

Vitamin A prevents night blindness, yes, but does Golden Rice?

Journalist Will Saletan set the Internet afire yesterday with [his long-form piece](#) against anti-GMO activists. A key component of his argument is that Golden Rice, which has been genetically engineered to contain Vitamin A precursors, has not been welcomed by anti-GMO crowd with open arms. But what Saletan fails to mention is that the science is still out on whether golden rice is actually the boon it's claimed to be.

The best evidence we have is that the compounds in the rice are converted to Vitamin A in the human system, but this isn't enough to say that it's healthy — Saletan makes a lot of hay out of the fact that anti-GMO activists often can't point to specific known harms, but instead must rely on fears of unknown future problems. The body's processes for gleaned nutrition from a particular food are highly complex, and depend on many different factors such as the ratios in which the nutrients are presented to the body, the form in which they greet your digestive system, and the composition of your gut biome.

While nobody denies that balanced whole-food diets prevent negative health effects of Vitamin A deficiency, the evidence is lacking for Golden Rice: Although studies have indeed shown that some biomarkers improve upon ingestion of Golden Rice, no studies to date show that eating Golden Rice actually prevents night blindness. Even industry mouthpieces say [this](#). So while it's a promising start that Golden Rice consumption is associated with higher levels of serum retinol, until we have evidence that this actually leads to less night blindness, the benefits are still theoretical, and the sensible response is to Golden Rice is a studied skepticism.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: We Don't Need Golden Rice