



## **EMMA SUTHERLAND**

Your Health Partner – Integrating Complementary Medicine into Your Life  
ND. BHIth Sc (Comp Med). MATMS, MNHAA

### **What is GM food?**

Genetic modification (GM) is a technology that takes genes from one life form and introduces them into another. Using GM, genes from bacteria, viruses, plants and animals are inserted into crops such as soybeans, canola, corn and cotton to grow commercial crops. These GM (genetically modified) crops (also called genetically engineered crops) are processed into foods and sold in our stores.

### **What is wrong with GM crops?**

There is growing scientific evidence that GM crops are harmful to the environment and may be harmful to human health. Once GM crops are released into the environment they can't be recalled. As living organisms, they can reproduce and pollute indefinitely.

### **Is GM food safe to eat?**

Although there have been no long-term studies into the impacts of GM food on human health, available studies give cause for serious concern. For example, a peer-reviewed study released in 2007 shows evidence of liver and kidney toxicity in rats fed an approved variety of GM corn. No follow-up studies have been conducted to determine the implications for human health of these results.

### **Aren't GM foods labelled already?**

No. Under current labelling laws in Australia and New Zealand, very few GM foods are labelled. The following foods do not require GM labelling:

- highly processed products such as oils, starches and sugars from GM crops
- meat, milk, cheese or eggs from animals fed GM feed
- food from restaurants and takeaways.

### **Do other countries label GM food?**

Yes. In Europe, highly processed GM ingredients such as oil, starches and sugars have to be labelled, as does animal feed. GM food served in restaurants and takeaways also requires labelling. This shows that it is both practical and inexpensive to label GM foods.

### **Why is labelling particularly important now?**

Until now the majority of food in Australia has been GM-free. However, this year GM food crops are being introduced to Australia, with GM canola grown in New South Wales and Victoria for the first time. Canola is used in many foods and in animal feed. Millions of Australians will be eating GM food without realising it.



## EMMA SUTHERLAND

Your Health Partner – Integrating Complementary Medicine into Your Life  
ND. BHlth Sc (Comp Med). MATMS, MNHAA

### Why do consumers want GM food labelled?

Polls show that 92% of Australians want GM food labelled. Consumers want GM food labelled for a wide range of health, environmental and ethical reasons.

**I personally refuse to eat GM foods** – I don't believe that there has been enough research on the effect of long term consumption in humans. To me, it just doesn't seem very natural to eat a food that has had its DNA modified in a lab. By choosing to eat organic, I know that I am avoiding GM foods.