T he following is a summary of the national Academy's recommendations to reduce pesticide residues in our food supply. It is based on the Academy's report, "Chemical Residues in Food: Their Occurrence, Effects, and Implications," which is available from the National Academy Press.

The Academy recommends that we:

1. Reduce the use of pesticides on fruits and vegetables to levels that are safe for human consumption.
2. Improve the methods for monitoring and testing pesticide residues in food.
3. Increase the understanding of the effects of pesticide residues on human health.
4. Develop new technologies for reducing pesticide residues in food.

The Academy's recommendations are based on the best available scientific information and are intended to help protect public health. The Academy urges all food producers, processors, and distributors to take steps to reduce pesticide residues in our food supply.

Our diet—like diets around the world—contains a myriad of chemicals traditionally thought of as "poisons." Mutagens and rodent carcinogens are found in food, water, and air. Some of these chemicals, such as those used in processing, are added to foods, while others are found naturally.

For example, coffee beans contain caffeine, which has been shown to cause cancer in rodents. However, there is no evidence that caffeine causes cancer in humans. Similarly, red wine contains a number of natural chemicals, such as resveratrol, which has been shown to have cancer preventative properties. However, there is no evidence that red wine causes cancer in humans.

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emphasize dietary patterns, such as increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables, that have been shown to be associated with lower rates of cancer, and other studies, ingredients that are present in various foods. The Food and Drug Administration, noting the potency of this natural carcinogen, has set reasonable and workable limits for human exposure to it.

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