

Biotechnology Holds Promise For Better Nutrition

Study Shows Consumers Interested In Nutrition Benefits Offered By Biotechnology

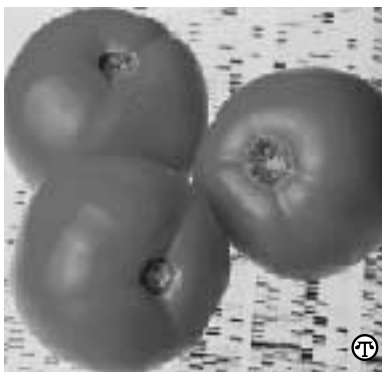
(NAPSA)—A healthy diet may one day be easier to swallow with the help of biotechnology. Researchers believe that some foods enhanced through biotechnology will not only make it easier to meet daily nutritional requirements, but may also offer disease-prevention benefits.

Studies show that the more people know about biotechnology, the more they support its use in helping produce our food. A recent opinion poll conducted by the Grocery Manufacturers of America found that two-thirds of Americans would buy produce enhanced through biotechnology if it contained more vitamins and nutrients.

Nutritional Benefits

Biotechnology allows researchers to develop foods that are rich in specific nutrients. In some cases, scientists are looking at ways to make foods better for the heart. Currently in development are crops such as canola with increased levels of beta-carotene and high-starch potatoes that absorb less oil when cooked. While some products are many years away, researchers are optimistic that several fruits and vegetables enhanced through biotechnology may someday help protect against cancer and heart disease.

Foods derived from biotechnology may also someday help combat malnutrition and improve the quality of life for people in underdeveloped countries. Scientists have developed a new strain of rice with increased levels of beta-



carotene to help fight vitamin A deficiency—a leading cause of blindness. Another goal of researchers is to deliver vaccines through foods to help prevent diabetes and other autoimmune diseases that cause a person's own immune system to attack the body.

“Food biotechnology, with all its possibilities to improve overall nutrition, has a really exciting future,” said Linda Thrane, executive director of the Council for Biotechnology Information. “The responsible development of foods through biotechnology may someday help protect against heart disease and cancer in addition to alleviating nutritional deficiencies worldwide.”

Foods In Development

Scientists and researchers are working on nutritionally-enhanced foods that may arrive in the supermarket in the next three to five years. Some examples:

- **High-Lycopene Tomatoes**

A new tomato may give America's favorite foods, like pizza,

ketchup and salsa, a healthy new twist. The tomato, enhanced through biotechnology, contains three times the amount of lycopene and beta-carotene as conventional tomatoes, which could help prevent heart disease and reduce the risk of developing some cancers.

- **Peppier Peppers**

Peppers are currently being developed to contain higher levels of antioxidants and other vitamins. Antioxidants such as vitamin C are known to help improve the body's immune system. Researchers have also developed a technique to make peppers peppier by enhancing specific traits in peppers to make them taste better. This trait also can allow researchers to control the pepper's color.

- **Smaller, Seedless Melons**

Single-serve melons could be a healthy alternative to convenience-type sweets like candy and cookies. Portability of the melons also may make it easier for people to meet their five-a-day requirement of fruits and vegetables.

- **Healthier Oils**

Peanut, canola and sunflower oils with lower saturated fat levels are now in development, resulting from advances in biotechnology. New soybean oils in development are more than 80 percent mono-unsaturated and contain 33 percent less saturated fat than olive oil.

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