

“Eat to Live” by Dr. Joel Fuhrman, M.D.

Notes from Foreword by Dr. Oz:

The majority of adults are overweight and undernourished.

Obesity is a more important predictor of chronic ailments and quality of life than any other public scourge.

Poor nutrition can also result in less productivity at work and school, hyperactivity among children and adolescents, and mood swings, all of which heighten feelings of stress, isolation, and insecurity. Even basic quality-of-life concerns such as constipation are affected, resulting in Americans spending \$600 million annually on laxatives.

It is clear to the public that a minor change in one’s eating habits will hardly transform one’s life so readily. So the public turns to magic cures, pills, supplements, drinks, and diet plans that simply don’t work or are unsafe. After a few failures, they give up hope.

I have become convinced that the most overlooked tool in our medical arsenal is harnessing the body’s own ability to heal through nutritional excellence.

Notes from “Eat to Live”

My plan is not only a healthful, scientifically designed diet calculated to supply optimal nutrition while losing weight quickly, it also meets the expectations of those desiring superb health and vitality while they find their ideal weight.

In spite of the more than \$110 billion consumers spend every day on diets and “reducing” programs (more than \$40 billion per year), Americans are the **most obese people in history**.

Scientific studies show a clear and strong relationship between cancers of the digestive tract, bladder, and prostate with low fruit consumption. What good is a diet that lowers your weight but also dramatically increases your chances of developing cancer?

The main principle of this book is that for both optimal health and weight loss, you must consume a diet with a high nutrient-per-calorie ratio.

Why should you wait until you are faced with a life-threatening health crisis to want health excellence?

It takes more than a try to quit addictions; it takes a commitment. A commitment is a promise that you will stick with, no matter what.

Our food choices have the power to either cut short or add many years to our lives.

Health care becomes self-care, with food your new weapon to prevent and defeat illnesses.

Digging our Graves With Forks and Knives

More Americans than ever before are eating rich, high-calorie foods while remaining inactive – a dangerous combination.

It is a combination of food choices, inactivity, and genetics that determines obesity. Obesity is not just a cosmetic issue – extra weight leads to an earlier death, as many studies confirm.

The link between thinness and longevity, and obesity and a shorter life, is concrete.

You have a clear choice. You can live longer and healthier than ever before, or you can do what most modern populations do: **eat to create disease and a premature death.**

There is no magic. There is no miracle weight-loss pill. There is only the natural world of law and order, of cause and effect.

Health Complications of Obesity:

Increased overall premature mortality

Adult onset diabetes

Hypertension

Degenerative arthritis

Coronary artery disease

Cancer

Lipid disorders

Obstructive sleep apnea

Gallstones

Fatty infiltration of liver

Restrictive lung disease

Gastrointestinal diseases

Being overweight is not caused by **how much** you eat but by **what** you eat.

Eating large amounts of the right food is your key to success and is what makes this plan workable for the rest of your life.

Most Americans are not aware that the diet they feed their children guarantees a high cancer probability down the road.

The diets we consume as children have a powerful influence on our future health and eventual premature demise.

Drugs are Not the Solution

The body will always pay a price for consuming medicines, which usually have toxic effects.

You cannot escape the immutable laws of cause and effect through ingesting medicinal substances.

If we wish true health protection, we need to **remove the cause**. We must stop abusing ourselves with disease-causing foods

True Hunger

It is our unhealthy tendency to eat without experiencing true hunger that contributed to our becoming overweight to begin with.

Poor nutrition induces cravings (addictive drives), and nutritional excellence helps normalize or remove them.

For optimal health, you must eat a diet rich in nutrients and fiber, with a very low percentage of foods that are not nutrient and fiber dense.

Overfed, Yet Malnourished

The typical American now consumes an unbelievable 32 teaspoons of added sugar a day.

Starchy (white flour) foods, removed from nature's packaging, are no longer real food. The fiber and the majority of minerals have been removed, so such foods are absorbed too rapidly, resulting in a sharp glucose surge into the bloodstream. The pancreas is then forced to pump out insulin faster to keep up. Over time, it is the excessive demand for insulin placed on the pancreas from both refined foods and increased body fat that leads to diabetes. Refined carbohydrates, white flour, sweets, and even fruit juices, because they enter the bloodstream so quickly, can also raise triglycerides, increasing the risk of heart attack in susceptible individuals.

If you want to lose weight, the most important foods to avoid are processed foods: condiments, candy, snacks, and baked goods; **fat-free has nothing to do with it**.

Food manufacturers remove the most valuable part of the food and then add bleach, preservatives, salt, sugar, and food coloring to make breads, breakfast cereals, and other convenience foods.

Enriched or Fortified: Whenever you see those words on a package, it means that important nutrients are missing.

As a general rule of thumb, the **closer we eat foods to their natural state, the healthier the food.**

Fat and Refined Carbohydrates: Married to Your Waist

Fat is an appetite stimulant: the more you eat, the more you want. If a food could be scientifically engineered to create an obese society, it would have fat, such as butter, mixed with sugar and flour.

If we biopsied your waist fat and looked at it under an electron microscope, we could actually see where the fat came from. It is stored as pig fat, dairy fat, and olive oil fat – just as it was in the original food. It goes from your lips right to your hips.

Oil will add fat to our already plump waistlines, heightening the risk of disease, including diabetes and heart attacks.

Raw, uncooked vegetables and fruits offer the most powerful protection against disease, and I encourage my patients to eat huge salads and at least four fresh fruits per day.

The earlier in life you start eating large amounts of these foods, the more protection you get. Raw nuts and seeds, avocados, and unsalted olives are healthy fats. However, you should consider a limited amount of these foods, especially if you wish to lose weight.

The “Magic” of Fiber – A Critical Nutrient

High fiber foods offer significant protection against both cancer (including colon cancer) and heart disease. I didn't say fiber; I said high-fiber foods. We can't just add a high-fiber candy bar or sprinkle a little Metamucil on our doughnut and French fries and expect to reap the benefits of eating high-fiber foods.

Meat and dairy products do not contain any fiber, and foods made from refined grains (such as white bread, white rice, and pasta) have had their fiber removed.

The American Diet: Designed for Disease

It may be convenient to pick up soda, burgers, fries, or pizza, but that convenience is not without its price; the result is that we are sicker than ever, and our medical costs are skyrocketing out of control.

Nutritional Powerhouses: Plant Foods

The greater the quantity and assortment of fruits and vegetables consumed, the lower the incidence of heart attacks, strokes, and cancer.

There's one thing we know for sure: raw vegetables and fresh fruits have powerful anti-cancer agents.

The earlier in life you start eating large amounts of these foods, the more protection you get.

The cow didn't eat another cow to form the protein in its muscles, which we call steak. The protein wasn't formed out of thin air – the cow ate grass.

When you consider the fiber, phytochemicals, and other essential nutrients, green vegetables win the award for being the most nutrient-dense of all foods.

I tell my patients to put a big sign on their refrigerator that says: **THE SALAD IS THE MAIN DISH.**

Green Salad is Less than 100 Calories Per Pound

Did you notice that 100 calories of broccoli is about ten ounces of food, and 100 calories of ground sirloin is less than one ounce of food? **With green vegetables you can get filled up, even stuffed, yet you will not be consuming excess calories.** Animal products, on the other hand, are calorie-dense and relatively low in nutrients, especially the crucial anti-cancer nutrients.

If you attempt to follow the perverted diet that most Americans eat, or even if you follow the precise recommendations of the USDA's pyramid – six to eleven servings of bread, rice, and pasta (consumed as 98 percent refined grains by Americans) with four to six servings of dairy, meat, poultry, or fish – you would be eating a diet rich in calories but extremely low in nutrients, antioxidants, phytochemicals, and vitamins. You would be overfed and malnourished, the precise nutritional profile that causes heart disease and cancer.

The U.S. Department of Meat, Milk, and Cheese

Could it be a conspiracy to have consumers not realize what they are really eating?

Over fifty years ago, the USDA began promoting the so-called four basic food groups, with meat and dairy products in the number one and two spots on the list. Financed by the meat and dairy industry and backed by nutritional scientists on the payroll of the meat and dairy industry, this promotion ignored science.

Americans began eating more and more animal foods. **The campaign sparked the beginning of the fastest-growing cancer epidemic in history, and heart attack rates soared to previously unheard-of levels.**

For years and years the USDA resisted lowering cholesterol and dietary fat recommendations in spite of the irrefutable evidence that Americans were committing suicide with food.

Out of one pocket we pay billions of our tax dollars to support the production of expensive, disease-causing foods. Out of the other pocket we pay medical bills that are too high because our overweight population consumes too much of these rich, disease-causing foods. Our tax dollars are actually used to make our society sicker and keep our health insurance costs high.

On any given day, no fruit whatsoever passes the lips of half of all Americans.

In 1998 the National Cancer Institute budgeted a million dollars to promote the virtues of fruits and vegetables. Compare that with McDonald's 500 million dollars spent on TV ads alone.

The diseases that afflict, and eventually kill, almost all Americans can be avoided. You can live a high-quality, disease-free life and remain physically active and healthy. You can die peacefully and uneventfully at an old age, as nature intended.

A Vegetarian Diet Is No Guarantee of Good Health

Following a strict vegetarian diet is not as important as eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables. A vegetarian whose diet is mainly refined grains, cold breakfast cereals, processed health-food-store products, vegetarian fast foods, white rice, and pasta will be worse off than a person who eats a little chicken or eggs, for example, but consumes a large amount of fruits, vegetables, and beans.

Vegetarians live quite a bit longer than non-vegetarians do. Long-term vegans almost never get heart attacks.

Unraveling the Protein Myth

We have been brought up with the idea that foods are good for us if they help us grow bigger and faster. Nothing could be further from the truth.

An unnaturally rapid growth and premature puberty are risk factors for cancers and other diseases later in life.

Exercise Powerfully Reduces Cancer Risk

Women who exercise regularly reduce their risk of developing breast cancer substantially. In one study, women who exercised regularly had 62 percent less risk than sedentary women.

Do not underestimate the effect of a superior diet on gradually removing and repairing damage caused by years of self-abuse.

Are Dairy Foods Protecting Us from Osteoporosis?

Most people consider a diet without dairy unhealthy. Without dairy foods, how could we obtain sufficient calcium for our bones? Let's examine this accepted wisdom: is it true, or have we been **brainwashed by years and years of misinformation and advertising**? Hip fractures and osteoporosis are more frequent in populations in which dairy products are commonly consumed and calcium intakes are commonly high. Does this suggest that drinking cow's milk causes osteoporosis? Certainly, it brings into question the continual advertising message from the national Dairy Council that drinking cow's milk prevents osteoporosis.

The Best Food for Bones: Fruits and Vegetables

Green vegetables, beans, tofu, sesame seeds, and even oranges contain lots of usable calcium, without the problems associated with dairy. All green vegetables are high in calcium.

The only reason cow's milk is considered such an important source of calcium, is that the American diet is centered on animal foods, refined grains, and sugar, all of which are devoid of calcium.

Cow's milk is "designed" to be the perfect food for the rapidly growing calf; but foods that promote rapid growth promote cancer.

Perhaps the strongest argument against dairy products in our diets: lots of us are lactose-intolerant. Those lactose-intolerant folks who don't digest dairy well, are constantly barraged with information that makes them believe they will lose their bones if they don't consume dairy products in some way. They may be better off without it.

Dangerous Weight-Loss Schemes

People are desperate to lose weight, and many heavily promoted books preach what people want to hear: that you can eat lots of fat, cholesterol, and saturated fat and still lose weight.

People are literally dying to lose weight.

You can lose some weight on the Atkins Diet, but you run the risk of losing your health at the same time.

It is now clear that increased consumption of animal products combined with the decreases consumption of fresh produce has the most powerful effect on increasing risk for various kinds of cancer.

A meat-based, low-fiber diet, like the one Atkins advocates, includes little or no fruit, no starchy vegetables, and no whole grains. Following Atkins's recommendations could more than double your risk of certain cancers.

There are numerous ways to lose weight. However "effective" they may be, some are just not safe. We wouldn't advocate smoking cigarettes or snorting cocaine simply because doing so would be effective in promoting weight loss. Advocating a weight-loss program based on severe carbohydrate restriction is irresponsible. You may pay a substantial price – your life!

Most Weight-Loss Plans Are a Waste of Your Money

All diet plans fail because they cater to modern American tastes, which include too much processed foods or animal products to be healthy.

Weight Watchers' brand foods contain 24 percent of calories from fat. Lean Cuisine contains 25 percent of calories from fat. The Jenny Craig program requires the purchase of packaged meals with entrées such as cheese soufflé and Salisbury steak, meals that are almost as bad as what most Americans eat at home. These commercial diet plans, since they are not very low in fat, must restrict portion sizes to offer "low calorie" meals. These "skimpy" portions represent an obsolete approach with a dismal track record.

It is merely a matter of time before those trying to keep their portions small increase the amount of food they are eating. These choices don't satisfy our desire to eat, and we wind up craving food and becoming frustrated. When dieters can't stand eating thimble-sized portions anymore and finally eat until satisfied, they put weight on with a vengeance.

You can't eat out of boxes and consume powdered drinks forever, either. If you do lose some weight, you will always gain it back. Instead, permanent changes in your eating habits must be made. Learning new recipes and adopting different ways of eating that you can live with will maintain your weight loss and protect your health for the rest of your life.

Instead of searching for weight-loss gimmicks and tricks, try to adopt a resolution to be healthy first by focusing on your health and not on your weight.

Unrefined Carbohydrates Encourage Weight Loss

Carbohydrate-rich foods, when consumed in their natural state, are low in calories and high in fiber compared with fatty foods, processed foods, or animal products.

When you eat high-carbohydrate foods, such as fresh fruits and beans, you can eat more food and still keep your calorie intake relatively low.

It is impossible to glean all the nutrients needed for optimal health if your diet does not contain lots of carbohydrate-rich food.

There is nothing wrong with carbohydrates; it is the empty-calorie, or refined carbohydrates, that are responsible for the bad reputation of carbs.

Foods That Make You Thin

Green vegetables are so incredibly low in calories and rich in nutrients and fiber, that the more you eat of them, the more weight you will lose. One secret to nutritional excellence and superior health is the “one pound—one pound” rule. That is, try to eat at least one pound of raw green vegetables a day and one pound of cooked/steamed or frozen green vegetables a day as well. The high volume of greens not only will be your secret to a thin waistline but will simultaneously protect you against life-threatening illnesses.

Trans Fat: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

Trans fats do not exist in nature. They are laboratory-designed and have adverse health consequences. Trans fats are as closely associated with heart attacks as the fats in animal products.

The Fatty Conclusion

1. Any extracted oil (fat) can promote cancer because consuming even the healthiest fats, such as olive oil, in excess adds too many empty calories. Excess calories have toxic effects, contributing to obesity, premature aging, and cancer.
2. Excess omega-6 fatty acids promote cancer risk, while omega-3 fats, which are harder to come by, tend to lower risk. Omega-6 fats are found in polyunsaturated oils like corn oil and safflower, whereas the omega-3 fatty acids are rich in seeds, greens, and some fish.
3. The most dangerous fats for both heart disease and cancer are saturated fats and trans fatty acids. You would be foolish not to carefully avoid these. Trans fat may raise breast cancer risk by as much as 40 percent. They are the fats listed as “partially hydrogenated” on the food labels.

4. Whole natural plant foods (whole grains, greens, nuts, and seeds) supply adequate fat. If you eat an assortment of natural foods, you will not be deficient in fat. We do not need to take fish oil, evening primrose oil, or any other oil when we eat healthy foods.

Americans have this fetish with watching fat and forgetting everything else we know about nutrition.

Giving Up the Myths About Protein – Like Changing Your Religion

Protein was thought to be the most favorable of all nutrients, and lots of protein was thought to be the key to strength, health, and vigor. Unfortunately, cancer rates soared.

Old habits die hard; most Americans still cling to what they were taught as children. There are **very few subjects that are more distorted in modern culture than that of protein.**

Keep in mind that we do need protein and that we cannot be healthy without protein in our diet. Plant foods have plenty of protein. It is only when a vegetarian diet revolves around white bread and other processed foods that the protein content falls to low levels. However, the minute you include unprocessed foods such as vegetables, whole grains, beans, or nuts – the diet becomes protein-rich.

Which has more protein – oatmeal, ham, or a tomato? The answer is that they all have about the same amount of protein per calorie. The difference is, the tomato and the oatmeal are packaged with fiber and other disease-fighting nutrients, and the ham is packaged with cholesterol and saturated fat.

Focus on eating healthy natural foods, and forget about trying to get enough protein.

Eat to Live Takes on Disease

Eat and live like most Americans, and you will eventually suffer from an assortment of ailments, like most Americans.

Good health is not merely the absence of disease. Good health assumes protection from disease in the future and can be predicted only by a healthy lifestyle and diet.

People are completely unaware that most illnesses are self-induced and can be reversed with aggressive nutritional methods.

99 percent of your genes are programmed to keep you healthy. The problem is that we never let them do their job.

The so-called balanced diet that most Americans eat causes the diseases Americans get.

Studies have shown controlling sodium intake and weight loss to be effective in reducing blood pressure, even in the elderly. How can you implement these interventions into your lifestyle? It's simple. **Eat many more fruits, vegetable, and legumes; eat less of everything else; and engage in a moderate amount of exercise.** High blood pressure is relatively simple to control. Your physician is likely doing just as poorly as you are and eating just as unhealthy or worse. After reading this book, you could improve his health and reduce his risk of premature death more than he could help yours.

So many people die needlessly because of wrong, weak, and practically worthless information from the government, physicians, dieticians, and even health authorities like the American Heart Association.

You are deluding yourself if you think that drugs alone will reverse your condition while you remain overweight and nutritionally malnourished.

As our country's weight has risen, diabetes has increased accordingly. The worldwide explosion in diabetes parallels the increase in body weight.

The body can heal itself when the obstacles to healing or stressors are removed. The reason people can't ever make complete recovery is that they are addicted to their bad habits and unhealthful ways of eating and drinking.

My most successful patients **treat processed foods and animal foods as condiments, constituting no more than 10 percent of their total caloric intake.**

Superior health and optimal weight are no longer a matter of chance, but a matter of choice.

"The best prescription is knowledge." – Dr. C. Everett Koop