

# THE greenREPORT



Spring 2004

## Healthy Eating—One Page at a Time

It seems so easy, doesn't it? Just focus on fruits and vegetables, and you'll be serving up healthy meals for you and your family.

Unfortunately, it's not quite that simple. It is true that fresh produce is an excellent source of vitamins and minerals. But at the same time, the health benefits of some fruits and vegetables are compromised by pesticide residues and other kinds of contamination.

Generation Green works for pesticide tolerance policies that protect children, and for other food policies that will ensure our families' health, such as limitations or bans on irradiated food. But such work takes time.



Until government standards and corporate policies improve, we can protect our families by learning which fruits and vegetables are the safest *and* healthiest, and serve those kinds of produce in family meals. The same goes for fish, which can be contaminated with mercury and other toxins, and meat and poultry, which may have antibiotic residues or other potentially health-threatening aspects.

Toward that end, Generation Green's Executive Director, Rochelle Davis, and David Joachim, an award-winning cookbook author, wrote a cookbook which was finally published this spring by Rodale Press after months of research, writing and editing. That cookbook is *Fresh Choices: Easy Recipes for Pure Food When You Can't Buy 100% Organic*.

So, why a cookbook that takes into account non-organic options, even though organic food is so often healthier and tastier? Simple. Organically grown produce and organically raised livestock can be good solutions to avoid toxic exposures, but such food is not always readily available. And, for some families, it's not affordable to buy everything organic. And that's why, while *Fresh Choices* promotes organic food as a good choice, it doesn't focus solely on such food. It provides realistic options that are just as healthy or nearly so.

*Fresh Choices* offers more than 100 recipes, each one tested in a home kitchen. Most recipes are geared toward easy cooking for busy households, with short ingredient lists and short cooking times. Helpful cooking and nutrition tips, menus, and fascinating food facts enhance the recipes when appropriate.

The book also includes profiles of people who have made a difference in the health and well-being of our planet, especially our children. *Fresh Choices* also educates consumers about exposure to pesticides and other toxins in our environment, and it explains the impact of these toxins on our health and wellness. 🌱

### A Quick Look at *Fresh Choices*

*It might very well become the most valuable  
cookbook on your shelf...  
...because it's more than just a cookbook*

The goal of writing *Fresh Choices* was always to create a comprehensive resource, not just a cookbook.

In part, *Fresh Choices* shows the home cook which foods are least toxic and least risky, and it provides fabulous recipes using those foods. But more than that, it tells you about governmental and corporate policies that put our food supply at risk to begin with.

To keep you up to date as policies change and new information becomes available, Generation Green has created *Fresh Choices Quarterly*. Those who buy the cookbook will be able to get this newsletter for free.

Also, if you order the book through Generation Green, you'll get a free Shopper's Guide as well. The Shopper's Guide is a condensed version of the most important information contained in *Fresh Choices* in a convenient format that you can easily take to the store with you.

To find out more about the cookbook, visit [www.generationgreen.org/cookbook-main.htm](http://www.generationgreen.org/cookbook-main.htm). To order it, you can visit [www.generationgreen.org/cookbook.htm](http://www.generationgreen.org/cookbook.htm).

# Bush Administration Seeks to Loosen Mercury Standards

In a move that favors industry and threatens our children, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been proposing weaker, polluter-friendly mercury rules for power plants. Instead of requiring all power plants to install Maximum Achievable Control Technologies (MACT), which is the most health-protective standard to reduce mercury emissions, EPA has indicated that it supports a cap-and-trade system.

This follows hot on the heels of similar proposals that the Bush Administration advocated in the 'Clear Skies' legislation it was pushing last year and early this year. That legislation has stalled in Congress, so now the administration seems to be trying to get the same result through EPA avenues.


The EPA's own estimates indicate that strong MACT rules would reduce mercury emissions by nearly 90 percent, to approximately five tons by 2008. The weaker cap-and-trade rule being considered will reduce coal-fired power plant emissions to only 34 tons by 2010 and 15 tons by 2018. Furthermore, the Bush administration's attempts to change mercury rules would



actually undercut protections and goals that have been set for years in the Clean Air Act.

If this administration—or any other—turns mercury rules backward, that could be awful for the health of our families. According to a report released in February 2003 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), titled *America's Children and the Environment: Measures of Contaminants, Body Burdens, and Illnesses*, about five million women of childbearing age had at least 5.8 parts per billion (ppb) of mercury in their blood as of 2000.

The EPA itself has said that children born to women with blood concentrations of mercury above 5.8 parts per billion are at risk of adverse health problems, including reduced developmental IQ, problems with motor skills, and damage to the cardiovascular, immune and reproductive systems.

To find out more about mercury issues and what you can do, visit the [www.generationgreen.org/cehn-main.htm](http://www.generationgreen.org/cehn-main.htm) page on our Web site. 

## Fish Please, and Hold the Mercury

Fish is one of the healthiest foods you can enjoy. To keep it that way, pregnant women and young children should avoid fish high in mercury. Check the following list of safe seafood choices compiled by the Environmental Working Group, a public advocacy group based in Washington, D.C.:

### *Seafood Low in Mercury*

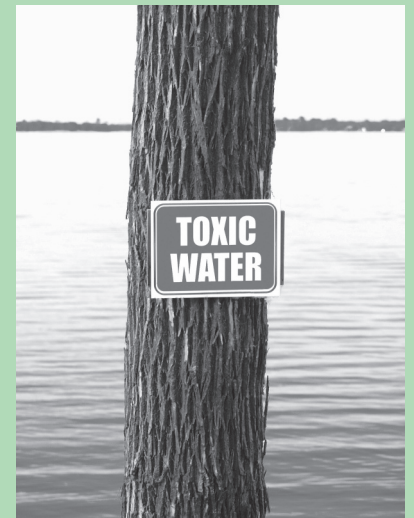
Catfish (farmed)  
Blue crab (from anywhere but the mid-Atlantic)  
Croaker  
Fish sticks  
Flounder (summer)  
Haddock  
Trout (farmed)  
Salmon (wild Pacific and Alaskan)  
Shrimp

### *Pregnant and Nursing Women Should Eat No More Than One Serving Per Month*

Canned tuna  
Mahimahi  
Blue mussels (farmed)  
Eastern oyster (farmed)  
Cod  
Pollock (Alaskan)  
Great Lakes salmon  
Gulf Coast blue crab  
Channel catfish (wild)  
Lake whitefish

### *Pregnant and Nursing Women Should Avoid*

Shark  
Swordfish  
King mackerel  
Tilefish  
Tuna steaks  
Sea bass  
Gulf Coast Oysters  
Marlin  
Halibut  
Pike  
Walleye  
White croaker  
Largemouth bass



# Cooking Fresh...with Mexican Flair

(Excerpted from *Fresh Choices* cookbook)


If you ever have the opportunity to take a cooking class with Rick Bayless, grab it. Rick has immersed himself in the culture and cuisine of Mexico for more than 25 years. You'll learn a truckload about Mexican cooking techniques from a master chef. Better yet, you'll learn about ingredients—from how they're grown to how they're prepared—which can actually help you enjoy the taste of food more.

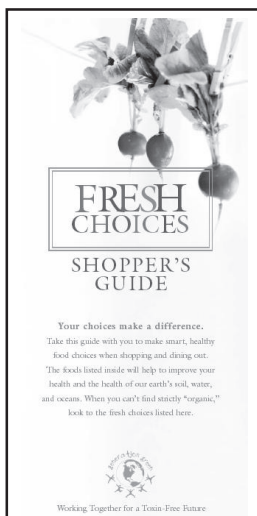
Rick and his wife, Deann, operate the wildly successful Chicago restaurants Frontera Grill and Topolobampo. The fabulous food, drinks, and service flow as freely as the admiration for the people who grow the restaurants' ingredients—the farmers themselves.

Rick has spent more than 20 years developing close relationships with local farmers. He buys directly from small, local producers that approach agriculture like artisans and responsible land stewards. These farmers encourage biodiversity by planting a wide range of produce. They grow high quality food without unnecessarily harming our soil and water. Rick uses meats from producers that raise livestock responsibly, keeping their focus on quality and sustainable methods of humane animal husbandry.

To honor their work and raise public awareness of sustainably grown local food, Rick names these farmers right on his restaurant menus. You'll see dishes made with "Steve Grebb's garlic," "Maple Creek pork," and "Gunthorp chicken."

Rick also grows organic produce at home—two thousand square feet of chemical-free vegetables and flowers. This produce often makes its way onto dinner plates at the restaurants. Growing organically has challenged and deepened the chef's commitment to sustainable agriculture.

"I've gained a massive appreciation for organic farmers—the kind all farmers were before the advent of chemical solutions," he says. "They are some of the smartest people on the planet." 



Order the Fresh Choices cookbook from Generation Green and you will also get a free Shopper's Guide (image at left). See the stories on page 1 for more details. If you don't have Internet access and want to order one or more cookbooks, send your order and check to: Generation Green, P.O. Box 7027, Evanston, IL 60201.

The price is \$12 for members and \$18.50 for non-members. Shipping and handling is \$3 per book.

## Rick Bayless's Grilled Shrimp Ceviche



### INGREDIENTS

- About 8 bamboo skewers
- 1 generous pound peeled trap-caught spot prawns or medium-size turtle-safe shrimp (about 24 pieces)
- Olive oil
- ½ cup fresh lime juice, plus several lime slices for garnish
- ½ medium white onion, finely chopped
- ⅓ cup chopped fresh cilantro, plus several sprigs for garnish
- ½ cup ketchup
- 1 to 2 tablespoons bottled hot sauce (like Frontera Tangy Toasted Arbol Hot Sauce)
- About 2 tablespoons olive oil (optional but recommended to smooth out sharpness)
- 1 cup diced peeled cucumber or jicama (or ½ cup of each)
- 1 small ripe avocado, peeled, pitted and cubed
- Salt, about ½ teaspoon
- Tostadas, chips or saltine crackers for serving

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat the gas grill or prepare a charcoal grill. Soak bamboo skewers in water for at least 30 minutes. Skewer the shrimp, about 6 per skewer; thread a second skewer through the shrimp so they won't turn on the grill. Spray generously with oil. Grill, turning once until opaque, about 4 minutes total. Let the shrimp cool completely. Cut cooked shrimp into ½-inch pieces and place in a large non-aluminum bowl. Toss with the lime juice, cover and refrigerate to chill.

In a small strainer, rinse the onion under cold water, then shake off the excess liquid. Add to the shrimp bowl, along with the cilantro, ketchup, hot sauce, optional olive oil, cucumber or jicama and avocado. Taste and season with salt, if you think it needs any. Cover and refrigerate, if not serving immediately.

Spoon the ceviche into martini glasses, juice glasses or small bowls; garnish with sprigs of cilantro and slices of lime. Serve with tostadas, tortilla chips or saltines to enjoy alongside.

# You Deserve to Know, But Will You?

Public right-to-know is a huge issue, but many government and business leaders would prefer to sweep that issue under a very large, very heavy rug.

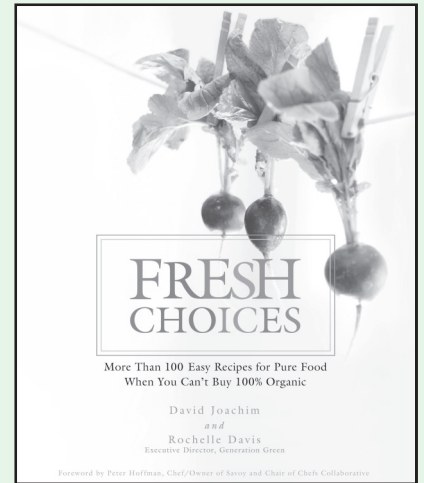
When it comes to shopping for your family's meals, it's not often clear what's safe and what's not. When there are risks, the people who make the "big decisions" choose to make sure we either don't know what those risks are—or they make it very hard to find out about them. It wasn't that many decades ago, remember, that food didn't even have freshness and expiration dates.

Irradiation of meat is one example of how the public is kept in the dark. Companies that make irradiation equipment, meat producers who rely on the technology to cover up the result of filthy operations, and stores that carry irradiated meat would prefer you don't know the meat is any different than the other meat in the store.

Same thing with labels on food, many of which suggest that food is healthy or "organic," but which actually mean little or nothing. Free-range doesn't necessarily

mean that the animal ran free most every day until it was slaughtered, for instance.

The *Fresh Choices* cookbook co-written by Generation Green Executive Director Rochelle Davis (see the article on page 1 of this newsletter), helps smooth out much of the confusion by explaining what many of the labels mean, and which ones really equate to healthy and safe choices for you and your family.



We cannot rely on the government and industry leaders to protect us, but we also don't have to go into the stores defenseless.



P.O. Box 7027  
Evanston, IL 60201

CITIZEN ACTION NETWORK

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

1-800-652-0827



Call us at

P.O. Box 7027  
Evanston, IL 60201



Write us at

info@generationgreen.org  
www.generationgreen.org



E-mail us at

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Evanston IL  
Permit No. 198

STAY INFORMED. GET INVOLVED. SIGN UP FOR OUR MONTHLY ACTION ALERT!