



GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

Genetic modification is a process whereby the genes of one species of plant or animal are inserted into the genes of another in order to give that plant or animal certain positive traits. Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) can be created with genes from bacteria, viruses, insects, animals or humans. Companies have worked on GMO tomatoes and potatoes for insect resistance; tomatoes and cantaloupes to delay ripening and slow down softening; radicchio that is resistant to herbicides; and squash and papaya which are resistance to viruses. According to Andrew Kimbrell at the Center for Food Safety, scientists are also “Engineering human growth genes into fish, pigs and other livestock to make them grow larger and more quickly; mixing flounder genes into tomatoes so they can grow and be stored at lower temperatures; adding pesticide genes into corn and other vegetables to resist pests...” (Andrew Kimbrell, Your Right to Know: Genetic Engineering and the Secret Changes in Your Food)

The problem with genetic modification is that it cuts across species lines and, therefore, can have many unintended consequences on organisms. The consequences are unknown because no one knows what reaction the insertion of a foreign gene into an organism will cause. As a matter of fact, there is evidence that genetically modified foods can cause severe illnesses, allergies, asthma, and cancer. In a well-publicized case, in 1994, Calgene came out with a tomato called the FlavrSavr Tomato, which was meant to look fresh long after being picked. The tomato was eventually recalled because it did not taste good. However, in studies, it had been shown that the FlavrSavr Tomato caused stomach lesions in rats.

In her book, The Unhealthy Truth: How Our Food Is Making Us Sick – and What We Can Do About It, Robyn O’Brien writes how she discovered that genetically modified products were causing allergies in her children. “I now believe that food allergies are really just the tip of the iceberg. They don’t just affect the children who have them – they’re a warning sign from our kids’ immune systems that something is wrong with our food supply. This toxic food supply has not only created an allergy epidemic, but also is linked to other types of health problems, such as asthma, autism, ADHD, and behavioral difficulties...”

Currently, the products that are genetically modified are: Corn; Soy; Canola; Wheat; Zucchini; Yellow Squash; Hawaiian Papaya; Tobacco. In the supermarket, genetically modified fruit and vegetables have a UPC code that begins with an 8. In addition, meat, poultry, dairy products come from animals that have been fed genetically modified foods, as do farmed salmon unless they are labeled organic. Genetically modified products are also in food preservatives and additives, as well as beauty products. For information on what products contain GMOs, check out NONgmoshoppingGuide.com. The best way to avoid GMOs is to vote with your dollars by: buying local and organic foods, looking for labels that say “Non-GMO”, and avoiding ingredients and products that contain GMOs (use the NON-GMO Shopping Guide as reference).

For more information on GMOs, check out:

Andrew Kimbrell, Your Right to Know: Genetic Engineering and the Secret Changes in Your Food

Robyn O’Brien with Rachel Kranz, The Unhealthy Truth: How Our Food Is Making Us Sick - and What We Can Do About It

Jeffrey M. Smith, Seeds of Deception: Exposing Industry and Government Lies About the Safety of the Genetically Modified Foods You're Eating