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Vegetables are deadly foes



By [Bill Ralston](#) | Published on June 13, 2011 | Issue 3710

The shape of our gnashers is proof we eat veges at our peril.



Getty Images

I'm feeling smug that, even if the deadly *E coli* outbreak should leap half the world and strike New Zealand, I am safe. News reports say there is as line-up of evil vegetables as suspects, from bean sprouts through cucumbers to, perhaps, an attack of the killer tomatoes.

Whatever the vegetative source of the plague, the point is, vegetables will kill you.

Personally I never eat the disgusting stuff, with the exception of root vegetables: with eyes closed and smeared with enough gravy, you can convince yourself they're meat. Food on a plate is not a meal unless, as I've pointed out before, it contains a fair measure of dead quadruped, or perhaps a chook.

It comes as no surprise to find that plants are deadly. They are dirty things, they grow in soil, get peed on by dogs, pooped on by birds and, heavens above, we put manure on them. That's just asking for trouble, isn't it?

Your garden is full of bugs and bacteria and, guess what, they love snuggling up to veges. Which makes last week's announcement by First Lady Michelle Obama all the more appalling.

In an effort to save America from its gluttony and encourage healthy eating, the US administration has abandoned its old food pyramid design in favour of a graphic of a plate divided up into food groups. You have to admire any attempt to persuade those 26% of lard-arsed Americans who are defined as obese to eat better but to my horror I see the educative plate drawing consists largely of vegetables, fruit (just vegetables in disguise) and grain (embryonic plants). Protein, by which I presume they mean yummy meat, occupies barely 20% of the pie graph. That is not a meal. That is barely entrée.

Thanks to Michelle's interference I fully expect the population of the United States to be decimated in an Armageddon. Of course, it is possible people will simply ignore her plate message and continue munching meat. After all, meat is the most appetising food we have. If it wasn't, and veges were the thing people craved, then you would find fast food outlets offering Kentucky Fried bean sprouts and a quarter pounder of cucumber in a bun.

With meat we are safe. I did notice those wily Japanese tried to blame some good old Australian beef for an *E coli* outbreak there. Apparently 15 diners at a Korean-style barbecue restaurant went sick after eating there and the meat was found to be infected. However, the Aussie livestock industry is adamant it was infected in Japan. Of course it was – Asians love chopping meat into small pieces and then contaminating it with vegetables like bean sprouts.

I am aware there are people out there who are vegetarian, and even vegan. Pale, wan, emaciated creatures forever grazing on potentially lethal bean sprouts and demanding to know if their salads are gluten-free. In the spirit of tolerance and culinary freedom of worship, I resist telling them to harden up and have a chop but, seriously, what kind of life can they have without enjoying the sizzle of a steak and the aroma of a roast?

By the way, for a while the *E coli* finger of suspicion was pointed at German bean sprouts from an "organic" farm. No chemical fertiliser or pesticides used there. Just germ-laden natural manures and herbal concoctions, I presume. A recipe for disaster.

I've never understood the obsession with "organic." All food is organic. I'd like to see you eat some inorganic food. What the organic movement seems to be about is turning the clock back, ignoring a century of scientific advance and resorting to the "healthier" farming methods of our forebears. I trust they plough using horses.

I was astounded, after the second Christchurch earthquake, when someone forwarded an email from a university academic who was advocating loo-less Cantabrians should dig shallow trenches in their gardens and mix their faeces into the soil as a natural compost. The fluid waste should be sprinkled over the lawn and shrubs, he advised. How organic. I guess typhoid and dysentery are organic, too.

I suppose I shouldn't be too harsh on vegetables, especially those grown without the aid of lavatory products. Parsley has its place, as a garnish. Mushrooms are fine, as long as they are mixed with beef and encased in pastry. Tomatoes are acceptable in a winter soup. If you're forced to consume plant matter by wives, mothers and other well-meaning purveyors of the green death, my best advice is to smother it in cheese sauce to disguise the foul flavour.

However, be aware, those pointy incisors most of us still have in our mouths indicate that man is a carnivorously leaning omnivore and you start nibbling vegetation at your peril.