

The Nutrition Reporter™

EXTRA

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The independent newsletter that reports vitamin, mineral, and food therapies

Reviews of Recent Health Books

Publishers send us a variety of nutrition and health books to review, and we've picked a few to share with you. To order, we encourage you to first visit nutritionreporter.com, then scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on the link to amazon.com.

The Inflammation Syndrome, by Jack Challem. (Revised and updated, John Wiley & Sons, 2010, \$14.95). The first edition of this book, published in 2003, introduced my concept of an "inflammation syndrome" – the idea that inflammatory diseases often have the same underlying causes and are therefore related to each other. The original edition of *The Inflammation Syndrome* became a national bestseller. Since then, considerably new research has been published linking inflammatory diseases to each other, as well as on how nutrition affects the inflammatory response. After all, nutrients form the basis of our biochemistry.

Every disease process involves inflammation, either as a cause or a consequence of the disease. Sometimes the inflammation is low grade, chronic, and asymptomatic, but still causing tissue damage; at other times it is associated with pain. Because inflammatory diseases share common nutritional and biochemical roots, it makes little sense to treat them with symptom-masking drugs. It is far more sensible to focus on the dietary modulators of the body's own pro- and anti-inflammatory compounds.

This updated version of *The Inflammation Syndrome* includes recent research on the omega-3 fish oils and gamma-linolenic acid (GLA, an omega-6 oil) and their synergistic anti-inflammatory benefits. Over the past several years, considerable research has also been published on curcumin and Pycnogenol®, two plant extracts that also have potent anti-inflammatory effects, and I have expanded the sections on these two nutrients. I've also revamped some of the other chapters, emphasized the importance of taking a multivitamin to reduce inflammation, and added new recipes and

drawings – these are just a handful of the many changes in the new edition of the book. You can download several free excerpts of the book at www.inflammationsyndrome.com, where there is also a link to www.amazon.com for ordering the book.

The New Atkins for a New You, by Eric C. Westman, MD, et al. (Fireside/Simon & Schuster, 2010, \$16.) Sometimes a great thinker has to die before his ideas gain general acceptance. I think that was the case with Robert Atkins, MD, who recommended a high-protein, low-carbohydrate diet in his 1972 *Diet Revolution* book. Atkins' diet was controversial because he challenged the reigning fat phobia theory of heart disease, as well as the high-sugar and high refined carbohydrate content of nutritionally void low-fat foods. In time, it became clear that his high-protein diet was addressing the underlying insulin resistance (prediabetes) so common among people who are overweight. In fact, I would argue that prediabetes has been the unrecognized factor leading to overweight and obesity.

From what I understand, Dr. Westman approached the clinical use of the Atkins diet gingerly and was eventually convinced of its usefulness by the science and his patients' experiences. Now, more than 50 studies with people show that a high-protein, low-carbohydrate diet can help people reduce weight and improve various markers of heart disease. In addition, research has clearly shown that saturated fats have little if anything to do with cardiovascular risk. (Recent issues of *The Nutrition Reporter* have reported some of this research.)

If you are interested in a high-protein diet but still concerned about saturated fats, you can opt for chicken, turkey, and fish, all of which are low in saturated fats. Once, before joining Dr. Atkins on his radio show, he asked me about the differences between his diet and the one I recommended. I told

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him that I was recommending mostly chicken and fish as protein sources. He confided that those were the foods he initially recommended to patients, but they came back to him saying that they lost weight eating beef and pork, which they preferred.

The Natural Physician's Healing Therapies, by Mark Stengler, ND. (Updated, Prentice Hall/Penguin, 2010, \$26.95). This is an extensive update of a 2002 book, and it is an excellent encyclopedic discussion of more than 160 nutritional and herbal supplements, homeopathic remedies, and other natural therapies. I know Dr. Stengler and occasionally collaborate with him on writing projects, and am impressed by his clinical experience. This book has become a reference for me when I need a solid overview of specific supplements, their benefits, and how to use them.

Counterclockwise: Mindful Health and the Power of Possibility, by Ellen J. Langer, PhD. (Ballantine, 2009, \$25). This book is really about the body-mind connection – and the power of the mind and perception in our overall health. Much of the book is based on Langer's research at Harvard University. An example: She took a group of elderly men and placed them in an environment reminiscent of life 20 years earlier. Within one week, the men's physical strength, thinking processes, and other physical abilities improved. In a sense, they had stepped back in time to when they were younger and stronger. Such is the power of the mind, and it raises the question of whether the physical and mental consequences of aging are in large part related to our perception that aging involves a precipitous deterioration in our physical and mental abilities. The book is not just a summary of research – rather, it is an enjoyable book to read that may literally change your life.

The Honey Prescription, by Nathaniel Altman. (Healing Arts Press, 2010, \$16.95). At one time I was skeptical of the almost cult-like following around honey, propolis, and royal jelly. Then I happened to read some medical journal articles on the antioxidant and antibacterial compounds found in various bee products. At that point I saw the medicinal value of various bee products. This book is an excellent review of the history and medical research on honey and its health benefits. In some parts of the world, honey-soaked bandages are still used to treat wounds – and not just in undeveloped nations. If you're curious about a pharmaceutical dressing made from a honey byproduct, visit www.medihoney.com. (I have no affiliation with the company, but found the pharmaceutical uses of honey fascinating.)

Beat Sugar Addiction Now!, by Jacob Teitelbaum (Fair Winds, 2010, \$16.99). I once interviewed Bill Dufty, the author of *Sugar Blues*, a jazz musician, journalist, and husband of legendary actress Gloria Swanson. He was at singer Billie Holiday's deathbed. Holiday was an alcoholic, and Dufty thought it was odd she asked not for alcohol, but for a soft drink. Years later, he understood why – Dufty explained that sugar addiction underlies alcohol addiction.

Several books have addressed our collective sweet tooth, and sugar addiction is certainly encouraged by the marketers of various convenience and junk foods, including Starbucks. In *Beat Sugar Addiction Now!* Dr. Teitelbaum takes an innovative approach, describing four common types of sugar addiction, followed by a treatment program for each type. In the second half of the book, he focuses on how sugar addiction is involved in a variety of common health problems, including chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, anxiety, heart disease, and low thyroid.

Cures A-Z, developed by Jacob Teitelbaum and Laurie Teitelbaum (iTunes, 2010, free). *Cures A-Z* (formerly *Natural Cures*) is a well-designed app available for free downloading to an iPhone, iPod Touch, or iPad. I've found it to be an easy-to-use and reliable quick reference when I'm traveling. The app consists of four sections. The first is an extensive alphabetical listing of diseases. Each disease is then subdivided into "background," with enough detail to make a tentative self-diagnosis, and "treatment," with the advice focusing primarily on natural therapies. The second section focuses on nutrition and provides a good overview of individual vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients. The "newsletter" and "more" sections tend to be product oriented and promotional, which is probably necessary to financially underwrite a free app. Still, *Cures A-Z* is a great app to have at your fingertips. □

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