In 1998 Starlink modified corn was approved by America’s EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) for animal feed but not for human consumption as there were concerns that the corn contained a protein, which could cause dangerous allergic reactions. Two years later the Starlink corn turned up in many Kraft products including one of their big sellers, Taco Bell corn shells. Many people consumed this corn and several reported very serious allergic reactions. In consequence there was a major recall of the product and the EPA said federal tests concluded that genetically modified corn didn’t cause allergies. So...

**Should humans consume genetically modified food?**

A study by the Italian National Institute of Research on Food and Nutrition showed that, when consumed by mice GM (Genetically Modified) corn caused significant immune system changes related to allergic and inflammatory responses. Sold by Monsanto, the corn contains a gene that produces the toxic “Bt” chemical pesticide in every cell. The aim of this is so that pesticides are not needed when growing the corn but it also means that when eating the corn you have no choice but to consume the pesticide. In North America there have been rises in allergies and immune disorders leaving the concern that the corn is linked to this.

A second study commissioned by the Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety provoked an equally compelling question; are GM foods the missing link to decreasing fertility? The study by The University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna was one of the very few long-term feeding studies done on GM corn. GM Monsanto’s GM corn was fed to two mice, which were then mated. The results in the third and fourth litters showed that there was a statistically significant reduction in the size and number of rat pups. Similarly when four successive generations of mice from the original parents to the great grandchildren were also fed GM corn, the outcome was that the size and number of offspring was much less compared to other mice that were fed on non-GM corn. Does this mean that the consumption of GM foods by humans is the missing link to why there has been a trend of decreasing fertility? But...

**What are the benefits from consuming GM foods?**

The short answer is; the pathetic amounts of arguments that are pro GM foods are easily over blown by many counter arguments that are based on facts from scientific studies.
One point pro GM food is that, with plant engineering it’s *sometimes possible to create pest-tolerant plants* which safely target a specific pest and so reducing pesticide use. It is also claimed by this source that plants, which have been modified in this way, are safe for human consumption! “What is that based on?” I ask. This point is not valid because not enough is known about what other organisms could be harmed by a certain transferred gene (the pesticide). Also there is not enough known about whether plants with pesticides built in are safe for human consumption. Other flimsy arguments were that GM foods in theory could be used to fight hunger in poorer nations as the food could be modified to grow quicker and in non-optimal conditions.

Genetically engineered food can be naturally pest resistant and so reduce the need (notice not eliminate completely) for additional chemicals or pesticides to be added.

Many companies such as Monsanto rely on loopholes in government systems such as the fact that the FDA (Food and Drug association) litmus test on the safety of GM foods was based on a policy that states ‘genetically modified foods are substantially equivalent to non-GM foods.’ This makes me wonder what happened to all the evidence from studies such as stated above. Why would the government make a policy that effectively ensures any test to show the non-safety of GM foods has to comply with the fact they already are? If there is a policy that states GM foods are equivalent to non-GM foods, then why is there so much evidence and testing to prove the contrary?

- [www.maizecdna.org/outreach/tpe.html](http://www.maizecdna.org/outreach/tpe.html)
- [www.webmd.com/food-recipes/features/are-biotech-foods-safe-to-eat](http://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/features/are-biotech-foods-safe-to-eat)
- [www.huffingtonpost.com/jeffery-smith/will-genetically-modifiedb145520.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeffery-smith/will-genetically-modifiedb145520.html)

In my opinion Genetically Modified foods should most definitely not be consumed, as there is simply not enough information known about the possible adverse effects. GM food is too new for us to know if it will affect the human body. Modifying the basic essence of food may also alter the dynamics of it in un-known ways.