

Genetic engineering: what are the pros and cons?

[Science](#), [Genetics](#)



Genetic Engineering: What are the Pros and Cons? In the next decade the technology to design children's genetic traits will become available. People will have the power to engineer their children to be smarter, stronger, taller, and even predetermine the gender. This technology is referred to as Eugenics, but the products are commonly called designer babies. Although this technology isn't entirely available it is causing quite the debates. Which leads many people to think: what are the pros and cons to genetic engineering? According to Stephen Baird, "Some will curse these new technologies, sounding the death knell for humanity, envisioning the social, cultural, and moral collapse of our society and perhaps our civilization. Others see the same technologies as the ability to take charge of our own evolution, to transcend human limitations, and to improve ourselves as a species" (13). The cons to most people seem to be more obvious. Choosing the fate of children is extremely expensive, which could lead to huge imbalance between the rich and the poor. Genetically enhancing will only lead to more discrimination, especially to those born naturally. Since this technology is not perfected yet, it may lead to experimenting with human life. Designer babies can cost thousands of dollars, thousands of dollars which is not available to everyone. Allowing only the rich to participate in something like this could lead to a huge imbalance in our society. If the only the rich can make their children smarter or more athletic, these enhances will give them a huge chance to be more successful, ultimately creating a never ending chain, making only the rich richer and poor poorer. According to Brandon Keim "The idea that it could be accessible to everyone is specious. We can't even get universal childhood vaccinations. We hope now

that we're going to get expanded coverage and health care, but to think we'll supply fertility treatments to everyone, not just people with infertility problems - that's going to break the bank in a hurry. " This is huge con with the idea of eugenics. Society today is unfortunately filled with discrimination, whether its race, social status, or sexuality. Allowing this new technology may create more discrimination, towards those not able to partake in it. What about those already born with disabilities? They will be neglected and treated differently even more. This could eventually lead to just to looking down upon those without genetic enhancements and become an even more prejudice society. Being able to choose the cosmetic genetics for children like: hair color, eye color, height, and gender could ultimately create the ' perfect race', which could lead to decreased girl populations in male dominate societies like China. Nicholas Agar explains, " The scientific minions of Adolph Hitler sought to shape the German population by murdering those judged inferior and encouraging those they saw as their betters to reproduce. " Are designer babies any different? Yes, no one is being murdered to create the perfect race, but both were or are trying to enhance the human race unnaturally. Those that are not genetically modified will not only be thought as insignificant, and may not be given the same equal opportunities. John Davis believes, " Just as we should love existing children unconditionally, so we should unconditionally accept whatever child we get in the natural course of things. If we set conditions on which child we get, we are setting conditions on our love for whatever child we get" (259). Many people see this as a major con that people will be treated differently based on their genetic makeup. Since this new technology

allows doctors to create babies to donate their organs to family members, children will be created just to save another. " Is this a wanted child or is it a child that's only being made to be a donor to its older brother? If it was the latter, then the baby would be being treated as a commodity" (Designer Babies). Children are going to be brought into this world to be used as an " organ donating factory". Children are going to be put through dangerous and painful procedures. Experimenting with this new technology on human life is a huge risk. It has great potential for upper classes to outweigh the lower classes and create unfair opportunities. This technology will create a more discriminating society, where people that are not genetically modified are not only looked down upon, but are given unequal disadvantages. The fact that this technology is new only means that it is not yet perfected, which implies that risk is going to be taken, risks that involve destroying human life physically and emotionally. Although these cons seem to be very drastic there are a lot of pros to designer babies as well. Rachel Iredale, Marcus Longley, Christian Thomas, and Anita Shaw explain the benefits as well, " it was perceived by participants to be acceptable for preventing inherited conditions and to create a child to save a sibling" (207). And Sonia Suter says, " Gene therapy is slowly offering the possibility of treating genetic and other diseases and may one day allow us to enhance or eliminate desirable and undesirable traits, respectively" (902). This technology would allow us to cure genetic diseases. It would also give us the opportunity to prevent the child from inheriting certain genes. We could potentially get rid of the obesity the before a child is even born. Jessica Hammond believes " parents will have a moral obligation to use genetic treatments to prevent serious

disabilities in their children" (Hammond 160). This can be seen as both a pro and con, because parents may be pressured into something they don't believe is right, but could ultimately save their child's life. Although we don't have this technology available to us yet, it is already causes a lot of controversy and it is easy to see why. The topic of genetic engineering has many pros and cons, and validates arguments on both sides, but there seems to be many more reasons against it. It is very dangerous toward our society and future generations. It will eventually lead to an even more unbalanced and prejudice society.