You Are Likely Eating GMO Foods

Genetically engineered corn and soy were introduced to the American diet in 1996. Though other nations have not allowed GMO crops, nine major GMO crops exist in the United States (see page 2). Their derivatives are in 70% of the food supply, particularly in processed foods.

Genetic tinkering is intended to make crops more resistant to pests and pesticides, and to increase production. Yet, the safety of consuming GMOs is debatable. Since their introduction, numerous auto-immune, digestive and inflammatory diseases are on the rise. GMOs are widespread, but hidden, making it difficult to make food choices.

Children are more susceptible to GMOs than adults as they are continuously growing and new cell reproduction is constant. Even babies are at risk. Most infant formula sold in the US uses either soy or milk from cows injected with rbGH (a GE hormone used to increase milk production in cows) and fed derivatives of genetically modified corn.

The Call to Label GMO Foods

If GMO products are as safe as companies claim, why not let consumers decide for themselves whether to purchase them or not? GMO labeling is already required in other countries.

Labeling opponents claim that mandatory GMO food labeling would increase food costs. The cost of labeling would require segregating seeds according to the genetically engineered content throughout the food chain, however, this is already done with many identity-reserved crops. Farmers are already segregating crops to prevent cross-contamination in fields. Testing is already being done to ensure purity of seed and crop that are exported to other countries with Genetically Engineered labeling requirements such as European Union countries, Japan and China.

These practices would have to be expanded, but an entirely new system would not have to be developed. Labels could be updated as the product reaches the market. The effects of GMO in our food are still unknown and without GMO labeling, it is difficult to associate any health conditions to what we are consuming.

Adapted from Food & Water Watch

What are GMOs?

“Genetically modified organisms,” or GMOs, are plants or animals with new traits created by forcing genes from bacteria, viruses, animals or humans into the DNA of a plant or animal. These new combinations of genes do not take place in nature or through traditional cross breeding. The process is known as genetic engineering, or GE.

15 x the Herbicides

Over 80% of all GMOs grown worldwide are engineered for herbicide tolerance. As a result, use of toxic herbicides like Roundup has increased 15 times since GMOs were introduced. GMO crops are also responsible for the emergence of “super weeds” and “super bugs” which can only be killed with ever more toxic poisons.

Adapted from the NON-GMO Project

Deadly Impact of GMOs in India

Millions of Indian farmers harvesting Bt Cotton buy expensive seeds and the chemicals related to them. To afford it, many borrow money at high interest rates. If the harvest is not successful, the loans lead them into high debt. In desperation, many commit suicide. The last decade shows that suicides are concentrated among cotton farms, and where Bt Cotton is grown, they are much higher. In the past decade, there have been nearly 250,000 farmer suicides in India, and 3/4 of them were growing Bt Cotton.
Nine GMO Products

1. SOY (GMO since: 1996)
How widespread: 94 percent of the US soybean crop was genetically modified in 2011, according to the USDA.
What to watch for: Soybeans show up in many traditional (i.e. not organic) soy products such as tofu, soy milk, soy sauce, miso, and tempeh, as well as products containing lecithin, such as ice cream and candy.

2. COTTONSEED (GMO since: 1996)
How widespread: 90 percent of the US cotton crop was genetically modified in 2011, according to the USDA.
What to watch for: The cotton plant produces not only fibers for fabric, but also cottonseed oil. It's available on US shelves as a standalone product, and also commonly used as an ingredient in margarine, salad dressings, and as a frying oil for potato chips and other snacks.

3. CORN (GMO since: 1996)
How widespread: 88 percent of the US corn crop was genetically modified in 2011, according to the USDA.
What to watch for: GM corn can make its way into hundreds of products: breakfast cereals, corn-flour products (tortillas, chips, etc.), corn oil products (mayonnaise, shortening, etc.), and literally anything sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup, which covers sweetened fruit drinks, processed cookies and other snacks, yogurts, soups, condiments, and many other products.

4. CANOLA OIL (GMO since: 1996)
How widespread: 90 percent of the US canola crop was genetically modified in 2010, according to the New York Times.
What to watch for: Any canola oil made in the US. This popular cooking oil, comes from a genetically modified plant that is no longer simply cultivated, but grows wild across the Dakotas, Minnesota, and Canada.

5. U.S. PAPAYA (GMO since: 1998)
How widespread: 80 percent of the US papaya crop was genetically modified in 2010, according to the New York Times.
What to watch for: All papaya grown in the US.

6. ALFALFA (GMO since: 2005)
How widespread: Data on the re-introduction of GM alfalfa in 2011 will be available from the USDA in July 2013. At present, GM alfalfa is used primarily as hay for cattle. The Monsanto Technology Use Agreement for “Roundup Ready” GM alfalfa forbids its use for sprouts.
What to watch for: It’s difficult to tell from a meat or dairy product whether it is from cows fed GM alfalfa. Look for organic dairy products and organic or 100 percent grassfed meat. An even better option is to go vegetarian or vegan.

7. SUGAR BEETS (GMO since: 2005)
How widespread: 95 percent of the US sugar-beet crop was genetically modified in 2009, according to the USDA. Around half of the sugar produced in the US comes from sugar beets.
What to watch for: If a non-organic bag of sugar or a product containing conventional sugar as an ingredient does not specify “pure cane sugar,” the sugar is likely a combination of cane sugar and GM sugar beets.

8. MILK (GMO since: 1994)
How widespread: 17 percent of US cows were injected with rBGH in 2007 (most recent figure).
What to watch for: No label is required for milk from rBGH-treated cows, though many brands of non-treated milk label their containers as such.

9. ASPARTAME (GMO since: 1965)
How widespread: Aspartame, an artificial sweetener, is derived from GM microorganisms. It is found in over 6,000 products, including diet sodas.
What to watch for: Avoid anything labeled as containing Nutrasweet, Equal, or aspartame.

Take action: Tell Congress We Have a Right to Know What’s In Our Food!

HR 3553, the Genetically Engineered Food Right to Know Act, requires labeling of all GMOs—including fish, which is especially important since GM salmon approval seems imminent.

HR 3554, the Genetically Engineered Safety Act, prohibits open-air cultivation of genetically engineered pharmaceutical and industrial crops, to prevent cross-pollination and contamination, and establishes a tracking system for crops and their by-products.

Content adapted from Genetic Roulette, Food & Water Watch, Time, Alliance for Natural Health and Green America


GMO Crops
• Nutrient deficient
• Produce lower crop yields
• Increase use of pesticides/herbicides
• Create $ burden on farmers (seed patents)
• Negative health impact on consumers
• Widespread
• Unidentified in the marketplace, taking away our freedom to choose

What is being done?
Bills to label GMOs have been introduced in 19 states, but none have passed. People continue to organize and share information.

What can we do?
• Avoid GMO products
• Buy organic
• Avoid the 9 risk ingredients (soy, cottonseed, corn, canola oil, US papaya, alfalfa, sugar beets, milk, aspartame)
• Baby food and infant formula suggestions from Non GMOs shopping guide Visit http://bit.ly/11kuNL5


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Adapted from Green America