

Podcast: GMOs to blame for coronavirus? Catching COVID-19 twice; junk studies fuel biotech skepticism

As the world continues to struggle against the rapidly spreading coronavirus, anti-GMO activists are blaming crop biotechnology for the pandemic. Early research indicates that you can't be infected twice by COVID-19. The virus, so far anyway, isn't mutating rapidly, raising hopes that a one-time vaccine could help quell the outbreak. Poorly designed studies claiming GMOs are dangerous continue to pass peer-review, but the scientific community is beginning to fight back.

On this episode of Science Facts and Fallacies, geneticist Kevin Folta and GLP editor Cameron English break down the science behind the latest headlines to keep you informed.

No reason to worry about being infected with the coronavirus twice, monkey study suggests

Concerns have emerged that COVID-19 patients can be reinfected after recovering from the disease. While scientists continue to gather evidence, the research so far indicates that [reinfection is unlikely](#) for most people. It appears that individuals who test positive after recovering from the disease may have yet to clear the virus from their bodies after initial exposure, but they have not been infected again. Some patients, however, may not be able to [mount an effective immune response](#) if exposed to [the virus](#) a second time.

The coronavirus isn't mutating quickly. That could mean a one-time vaccination against it

A coronavirus vaccine is at least a year and a half away, and some experts say [probably even further](#) than that. But the hurried efforts to develop immunizations against SARS-COV-2 could be aided by the fact that the virus isn't mutating rapidly, unlike the flu, which can change drastically from year to year. A single coronavirus vaccine may therefore protect us from infection for many years, or possibly for life. As the virus continues to spread, however, it could continue mutating and complicate our attempts to develop a vaccine.

Viewpoint: Anti-biotech activist Vandana Shiva says GMO soy caused the COVID-19 pandemic. Here's why she's wrong

You thought the coronavirus started in Wuhan, after jumping from animals to humans? Well, you've been fooled, says prominent anti-biotech activist Vandana Shiva. Viruses from GMO soy used as animal feed have hybridized with viruses in the guts of pigs to create "super viruses" like SARS-COV-2, Shiva says. If this hypothesis sounds ridiculous to you, that's because it is. There is no evidence to substantiate such an origin for the novel coronavirus.

Viewpoint: How 'fraudulent, poorly designed, and biased' studies sow doubt about GMO, gene-edited crops

The scientific consensus on crop biotechnology indicates that GMO and gene-edited plants are unlikely to cause any health issues. Nonetheless, this conclusion is continually challenged by activists who distrust

mainstream research and the academic institutions that do it. Their effort has been aided by the publication of low-quality and sometimes outright fraudulent studies that claim GMO and gene-edited crops pose a threat to human health. What are scientists doing to combat this pollution of the peer-reviewed literature?

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