

SUMMIT

Naturopathic News

Genetically Modified Foods: Toxic to Your Health

by Dr. Kim Nearpass

www.mountainriverclinic.com

Genetically modified organisms, or "GMO's", may be one of the greatest assaults on health that we've seen. The first GM foods were introduced in 1992, with the claim that they would allow the food industry to produce more food, faster. Scientists genetically modify foods by cutting and pasting DNA sequences into the plant. These DNA sequences, or "genes", are designed so the the plant contains its own built-in pesticide. This is very different from "selective breeding", which cross pollinates plants to propogate desirable traits. When insects ingest the genetically modified plant, the gene causes the rupture of the intestines, which kills the bug. Other GM genes protect the plant from otherwise deadly herbicides. This means that the field can be sprayed with chemicals that will kill weeds, but leave the GMO unharmed.

Extreme health problems may occur when humans, and other animals, ingest these GM foods. The European Union has serious concerns about the safety of genetically modified foods. All GMOs are considered "new food" and subject to extensive, case-by-case, science based food evaluation by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). In the United States, the FDA does not require any studies on GMO's, even though numerous studies show serious health risks associated with GM foods including infertility, immune problems, birth defects, gastrointestinal issues and faulty insulin regulation, to name a few. It seems unlikely that it's coincidence that the same illnesses are also exponentially increasing in our culture.

Over the recent decade, food allergies have skyrocketed. Children commonly exhibit food reactions from an early age, and it is an increasing phenomenon in Americans of all ages. The effects of GMO's on the digestive system help explain the trend of increasing food sensitivities. Evidence suggests that since GMO's can destroy the intestines of insects, they can also cause damage to, and inflammation of the digestive tracts of people who eat them. When the intestines are inflamed, the cell lining (which normally acts as a strong barrier from the "outside world" to the "inside world") becomes "leaky". This process has been termed "leaky gut", and it allows food particles to bypass the normal absorption process, and move directly into the blood stream. When these food particles (most commonly proteins) interface with the blood, they may trigger an immune response which results in food allergies. If the immune system is continually exposed to these allergens, the reaction may develop into atopic conditions, such as eczema, asthma, ear infection and sinusitis. In other cases, the result may be more serious, like autoimmune diseases, rheumatoid arthritis, Celiac disease and autoimmune thyroiditis.

Even as the FDA and Monsato argue that GMO's are safe, we have hundreds of thousands of

years of history, multitudes of scientific studies, and epidemiological research that repeatedly show us that the safest and healthiest food is real food. Unprocessed, unadulterated food that naturally, organically comes from the earth. One of the best choices you can make for the future of your and your family's health is to shop carefully. Read labels and purchase foods that are pure and non-genetically modified. As of 2013, the FDA does not require labeling of GM food. As a result, consumers must be aware and vigilant. In order to insure that a food is not genetically modified, it must be labeled as USDA Organic or have the "Non-GMO Project" verified seal.

The following foods are currently produced by genetically modified seeds:

- Soy (85% of soybeans grown in the US are genetically modified)
- Corn (40% of US grown corn is GM)
- Cottonseed (for oil)
- Canola (75% of US grown canola is GM)
- Sugar beets (for sugar)
- Papaya
- Zucchini
- Yellow crookneck squash
- Alfalfa

Many of the above GM foods also serve as additives and may be hidden ingredients in many, if not most, processed foods. In addition, any animal that consumes these GMO's (like chickens that eat the corn) may carry the GM toxins.

For more information on choosing safe foods, visit www.NonGMOShoppingGuide.com.