

How to Steer Clear of GMOs for Health, Part 2

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Q&A with Melissa Diane Smith, author of *Going Against GMOs*

Last week in [Part 1 of my interview](#) with Melissa Diane Smith, author of the new book *Going Against GMOs*, we covered the basics of GMOs, the serious issues they pose, and some of the main challenges and guidelines for avoiding them. In this concluding part of our interview, we highlight more in-depth nutrition information in Melissa's book.



In Part 1 of our interview, Melissa, you mentioned that it's important for people to think beyond just non-GMO. In your book, you mention that people who are eating non-GMO are making similar mistakes to people who first began eating gluten-free.

Can you explain these important issues?

Thank you for asking that question, Ann Louise, and for understanding how important it is that we as nutritionists get this message out! *If we focus on eating non-GMO and nothing else, we'll likely develop health problems that don't have anything to do with GMOs.* That's because many foods that are labeled non-GMO are non-GMO junk foods that set us up for disease. They may contain non-GMO versions of sugar, corn, soy, and canola oil, but those foods, whether GMO or not, are cheap filler foods that fatten people and contribute to disease over the long term.

As the first nutritionist to write a full-length book about non-GMO eating, I want people to know that the typical advice to eat non-GMO is to avoid the top genetically modified products, unless they are labeled non-GMO or organic. Unfortunately, that advice doesn't go far enough. The nutrition guidelines we individually need to promote health are also what we collectively need to pursue to change our agriculture system away from producing outrageous amounts of foods, such as sugar, corn, soy, and wheat, that keep us unhealthy. In addition to avoiding GMOs, the six Eating for Optimal Health Eating Guidelines I discuss in my book are:

1. Avoid sugar and other sweeteners (whether GMO or not).
2. Ditch artificial sweeteners (whether GMO or not).
3. Go against the grain: Eat more non-starchy vegetables, and avoid wheat and gluten.
4. Be wary of corn, soy, or milk products (whether GMO or not).
5. Steer clear of vegetable oils and trans-fats (whether GMO or not).
6. Limit exposure to chemicals, including pesticides and food additives, and eat as "clean" a diet as possible.

Tell us about your approach to food as it relates to a GMO-free diet.

The same nutrition approach I emphasized in *Going Against the Grain*—to eat many more non-starchy vegetables and, to a lesser extent, fruits in place of processed grain-based convenience foods like bread, crackers, and cereals—is the best strategy for avoiding the most common direct sources of GMOs. Those are the Big Five: corn; soy; sugar; canola oil; and cottonseed oil.

As of right now, there are only five (but soon-to-be six) produce items that may be genetically modified—they are: sweet corn, zucchini, yellow squash, potatoes, papaya from Hawaii and China, and starting next year, apples. Avoid those foods or seek out organic versions. Any other produce items that you buy are naturally non-GMO, and loading up on vegetables is protective of health in a wide variety of ways! According to one recent study, each daily portion of fresh vegetables we eat reduces the overall risk of death by 16 percent.

It's so refreshing to see the topic of GMOs written about from a nutritionist's point of view!

Can you tell us what is in *Going Against GMOs* that isn't available in other books about GMOs?

I wrote the book to provide nutrition advice at every step in the process of going against GMOs.

The book has chapters on: emotionally and practically preparing for the challenges involved in steering clear of GMOs; basic non-GMO guidelines; eating for optimal health guidelines; targeted advice for those on various therapeutic diets; and non-GMO shopping and eating out advice. It also contains more than 45 non-GMO (and gluten-free) recipes. And it even has a chapter on educating children and teenagers about GMOs. (The interesting thing I found when researching for that chapter is that sometimes children learn about GMOs first and end up educating their parents!).

There's also information on non-GMO supplements and organic and non-GMO dog and cat foods, and I explain why we should use the information in the book to act now and not be "on hold" waiting for GMO labeling to occur.

Though I specialize in gluten-free and grain-free diets, I wrote *Going Against GMOs* so that people on any type of diet (or on no special diet) could easily understand the serious issues associated with GMOs and take action to protect their health and the health of our environment and planet. Thank you so very much, Ann Louise, for allowing me to be a guest on your blog to spread the word about this very important food topic for all of us.

I enjoyed having the opportunity to interview you, Melissa, and encourage readers who would like to learn more about your book to visit your *Going Against GMOs* book page at

www.goingagainstgmos.com.

