Agriculture; Kids And Fresh Food; GE Free Recipes; Michael Pollan On The Cost Of Food, and more.