

What are the dangers of Genetic Engineering?

Side effects — genetic engineering is like performing heart surgery with a shovel. Scientists do not yet understand living systems completely enough to perform DNA surgery without creating mutations which could be harmful to the environment and our health. They are experimenting with GE very delicately, yet they use powerful forces of nature, without full knowledge of the repercussions. As a result 37 people died, 1500 were partially paralyzed, and 5000 more were temporarily disabled by a syndrome that was finally linked to tryptophan made by genetically-engineered bacteria.

Widespread crop failure — genetic engineers intend to profit by genetically engineered seeds. This means that, when a farmer plants genetically engineered seeds, all the seeds have identical genetic structure. As a result, if a fungus, a virus, or a pest develops which can attack this particular crop, there could be widespread crop failure.

Threat to the entire food supply — insects, birds, and wind can carry genetically altered seeds into neighboring fields and beyond. Pollen from transgenic plants can cross-pollinate with genetically natural crops and wild relatives. All crops, organic and non-organic, are vulnerable to contamination from cross.

Toxins — genetic engineering can cause unexpected mutations in an organism, which can create new and higher levels of toxins in foods.

Allergic reactions — genetic engineering can also produce unforeseen and unknown allergens in foods.

Antibiotic resistant bacteria — genetic engineers use antibiotic-resistance genes to mark genetically engineered cells. It means that genetically engineered crops contain genes which confer resistance to antibiotics. These genes can be picked up by bacteria that can infect us.

Increased use of herbicides — scientists estimate that plants genetically engineered to be herbicide-resistant will greatly increase the amount of herbicide use. Farmers, knowing that their crops can tolerate the herbicides, will use them more liberally.

Ecological damage — the influence of a genetically engineered organism on the food chain can damage the local ecology. The new organism can compete successfully with wild relatives, causing unforeseen changes in the environment.

Gene pollution cannot be repaired! Once genetically engineered organisms, bacteria and viruses are released into the environment it is impossible to contain or recall them. Unlike chemical or nuclear contamination, negative effects are irreversible.