

GMOs Are Safe. Are We Sure?

Periodically I like to challenge myself and take a step back and question my beliefs about [GMOs \(genetically modified organisms\)](#). I have always been comfortable with GMO studies I have read and researched. But I would be lying if I said that I never questioned my beliefs about biotechnology when I hear how strong other people's convictions are about their harmfulness. So, are we sure GMOs are safe?

Yes.



Corn Plant Research Conducted at Danforth Plant Science Center

Believe me, there is no shortage of anti-GMO information. I wanted to see for myself the research behind the anti-GMO movement. I emailed GMOFREEUSA and asked for a list of their independent GMO research. This was their reply:

We only research and compile peer-reviewed independent scientific research. We don't conduct our own studies – at least not at the moment. The list of studies is in the GMO Science section of our website: <http://gmofreeusa.org/gmos-are-top/gmo-science/>.

Are GMOs Safe? What does science say?

I immediately fired up my web browser and headed over to gmofreeusa.org. Their list is quite long and prefaced by this statement:

This compilation is a sample of the scientific references including over 1400 studies, surveys, and analyses that suggest various adverse impacts and potential adverse impacts of genetically engineered (GE/GMO) crops, foods and related pesticides.

Their words are chosen very carefully. The word “suggest” and “potential” are not definitive. I was expecting a statement such as GMOs cause this . . . Their obscure statements are similar to me saying, “If I walk down to my mailbox (which is located at the end of my driveway on a road) to retrieve the mail, I have the “potential” of getting hit by a car.” The words “suggest” and “potential” gives their research a lot of leeway in my opinion.

I proceeded to look at some of the exact research in their list. One of the reports stated that Monsanto developed corn that contained toxins which cause organ failure in rats and adverse effects in pregnant women.

Hmmmm. . .

This sounded serious. Upon further research, I find out these claims are **false** according to the well-known site [Snopes](http://Snopes.com). Snopes.com is an Internet source that looks at specific claims and determines if these claims are accurate. And no, Snopes does not and never has received any monies from companies or industries – they are an independent entity, who receives their funding from advertising.

Other than Snopes, how does one know if a research report is true? How will I know if GMOs are safe? For the non-scientific person (such as myself), there are some basic requirements to determine if a study is respected and an approved science research study. Authentic scientific research needs to be peer-reviewed and able to be duplicated. In addition, one must also determine biases such as who is funding the research and does this funding affect the results of the study? Check this [link to learn more about evaluating biases.](#)

Correlation vs. Causation

Another common argument I hear often is the “[correlation is causation](#).” We need to be very careful about that analysis. Just because two things seem to correlate, or happen at about the

same time, does not mean one caused the other. Correlation is an example of pseudoscience.



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Biofortified.org and [GMO Answers](http://GMOAnswers.com) are good websites to reference. Biology Fortified, Inc. is an independent, non-profit organization devoted to providing factual information and fostering discussion about issues in biology, with a particular emphasis on plant genetics and genetic engineering in agriculture. They list GMO research studies, including independent studies. And let me just state that not all the studies are positive to GMO, although the majority are. Here is a good [synopsis article about these studies](#). [GMO Answers](http://GMOAnswers.com) is also the resource where anyone can ask GMO-related questions. The independent experts who answer consumer questions are not paid by GMO Answers to answer questions. Experts donate their time to answer questions in their area of expertise for the website. They do so because they are passionate about helping the public better understand GMOs and how our food is grown.

Most importantly, no matter how you do it, it is good to take a step back and look at all your beliefs with a critical eye. It's up to each of us to do the research, to learn, be open-minded and not get sucked into certain celebrities' positions and certain high-profile social media sites such as Food Babe. The Internet has allowed people, such as Food Babe (who has no relevant credentials), to open a new "information-based" business. Many of her arguments fall in the line of

hydrogen (H₂O) is part of the makeup of water. Hydrogen is also used to make gas, therefore, water must not be good for us because hydrogen in gas is highly flammable.

People fall for these ludicrous analogies and her charisma. Her gain? *Money and notoriety*. I am not saying everything she is doing is bad, but we really need to look at her analogies with a critical eye because many of them are misleading. And the bottom line is GMOs are safe.

I want to make it perfectly clear that I am not against non-GMO—I am just against the misinformation about them.

All I ask is to please do your own research.

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