

Healthy Shopping

Stay Informed:

In this article you will find several websites listed that provide the latest research on health-related issues, beginning with: www.mercola.com.

E-newsletters are also available. It's a great way to stay current.

What is Genetically Modified (Engineered) Food?

Genetic Engineering is the practice of altering or disrupting the genetic blueprints of living organisms – plants, animals, humans, microorganisms – then patenting them and selling the resulting gene-food products for profit. The motivation behind this is vast. One aspect is to increase the shelf life of these products. There are currently tomatoes on the supermarket shelves that have fish genes in their DNA. Our bodies are innately intelligent. When we take food in and begin chewing, the parotid gland in our mouths identifies the food and tags it for use in various areas of the body. What is a body to do with genetically altered foods? It isn't set up to utilize them, so much of this altered food isn't tagged. These foods clog the metabolic pathways and can result in allergies, degenerative disease and cancer. There is a 9-page article on www.mercola.com where you can read more about this.

So much of the food in traditional supermarkets is genetically modified. Unless a product label specifically states that it doesn't contain genetically altered foods, it most likely does.

Those little stickers on fruit and vegetables contain different PLU codes depending upon whether the fruit was conventionally grown or organically grown. The PLU code for conventionally grown fruit consists of four numbers while organically-grown fruit contains five numbers, prefaced by the number 9.

For example:

- Conventionally grown PLU: 1022
- Organically grown PLU: 91022

In terms of fruit, another strategy is to avoid hybrid varieties, which are fruits that have been altered by humans. Typically, hybrid fruits contain more sugar than regular varieties so they taste sweeter and can be easily identified because generally they don't contain seeds (seedless watermelon, seedless grapes, etc.). Although there are also seeded hybrid varieties, avoiding seedless fruit is one of the more prominent ways to avoid hybrid fruits.

Avoid Processed Foods

About 70 percent of all processed foods contain genetically modified ingredients, and the food manufacturers themselves often don't know for sure whether or not their products contain GM elements. There are many reasons why processed foods are not optimal for your health, for instance they often contain chemicals and little nutritional value, so avoiding them will not only help you to cut back on the amount of GM foods you are consuming, but will also boost your health.

Food Choices:

Organic foods may be a little more expensive but you get more for your money. Research has shown that organic food contains on average 83 percent more nutrients than conventionally grown produce.

But more importantly, organic foods don't provide you with a dose of pesticides and herbicides which block metabolic processes within the body.

Organic produce is getting easier to find in local grocery stores and is always your best choice. However, it is better to eat conventional produce than no produce at all. Wash it thoroughly and remove the outer layers of leaves or skin. Here is a chart regarding pesticide levels in conventionally grown produce to help you make the best choices possible.

Highest Level of Pesticides		Lowest Level of Pesticides	
Fruits:	Vegetables:	Fruits:	Vegetables:
Peaches	Spinach	Pineapples	Cauliflower
Apples	Bell Peppers	Plantains	Brussels Sprouts
Strawberries	Celery	Mangoes	Asparagus
Nectarines	Potatoes	Bananas	Radishes
Pears	Hot Peppers	Watermelon	Broccoli
Cherries		Plums	Onions
Red Raspberries		Kiwi Fruit	Okra
Imported Grapes		Blueberries	Cabbage
		Papaya	Eggplant
		Grapefruit	
		Avocado	

Healthy Cookware:

In the past, stainless steel was the recommended cooking utensil. Recent research has shown that there is a measurable amount of nickel released in foods. There are two types of stainless steel – one kind is attracted to magnets, the other kind is not. You want to buy only the magnetically-attractive type of stainless steel, which apparently has a very low nickel content and does not leach nickel into food.

Teflon coated cookware releases fluoride and other noxious substances. Teflon can be used safely at low temperatures. Most Teflon pans should be discarded after one year of use. In addition, if a scratch develops on this type of pan aluminum will leach into food since this is the type of metal most often used on Teflon pans. Obviously, aluminum cookware or drinkware should be avoided.

The best bet for cookware would be a ceramic coated metal as ceramic is virtually inert and will not transfer metal ions into the food you cook.

Food Storage:

Store your food and water in glass, not plastic. Plastic containers leach Biphenyl A (BPA) into foods. This chemical exhibits hormone-like properties and imitates the effects of naturally occurring estrogens. Research has shown that this chemical interferes with cell division in the eggs of female mice, resulting in an abnormal number of chromosomes in the eggs. This is the leading cause of mental retardation, neurological problems, and birth defects.

Personal Care and Home Care Products:

www.EWG.org/ This website gives you news about the health and safety of personal care products, cleaning products, and more. You can sign up for their monthly email bulletin to learn more about chemicals and your health.