

THE CENTER FOR FOOD SAFETY'S

Pocket Shoppers'
Guide to
Genetically Engineered
Foods



EXCERPTED FROM

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

Genetic Engineering and the Secret Changes in Your Food

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INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Which supermarket foods are genetically engineered? This is probably the most urgent question the public has about these novel foods.

This Quick Guide is designed as an accessible way for you to reclaim your right to know about the foods you are buying. It will help you identify the GE foods that are in your supermarket. These tips will help you find and avoid GE foods and ingredients. With this information in hand, you can shop with confidence, knowing that you won’t unwittingly expose your family to the hazards of GE food.

It’s helpful, when trying to identify GE food in your supermarket, to keep three general categories of food in mind: 1) Products in your supermarket that are not genetically engineered and contain no genetically engineered ingredients; 2) Food made from animals that are not genetically engineered, but may have been raised on genetically engineered feed or treated with genetically engineered hormones; and 3) Whole foods that are genetically engineered or processed foods that are likely to contain genetically engineered ingredients.

1) Foods that have not been genetically engineered

Fortunately, avoiding many genetically engineered foods is simple. For example, most whole foods for sale—almost all fruits and vegetables as well as staples such as rice, wheat, and other grains, and beans—are not genetically engineered. You can purchase these foods and products without concern.



2) Foods derived from animals fed or treated with GE products

The good news is GE animals, including fish, are not commercialized. So you can purchase these products without the fear of genetic tampering; furthermore, this Guide will help you identify and avoid meat, fish and dairy products derived from animals that have been fed or treated with GE products. This includes processed foods that possibly contain milk-derived ingredients, like whey and milk powders or solids, from cows given the GE hormone rbGH (or rbST).

3) Genetically engineered foods and ingredients

Unfortunately, certain widely used crops have been genetically altered. Of most concern are the “Big Four”: corn, soy, canola, and cotton. These Big Four GE crops—especially their byproducts—find their way into the majority of packaged foods in our supermarkets. Some of the most common genetically engineered Big Four ingredients in processed foods are:

- CORN: corn oil, corn meal, cornstarch, corn syrup
- SOY: soybean oil, soy flour, soy protein, soy lecithin
- CANOLA: canola oil
- COTTON: cottonseed oil



GE-Free Grocery Store Brands

*Trader Joe’s brands
Whole Foods’ 365 brands
Wild Oats’ brands*

Processed foods typically contain ingredients derived from the Big Four GE crops, especially corn and soy. But these secret derivatives are often undercover behind complex or ambiguous names. Some of these derivatives are also created using GE microorganisms. Look out for the common ingredients listed below, and remember that the surest way to avoid GE-derived ingredients in processed foods is to buy certified organic.

Corn

- Corn flour, meal, oil, starch, gluten, and syrup
- Sweeteners such as fructose, dextrose, and glucose
- Modified food starch*
- Mono- and diglycerides*
- Vitamin C (ascorbic acid)*

Soybeans

- Soy flour, lecithin, protein, oil, isolate, and isoflavones
- Vegetable oil*
- Vegetable protein*
- Vitamin E (tocopherols)*

Canola

- Canola oil (also called rapeseed oil)

Cotton

- Cottonseed oil

*May be derived from other sources

Fortunately, circumventing genetically modified food in the grain-and-bean aisle is simple. Other than corn, no GE grains are sold on the market. Most pasta is made from a few ingredients.

Quick Hints—conventional

- Look for 100-percent wheat pasta, couscous, rice, quinoa, oats, barley, sorghum, and dried beans (except soybeans). Watch out for additives and other potential GE ingredients in the seasoning packets of boxed pasta and rice-based meals.

Quick Hints—organic

- Choose certified-organic brands or GMO-free brands of corn pasta, soybeans, and polenta.



GE-Free

Eden certified organic grains
Bob's Red Mill (organic line)
Vita-Spelt pasta
Annie's Natural Pasta

PACKAGED MEALS

GE-Free

Annie's Homegrown certified organic macaroni & cheese
Lundberg Farms Rice Sensations

Seeds of Change certified organic boxed meals
Casbah (Hain-Celestial)
Fantastic Foods
Amy's Kitchen

May Contain GE Ingredients

Kraft Macaroni & Cheese meals
Betty Crocker meals (General Mills)
Lipton meal packets (Unilever)
Pasta Roni and Rice-A-Roni meals (Quaker)
Knorr (Unilever)
Near East (Quaker)

Fortunately, plenty of healthy, non-GE options are available in this category. Unless labeled explicitly, corn, soybean, cottonseed, and canola oils probably contain genetically engineered products. Ketchup usually incorporates corn syrup; and mayonnaise and most conventional salad dressings use soy, cottonseed, or canola oil as a major ingredient.

Quick Hints—conventional

- Choose pure olive, coconut, sesame, sunflower, safflower, almond and peanut oils (not products mixed with canola, soy, cottonseed, or corn oil). Look for preserves, jams, and jellies with sugar, not corn syrup. Look for conventional nut butters without added soy, corn, cottonseed, or canola oil.

Quick Hints—organic

- Choose products identified as "certified organic" or labeled "GE-free."

GE-Free

Bragg's liquid amino
Spectrum oils and dressings
Drew's salad dressing
Annie's
Nasoya
Muir Glen organic tomato ketchup
Maranatha Nut Butters
I.M. Health™ SoyNut Butters

May Contain GE Ingredients

Mazola
Crisco (Smucker's)

Pam (ConAgra)
Wesson (ConAgra)
Heinz
Wish-Bone (Unilever)
Kraft condiments and dressings
Del Monte
Hellmann's (Unilever)
Smucker's (except their "Simply 100% Fruit" line of preserves)
Skippy (Unilever)
Peter Pan (ConAgra)

Shopping for soups and sauces can be challenging. Many are highly processed and include ingredients that can be genetically engineered, so give the ingredient lists close attention.

Quick Hints—conventional

- The fewer ingredients and flavors a product contains, the less likely it is to harbor genetically engineered components.

Quick Hints—organic

- Choose certified-organic brands and GMO- or GE-free brands.

SOUPS

GE-Free

Walnut Acres certified organic
ShariAnn's Organics
Imagine Natural
Amy's Soups
Fantastic Foods
Health Valley/Westbrae Natural/Hain

May Contain GE Ingredients

Campbell's products
(including Healthy Request, Chunky, Simply Home, and Pepperidge Farm)
Hormel products
Progresso products (General Mills)
Chef Boyardee, Healthy Choice (ConAgra)

SAUCES/SALSAS

GE-Free

Seeds of Change certified-organic pasta sauce
Walnut Acres certified-organic pasta sauce
Muir Glen Organic pasta sauce & salsa
Green Mountain certified-organic salsa
Annie's Natural

May Contain GE Ingredients

Ragú (Unilever)
Prego (Campbell's)
Classico (Heinz)
Bertolli (Unilever)
Healthy Choice (ConAgra)
Hunt's (ConAgra)
Del Monte
Chi-Chi's (Hormel)
Old El Paso (General Mills)
Pace (Campbell's)

Finding GE-free vegetables, beans, tomatoes, and seafood is easy; however, canned goods that are flavored or highly processed offer more of a challenge. When shopping for canned fruits and meats and flavored sauces, look for items marked “certified organic” and brands that don’t contain potential GE ingredients.

Quick Hints—conventional

- Search for canned vegetable/bean/tomato products packed only in water and salt. Common GE ingredients in canned foods are: corn syrup; corn, soy, canola, and cottonseed oils; and cornstarch.

- Other good choices are plain beans (except soybeans) packed in water; plain vegetables (except corn) packed in water; stewed or crushed tomatoes; 100-percent tomato paste; seafood packed in its own juices, water, or olive oil; and mixed vegetables (excluding corn). Additionally, some canned and flavored tomato sauces contain the Big Four ingredients.

Quick Hints—organic

- As always, look for certified-organic brands and GMO- or GE-free brands.



GE-Free

Westbrae certified organic beans
ShariAnn's certified organic beans
Amy's Kitchen
Annie's Natural
Yves Veggie Cuisine (Hain Celestial)

May Contain GE Ingredients

Chef Boyardee
Dinty Moore, Stag, Hormel (Hormel)
Franco-American (Campbell's)