



# Genetically Modified Foods?

## *We Have the Right to Know!*

### What are Genetically Modified Organisms?

- A genetically modified organism (GMO) is created when the genetic material from one species, such as a bacteria, virus, plant, or animal, is inserted into the DNA of another species in an attempt to introduce a new trait or characteristic.
- Manipulation of DNA in this manner would never occur in nature.
- GMOs are widespread in our food supply. According to the USDA, 89% of corn, 91% of cotton, 90% of sugar beets and 94% of soybeans are genetically modified. It is estimated that more than 80% of all processed foods contain GMOs.
- With FDA approval, genetically modified salmon that grows at twice the normal rate may soon be on the market. Apples that do not brown when sliced, as well as potatoes that do not produce black spots when peeled or bruised, have already gained FDA approval.

### What are the Health Concerns Associated with Genetically Modified Foods?

- In 1992, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced that GM foods were safe to eat, citing the lack of any evidence to the contrary. Yet, the FDA's own scientists and independent researchers have repeatedly warned that consuming GM foods could have serious, multiple long-term health effects, and might cause potentially life-threatening allergic reactions.
- According to the American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM), health risks from consumption of GMOs could include infertility, immune and digestive system problems, accelerated aging, faulty insulin regulation and organ dysfunction. The AAEM has advised its members to recommend that patients avoid GM foods.
- The imprecise methods used to create GMOs have yielded unpredictable results including “turning off” neighboring non-target genes, permanently disabling them. The new “imported” genes produce brand new proteins, and little is known about the health effects of these novel substances.
- Funding for independent testing of GM foods has been repeatedly blocked by industry, and rigorously-enforced patent and trademark laws prohibit any independent testing of GM foods without the permission of the manufacturer.

## How Does Pesticide Use Relate to GMOs?

- GM crops are engineered to survive lethal doses of pesticides — amounts that would likely kill any other kind of plant. According to the USDA, more than 94% of soy and 89% of corn has been genetically engineered to withstand weed-killing pesticides (herbicides).
- GM crops used for human consumption are thus contaminated with higher pesticide residues than non-GMO varieties.
- The widespread use of GM crops has resulted in the development of so-called “superweeds” that have become resistant to the herbicide most commonly used on GM crops, RoundUp (glyphosate). The FDA has now approved the use of a new breed of GM crops engineered to withstand even stronger, more toxic herbicides, including 2,4-D, an herbicide best known as a component of Agent Orange.

## Are There Special Concerns for Children and GMOs?

- The potential impact of GMOs on our youngest, most vulnerable populations is raising concern among pediatricians and parents alike. Fetuses may be exposed in the womb and breast fed infants via their mother's diet. Young children are uniquely vulnerable to environmental toxins due to their rapidly developing physiology, and exposure to GMOs is no exception.
- Young children also eat a greater percentage of corn and soy in their diets than adults, leaving them particularly susceptible to potential health impacts from GM crops. In addition, children are especially prone to food allergies, and studies have shown that GMOs contribute to this phenomenon. Data shows that soy allergies in children living in the UK skyrocketed after GMO soy was introduced.

## We Have a Right To Know!

- More than ever before, the public is demanding full disclosure and transparency of ingredients and additives in our food supply. Since 2001, nationwide polls have consistently shown that over 90% of Americans want GM foods labeled.

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CORN SYRUP, CARAMEL COLOR,  
PHOSPHORIC ACID, NATURAL  
FLAVORS, CAFFEINE. PRODUCED WITH  
GENETIC ENGINEERING.**

*A battle over four words*

- 64 countries around the world already require labeling of GM foods, representing over half the global population. Connecticut, Maine and Vermont have passed legislation to require labeling of GM food products, and over two dozen other states are considering GMO labeling laws.
- Giving consumers the information they need to make educated choices about health and safety is the mandate of responsible government.



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