



Fitness with PJ
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Genetically Modified Foods

A typical kitchen in Delta probably has more genetically modified (GM) foods than you may think it does. With over 30,000 different products on our local grocery store's shelves, you would be hard-pressed to open a cupboard and not find something made from a GM plant.

What exactly is a GM food? A GM food has had its DNA altered by the insertion of foreign genes from a plant, animal, viral or bacterial source. If you are familiar with the "Cut" and "Paste" options on your computer, think of GM foods as having one organism "cut out" and another "pasted" in its place. For example, corn is being modified throughout North America – via the insertion of a soil bacterium – to self-produce a pesticide that makes the corn less vulnerable to insect damage. Less damage equals greater production of crops, which in turn equals more corn on the market for the consumer.

Sounds great, doesn't it? However, it really isn't that simple. While some people believe that GM foods are the answer to the world's food shortages, others believe that they pose a danger to an unsuspecting public.

Consumer groups and scientists have expressed a number of concerns about GM foods including their unknown long-term health risks, the possible creation of new allergens, superweeds and superbugs, and the potential for gene pollution and antibiotic resistance.

About 60 percent of our processed foods contain some genetic modification. This is largely due to the prevalence of soy in processed foods which, next to corn, is the largest modified food. Not that we'd be aware of that, though. The manufacturers are not required by law to label GM foods. Where labeling is mandatory in Europe, a similar bill in our Parliament back in 2001 was voted down.

For a list of GMO-free foods, Green Peace released its own shoppers' list for consumers (<http://gmoguide.greenpeace.ca/>) that details everything from baby food to vegetarian and meat alternatives.

Barring that, if you want to avoid GM foods, it really just takes some common sense. Avoid products with food labels longer than your arm (the more processed a food is, the more certain you can be that there is a GM ingredient in there) and eat organic fruits and vegetables. You will also want to pay attention to what you eat eats too. Our

livestock is also fed GM corn and oats. Eat the cow that is fed GM feed and you are also eating what he had for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

A Sample of Foods without GMO's

(Source: Green Peace Shopper's Guide, for a complete listing log onto <http://gmoguide.greenpeace.ca/>)

Snack Foods	Beverages	Cereals & Breakfast Foods	Condiments
Clif Bars	Happy Planet	Barbara's Bakery Cereals	Anke Kruse Organics Ketchups
Luna Bars	Imagine Foods Rice Dream	Bob's Red Mill 10 Grain Organic & Organic Corn Grits	Amano Foods Soy Sauce
Arrowhead Mills Organic Popcorn	Cascadian Farms Juices	Nature's Path	Eden Foods - all
Kettle Chips	Knudsen's Green Juice	Sunny Boy Hot Cereal	Thai Kitchen
Que Pasa Tortilla Chips	Lundberg Farms Rice drink	Arrowhead Mills	Miur Green BBQ Sauce & Ketchup
Carr's Bscuits	Soylutions	PC Organics	Spectrum Organics margarine
Barbara's Bakery products	Muir Green Tomato Juice & Veggie Juice	Whole Foods Brand	Whole foods brand