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**2015 08.04 Health Matters  
Corn on the Cob**

**This is Health Matters, discussing corn on the cob.**

**Steam it, add butter and salt, and enjoy. Because corn on the cob is good for you. Some call it a nutritional powerhouse. And it is, unless you need to count calories, or you're on a diabetes diet. If you do have diabetes, caution is advised. Corn can make glucose levels do a high jump.**

**Corn is both a vegetable and a grain. Eaten straight off the cob, it's a vegetable. And like other fresh vegetables, it's rich in anti-oxidants. Which we need in abundance. Because "oxidants" are cell-damaging by-products of digestion and metabolism. Luckily fruits and vegetables and grains protect the body from the damaging impact of these by-products.**

**Taken as a grain, as in tortillas or corn bread or popcorn, corn is considered by some to be a better source of anti-oxidants than wheat, rice or oats. Corn's anti-oxidants include vitamin C, vitamin E and carotinoids. (car-**OUGH**T-tin-oids -- is if you were saying carrot, with the accent on the second syllable).**

**Carotinoids are pigments found in a variety of plants, and in ome fungi and bacteria. Mainly of red, yellow and orange hue. Carotinoids help**

prevent heart disease, eye disease, and cancer. Also, the body can convert carotinoids into vitamin A, which is essential to eye function, healthy skin, teeth, skeletal and soft tissue. And, mucus membranes.

Vitamin A helps the eyes to see under conditions of low light. Which is interesting because two of corn's antioxidants protect eye cells against bright light -- namely the damaging high-energy blue light we mentioned last week. The American Optometric Association reports that the anti-oxidants in corn help prevent macular degeneration and cataracts.

Corn on the cob is a good source of fiber. In fact most of the fiber in corn is insoluble. This is an advantage because it helps rid your body of toxins. Fiber attaches itself to toxins and ushers them out of the large intestine. Fiber also alleviates constipation.

According to [livestrong.com](http://livestrong.com), corn on the cob may help lower blood pressure. This is because potassium is a factor in regulating blood pressure. One cup of yellow corn contains 392 milligrams of potassium, and 1 cup of white corn contains 416 milligrams. The American Heart Association recommends 4,700 milligrams a day. Humans need a lot of potassium and they need it every day.

Corn can help meet your daily need for potassium, whether it's yellow or white. However, high potassium may not be good for older adults and people with kidney disease. If you're not sure about your potassium needs, check in with your doctor.

There is another caution about corn on the cob. Or any corn for that matter. Simply put, if the corn is not organic, the chances are it's genetically modified. The most recent figures from the federal

**government indicate that 89% of the U.S. corn crop has been genetically modified. In other words, corn is a major GMO crop. GMO stands for genetically modified organisms.**

**The chances are slim that any corn you buy in a supermarket is not genetically modified. Corn from local growers may have been grown from heirloom seed that has not been genetically modified. But this is becoming more and more rare.**

**There are three types of GMO corn. There's an herbicide resistant variety, a pest resistant variety, and one that is genetically modified to be resistant to both herbicides and pests. The double resistant GMO seed is the most widely planted. And is rapidly replacing seed that is herbicide resistant only.**

**Pest resistant GMO material targets particular pests in particular crops. For example, pest-resistant corn is genetically modified with a bacteria that targets the corn borer and the corn root borer.**

**The San Francisco Chronicle reports that a major health problem related to GMO corn is its potential to trigger allergies. Because the genetically transferred gene may come from a potentially allergenic substance. And because the modification modifies the actual DNA of the corn. This modification introduces new proteins into the food supply. Proteins our bodies have never encountered.**

**Proteins that are not naturally present in the food supply can trigger allergic reactions. Our word to the wise is make sure this year that your corn on the cob is organic.**

**Health Matters is a production of KIDE Hoopa CA. Produced and written by Cynthia Poten. Engineered by Joseph Orozco. Our readers were Joy Hostler, Jay Renzuli and Joseph Orozco. For this audio and more information, visit our download area at [www.kidefm.org](http://www.kidefm.org). Thank you for listening.**

**Sources and Links**

**<http://www.livestrong.com/article/462338-is-popcorn-as-healthy-as-corn-on-the-cob/>**

**<http://forums.webmd.com/3/diabetes-exchange/forum/5640/10>**

**<http://healthyeating.sfgate.com/benefits-eating-sweet-corn-1505.html>**

**<http://healthyeating.sfgate.com/disadvantages-gmo-sweet-corn-9024.html>**

**<http://www.livestrong.com/article/18783-nutritional-value-corn/>**

**<http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/adoption-of-genetically-engineered-crops-in-the-us/recent-trends-in-ge-adoption.aspx>**