

# The Nutrition Reporter™

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EXTRA

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

## A Review of Recent Health Books

So many good nutrition books have crossed our desk over the past year! This August supplement to *The Nutrition Reporter*™ focuses on some of the many books that have impressed us. To order these, go to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), [www.barnes&noble.com](http://www.barnes&noble.com), or your local bookstore.

**Syndrome X: The Complete Nutritional Program to Prevent and Reverse Insulin Resistance**, by Jack Challem, Burt Berkson, MD, PhD, and Melissa Diane Smith (John Wiley & Sons, 2000, \$24.95). Syndrome X is a cluster of elevated blood fats, high blood pressure, abdominal obesity, and insulin resistance that sharply increase the risk of adult-onset diabetes and heart disease, and likely Alzheimer's disease and some types of cancer. Syndrome X is in large part the result of excess insulin levels, triggered by a diet high in refined carbohydrates and oils and low in vitamins and minerals. The solution recommended by the authors is a protein-rich diet (emphasizing chicken, turkey and fish) that includes plenty of nonstarchy veggies; dietary supplements; and moderate physical activity. Two of the book's authors produce *The Nutrition Reporter*™ newsletter. Do be careful when ordering *Syndrome X*. Another book with the same title is confusing – and, ironically, recommends a diet (sans supplements) that might promote Syndrome X.

**Methyl Magic: Maximum Health through Methylation**, by Craig Cooney, PhD, and Bill Lawren. (Andrews McMeel Pub, 1999, \$22.95). Methylation is one of the most basic molecule-building processes in the body. When it goes awry, cells don't receive the carbon and hydrogen atoms they need to function, and the risk of cancer, heart disease, and other disorders increases. Methylation is fundamentally dependent on some of the B vitamins, such as folic acid and choline; elevated homocysteine (a risk factor for heart disease) is a marker of defective methylation. For years, methylation was one of those technical topics that only biochemists could understand – and were never able to clearly explain to the average person. That's not the case with this book. *Methyl Magic* is full of clear, easy-to-understand explana-

tions. It's a book well worth getting.

**Textbook of Nutritional Medicine**, by Melvyn R. Werbach, MD, and Jeffrey Moss, DDS (Third Line Press, 1999, \$74.95). This recent book by Werbach, a nutritionally oriented physician with an encyclopedic grasp of studies, describes how diet and vitamin, mineral, and herbal supplements can reverse disease. This book provides information on nutritional treatments for 82 illnesses, complete with medical journal citations. Whether you are a physician or a consumer with a strong interest in dietary supplements, this should serve as a standard reference book.

**Nutritional Influences on Mental Illness: a Sourcebook of Clinical Research (2nd Edition)**, by Melvyn R. Werbach, MD, Third Line Press, 1999, \$59.95). Some researchers have suggested that the first signs of nutritional deficiencies appear as behavioral perturbations. This book summarizes hundreds of published studies on how diet, deficiencies, and supplements influence anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, and many other mental illnesses. Every psychiatrist and psychologist should have a copy of this book on their shelves. Since they don't, you probably should.

**Know Your Fats: The Complete Primer for Understanding the Nutrition of Fats, Oils, and Cholesterol**, by Mary G. Enig, PhD (Bethesda Press, 2000, \$29.95). Fats are probably the most misunderstood nutrients of the 20th century, and far too many people have foolishly opted to eat a low-fat diet as the path to optimal health. In truth, fats are essential nutrients, but modern food processing has skewed the ratios of individual fats. The diet is dominated by processed vegetable oils (soy, safflower, corn) and artificial trans fats. In this book, Enig, an internationally respected expert on fats, debunks many common misconceptions about fats (especially about saturated fats) and explains virtually everything you might want to know on the subject. Although some parts of the book are technical and dry, overall it provides a comprehensive, accurate, and understandable explanation of dietary fats.

Continues on next page

**The IBIS Guide to Drug-Herb and Drug-Nutrient Interactions**, by Mitch Stargrove (Integrative Medical Arts, Beaverton, Ore, 2000, \$99.95). The interactions of nutrients, such as vitamin supplements, and drugs have become a hot topic in medicine, with the deleterious consequences generally overblown. For example, the fact that vitamin E or ginkgo act as blood thinners should lead physicians to reduce Coumadin intake, not that of the vitamin or herb. This CD provides a ready resource for physicians and consumers interested in a reference that lists how drugs and nutrients might interact. The CD works on both Mac and Windows computing systems, and it automatically loads a copy onto your hard drive. It lists both generic and trade names of drugs, and pages can be printed out for patients.

**Antioxidants in Diabetes Management**, edited by Lester Packer, PhD, et al. (Marcel Dekker, 2000, \$150). A huge body of scientific and clinical evidence has shown that people with diabetes (and presumably other people with glucose-tolerance disorders) suffer from a serious imbalance of free radicals and antioxidant nutrients. Free radicals play major roles in virtually every disease process, and elevated glucose levels in diabetes generate large numbers of free radicals, which account for many of the disease's complications. This scientific book explains the nature of oxidative stress in diabetes and how several nutrients – alpha-lipoic acid, gamma-linolenic acid, and vitamins E and C – can help in diabetes. This is an excellent book for physicians, researchers, and technically minded consumers.

**Feed Your Kids Well: How to Help Your Child Lose Weight and Get Healthy**, by Fred Pescatore, MD (John Wiley & Sons, 1998, \$14.95). From the photograph of Fred Pescatore on the cover of this book (just released in paperback), you would never realize that he was once a chubby child who relished his pasta. Pescatore used to work with Robert Atkins, MD, and he recommends a high-protein diet tailored for children. Given the fact that fast-food "super-size" meals have fostered super-size children, radical action is needed to help children slim back down. This is an excellent book for parents who want to get their children on a safe and effective weight-loss diet.

**Crazy Makers: How the Food Industry is Destroying Our Brains and Harming Our Children**, by Carol Simontacchi (Tarcher/Putnam, 2000, \$24.95). The modern food industry has foisted billions of dollars worth of dangerous foods on unsuspecting consumers. They contain dangerous fats, such as trans fats and highly refined omega-6s, highly refined sugar, grains devoid of vitamins and minerals, and countless unsafe or questionable food additives. In

this book, Simontacchi maintains that these artificial food products do far more than increase the risk of heart disease and diabetes: they also endanger our mental and behavioral health and especially that our children. Simontacchi does a good job of explaining how the modern food supply has gone awry and how the process seems to be accelerating, such as with public schools that make financial deals with Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola to promote junk foods. She also offers practical solutions on how to avoid these processed foods that literally may be driving us crazy.

**The Heart Revolution: The B Vitamin Breakthrough that Lowers Homocysteine, Cuts Your Risk of Heart Disease, and Protects Your Heart**, By Kilmer McCully, MD, and Martha McCully (HarperCollins, 1999, \$24.00). In 1969, Kilmer McCully proposed that a lack of B vitamins, leading to excessive blood levels of homocysteine, was a fundamental cause of coronary artery disease. His theory was largely ignored, and he was fired from Harvard University because the prevailing ideas was that too much cholesterol caused heart disease. McCully is lucky – he has lived long enough to see his work being embraced by medicine. McCully's idea is very simple: B vitamins are needed to process homocysteine. A lack of B vitamins results in elevated homocysteine levels, which damage arteries and set the stage for cholesterol deposits. In effect, a few pennies of vitamins each day can significantly reduce the risk of coronary artery disease and stroke. In this book, McCully's ideas are explained in a consumer-friendly style for the average person.

**Don't Let Your HMO Kill You**, by Jason Theodosakis, MD, and David T. Feinberg, MD (Routledge, 2000, \$14.95). "Health maintenance organizations" are an oxymoron, yet they now dominate how medical care is dispensed. This book's guidelines can help you navigate and get the most out of your HMO. The authors also offer some good advice on supplements to keep you healthy.

– Jack Challem

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