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Hidden GMO Shopping Guide

How to Weed Out GMOs in Your Diet

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So you want to eat greener? If so, you've likely heard some snippets on the debate about genetically modified organisms (GMOs) – plants or animals that have had their genetic makeup altered to select for certain traits. They're cropping up in our food choices more and more. You'll even find GMOs in your tea, dairy (contaminated by GMO-containing corn-based dairy coagulants), artificial sweeteners, baking powder, MSG, xanthan gum, natural and artificial flavourings, and milk powder. But what's the problem with them, and how do you avoid them if you want to?

Photocredit: Flickr / jpalinsad360

The Risks of Eating and Supporting GMOs











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Many environmental and health experts are raising alarm bells. Those concerned about GMOs (sometimes also called genetically engineered or GE foods) point out that they have not been sufficiently tested for the risks they pose to human health and the environment, including:

- The creation of super-pests and super-weeds that are resistant to pesticides

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and antibiotics

- The introduction of GMO-related toxins into the human blood stream
- The increase of pesticide use with GMO crops, resulting in contamination of waterways, soils, and ecosystems

Shopping for GMO-Free Foods

If you're looking to cultivate a diet low in GMO ingredients – not a bad idea even if you haven't had the time to read up on the issue – you'll need to concentrate on looking for organics and avoiding high-risk crops. These tips will guide you through the selection process:

1. Look for Non GMO Project Labeled Foods: This is the only North American non-GMO labelling verification system. Search their verified products database to find options available in your local area or look for their label in your local grocery store.



Photocredit: Flickr / MinnesotaMAM

2. Shop for Certified Organic Ingredients: Anything that is grown in a certified organic fashion must be GMO-free. This includes brewed teas and dairy, and any processed foods. But beware: Even if a product is labeled 100% organic by the USDA, it actually can contain up to 5% non-organic ingredients. Within that 5% there may be lurking GMOs.



Photocredit: Flickr / mailxpressmcmc

3. Avoid Processed Foods that Contain Corn or Soy: 88% of all corn crops and 94% of all soy crops are GMO unless grown organically. This includes the most obvious culprits: canola oil, corn flour, corn syrup, soy protein, soy flour, lecithin, and soy sauce. Since corn and soy byproducts are used in a vast array of processed foods, this often rules convenience foods out if you're trying to eat GMO-free.



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4. Cut Out Sugar and Cottonseed Oil: These are two additional high-risk ingredients you should look for on ingredient lists (though 100% cane sugar should be safe).

5. Look Out for Ingredients Commonly Contaminated with Corn Based GMOs: This can include non-organic dairy, amino acids, vitamin C, lactic acid, molasses, yeast products, sodium ascorbate, citric acid, and sodium citrate.

If you really want to go GMO-free, support regulations in your municipality that will either require GMO labelling or ban them from use on local crops. Unfortunately, in North America, there are few laws in this area. While Mexico has banned the growth of GMO corn and the EU requires GMO products and feed to be labeled, North America has yet to have broad laws like these, (though some local governments are moving in that direction) so it's really up to you to be GMO-Aware.

Resources

Find out even more about how to shop GMO-free with the following resources:

[Non-GMO Shopping Guide >>](#)

[Just Label It >>](#)

[Institute for Responsible Technology >>](#)

[GM Watch >>](#)

[Canadian Biotechnology Action Network >>](#)

About the Author:

Maryruth has been seeking the keys to environmental justice—both at home and at work—for over a decade. Growing up adjacent to wild spaces, Maryruth developed a healthy respect (and whimsical appreciation) for things

non-human, but her practical mind constantly draws her down to earth to ponder tangible solutions to complex eco-problems. With interests that range from green living to green business, sustainable building designs to organic gardening practices, ecosystem restoration to environmental health, Maryruth has been exploring and writing about earth-matters for most of her life. Of special interest is the subject of ecopsychology and the role the natural world plays in the long-term health and well-being of humanity. You can learn more about Maryruth's work by [visiting her site](#).

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