

## How To Avoid GMO Foods

Avoid the big four, which has become five now: The highly genetically engineered crops are **soy, corn, canola** and **cottonseed**. Add **sugar beets**, which are now becoming GMO.

Most blended oils in North America contain canola and cottonseed oils. Use extra virgin olive oil instead. Avoid all soy products and oils as well. The healthy alternative is usually not so healthy after all, since most soy is GMO unless it is specifically labeled non-GMO.

Most corn is GMO. Items like corn flakes and corn chips are from GM corn. Corn based products, corn starch, corn oil, corn syrup, and high fructose corn syrup appear on the ingredients labels of many processed foods. Corn in various forms is prevalent in the vast fast food supply that dominates our culture.

GMO corn is fed to cattle and other livestock. If you eat beef, pork or fowl, you are probably a second hand consumer of GM corn. So dig a little deeper and buy grass or alfalfa fed or free range livestock meats only.

Sugar beets are added to the big four to make it five. Now more and more sugar beets are GMO. Sugar from sugar beets is less expensive than cane sugar for refined sugar; therefore, it is popular with food processing groups. So if you haven't stopped using sugar or products with refined sugar, you might want to reconsider now.

A handy guide for consumers are **PLU codes** that are labeled or stamped onto fruits and vegetables. PLU stands for Price Look Up. The PLU codes are for input into electronic cash registers to determine prices for bulk items, such as apples and cabbage. The codes identify exactly what the item is with its current pricing, while giving the consumer a handy tag for identifying GMO produce.

Each PLU code has five digits. If the first digit is a 9, the item is organic. If it is an 8, it is GMO! Conventionally grown produce has a 0 for the first digit, but usually the 0 is dropped. So most conventionally grown produce will actually have only 4 digits on the PLU tag if you don't see a 0 at the beginning. The 8 gives you the worst of two worlds, GMO and heavy chemical spraying!

Those are your three main categories. PLU codes do not usually appear on packaged produce or items such as string beans that are too small to label or stamp.

Obviously, buying organic and from local farmers is ideal. Forget convenience. Buy bulk and eschew packaged foods. So what if you have to soak legumes the night before cooking them. If you buy locally, through a local health food store or at a farmers' market, you can determine by direct communication how the crops were raised.

Need more details? You can download a free, very detailed Non GMO Shopping Guide (pdf) created by The Center for Food Safety here: <http://www.responsibletechnology.or...>