

## Reviewing food labels: What do they really tell us?

The debate over the safety of genetically modified foods came into the spotlight when Chipotle, the popular Mexican food chain, announced it was working to remove ingredients that contain genetically modified organisms, or GMOs, from its menu.

GMO-free is just one of the latest in a long list of food labels that includes gluten-free and organic items. Often they come at quite a markup, despite a shortage of health studies showing a clear benefit.

Just as concerning is that some of these labels can be slapped on packaging with little regulation by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

### **GMO or no**

The good news for consumers who are troubled by genetic engineering is that, at least from a human health perspective, they seem safe so far. "From the data that are available, there doesn't seem to be any concern with respect to human health and GMOs," said Alice Lichtenstein, the Stanley N. Gershoff professor of nutrition science and policy at Tufts University.

The FDA has reviewed 96 GMO-free plants, as of 2013, as part of the agency's process to ensure that new products, whether genetically modified or not, are safe.

### **'Natural,' 'nutritious' and 'wholesome,' whatever they mean**

Who doesn't want foods with these good-for-you-sounding labels? Just about everybody looks for these labels, which adorn cereal boxes, juice drink bottles and syrup jars. But almost [nobody knows](#) what they actually mean. A [2010 report](#) by the Center for Science in the Public Interest described how consumers think foods with these labels are healthier when, in fact, they often are not.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: ['Natural' and other food labels that sound legitimate but may not be](#)**