

Dietitians challenge fears of 'excessive chemicals' in conventional foods

[Editor's note: Mindy Hermann, MBA, RDN, is president of Hermann Communications in Somers, New York; Michael P. Holsapple, PhD, is director and endowed chair at the Center for Research on Ingredient Safety (CRIS), and professor at Michigan State University ; Heather E. Dover, RDN, is a research assistant at CRIS at Michigan State University.]

Clean. Free-from. Natural. Organic. Non-GMO. These marketing buzzwords featured on product packaging communicate to consumers that the products are healthful and better for the environment. Today's shoppers often rely on these claims more than nutrient content.

However, buzzwords can backfire when they foster fear and scare consumers away from healthful, accessible, and affordable food choices. For example, the fear of ingesting pesticides often prevents people from eating produce if they can't afford organic varieties. Fear of GMOs may steer them away from healthful foods that aren't marked non-GMO. Unfamiliar names for vitamins in fortified cereal can lead to choosing a less nutritious, unfortified brand.

"The food and nutrition environment has changed in recent years from proactive to reactive," says Leah McGrath, RD, LDN, a retail dietitian at Ingles Markets in Asheville, North Carolina. "Questions I receive during talks, via e-mail, or on social media are almost all fear-based, and the level of food fears is overwhelming."

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Food Fears](#)