



GMOs: Panacea or Pandemic?

When assessing food safety, few issues prove as controversial as genetically modified organisms (GMOs). GMOs were developed to resist pests, disease and herbicides and increase the world's food supply. However, because GMOs are relatively new, scientists don't know how they will affect people and ecosystems long-term.

The most common GMOs include corn, soy, cotton, sugar beets, papaya, canola and alfalfa (animal feed). To create GM plants, genes from viruses and bacillus thuringiensis (Bt) toxin (which kills insects via the digestive system) are added to plant DNA, helping crops withstand threats. However, there's evidence Bt may damage human intestinal tracts. Some researchers believe that because GM seeds are resistant to disease, and humans are becoming more resistant to antibiotics, GMOs may alter our immune systems as well.

Glyphosate, a toxic herbicide (e.g., Roundup®) ingredient, has been shown to decrease healthy gut bacteria. The Global Healing Center says gastrointestinal disorders like celiac disease and food allergies are rising and suggests avoiding GMO foods until we know more. In addition, the World Health Organization International Agency has deemed glyphosate a potential human carcinogen. Recently won lawsuits by cancer patients harmed by Roundup support this premise.

Since they tolerate higher amounts of herbicides and pesticides, GMOs harbor more toxins than non-GM crops. A 2017 study by the Journal of the American Medical Association indicates pesticide residue may affect fertility. The study discovered that women who consumed foods with higher pesticides had miscarriage rates of 34% compared to 7% for women who consumed the least pesticide. A 2018 Environmental Health study also showed a majority of Americans have detectable glyphosate in their urine and linked the toxin to shorter pregnancies.

Until we fully understand how GMO affects people, soil, insects, and bees that pollenate GMOs, groups like Harvard Medical School recommend swapping processed foods with foods free of additives and preservatives, organic when possible, and local non-GMO. This practice shows promise in reversing GMO effects. A recent study by The International Journal of Human Nutrition and Functional Medicine found that health improved after removing GM foods from the diets of 3,000 patients, proving that food can harm but also heal the body.

To learn more about GMOs, how glyphosate has affected families across the US, and how we can assure a safer food supply, join us on July 25 at the Chapman Center for a screening and discussion of Secret Ingredient. For tickets, visit tinyurl.com/y6z4sog9.

Eat Healthy. Be Happy.

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