

Book Reviews

Breast Health: What You Need to Know about Disease Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Guidelines for Healthy Breast Care by Charles B. Simone. Avery Publishing, 120 Old Broadway Ave. Garden City Park, NY 11040. Paperback. 410 pages, \$22.95, 1996

With a disease which is running epidemic in America, this book is a must for every woman in the United States to read. One in eight women develop breast cancer, while 60-80 percent will develop some kind of benign breast disease.

Breast Health presents a comprehensive review of the role of diet, electromagnetic fields, nutrition, genetics and cancer prevention.

Dr. Simone explains, in great detail, the psychological, social, and multiple risk factors related to breast cancer. With such enormous numbers of candidates for nutritional supplements in the United States and America's poor nutrient intake and poor dietary approaches, this book should become a classic in the field and should be used in medical schools.

Review by Eric Braverman M.D.

Eat The Weeds By B. Harris. Keats Publishing, 27 Pine St. New Canaan, CT 06840-0876, Paperback. 254 pages, \$12.95, 1995

Rosemary Gladstar in her forward writes: "those earlier books written by the pioneers of herbalism are classic; they capture the spirit and essence which is essential to the heart of herbalism and which is so often lacking in modern herb books. Her *Eat the Weeds* is certainly one of those classics, a wonderful treatise on the benefits of wild foods for health and healing."

This book continues a movement which began when the first animal on earth began to eat the first plant on earth. The problem always is how to know which plants are edible and which are poisonous, and if they are poisonous, how can the poison be removed. Agriculture has solved the problem of providing those few plants such as the grains and vegetables which

feed the vast billions on earth today. But unfortunately we have not yet solved the major problem of seeing that these foods, when they arrive on our plates, are as nutritious as they could be and were at one time.

Herbalists have concentrated on a large number of other plants which are generally ignored, but which provide good nutrition—again, if you know how to find them and use them. In this book the ways of collecting, preserving and preparing these plants are presented, but the major portion of the book describes the herbs and their uses. Did you know that Skunk Cabbage can be used as a cabbage substitute? If you don't believe me, read this book. One hundred and fifty wild vegetables are edible foods if you know how to identify them and where to find them.

Review by Abram Hoffer, M.D., Ph.D.

Hoffer's Laws of Natural Nutrition by Abram Hoffer, MD, PhD. Quarry Press Kingston, ON K7L 4Y5. Paperback, 284 pages, \$19.95, 1996.

There was a time not so long ago when our relationship to food was a simple means to an end—we hunted and gathered what we needed for survival. Today food has become an industry no different from General Motors, with market share and shareholder dividends added to the equation. The profitable growth of this new enterprise is predicated on efficiency of production and increased consumption; the nutritive value of food is no longer relevant. Thanks to the dedication of food engineers and marketing MBAs, our relationship to food has regressed to an infantile state of novelty and instant gratification. These days the inside of a modern supermarket looks an awful lot like a toy store. We seem to have lost the ability to even remember or discern what real food is.

Dr. Hoffer's new book shows us how to regain the ability to separate real foods from their high-tech imposters. In the first section of this book Dr. Hoffer stresses the

importance of self-education in health because it is the one variable over which we have some measure of control. Here, “good health” is not merely freedom from overt disease, but freedom from the symptoms of ill health and disease; a positive relationship with family and community; and the ability to work. This biosocial model of health is achievable by a proper relationship with food. Dr. Hoffer also gives us a new model in which to evaluate our own health and individualize a diet to best serve our unique biochemical needs.

In part two, Dr. Hoffer explains that animals form a powerful association between illness and foods which have recently been consumed. This is known as the “gag reflex” and is a basic survival mechanism. This reflex also exists vestigially in humans but it has been masked by calorically dense and nutrient sparse pseudo-foods which make up the bulk of a modern diet. Dr. Hoffer characterizes the history and development of high tech food as one of successive adulteration by fire, domestication, chemical modification and biotechnological tinkering.

Dr. Hoffer gives us an easy way to pick our way through this chemical minefield with a detailed nine-point definition of what constitutes dangerous high-tech foods. This immensely practical information can inoculate us for life against the encroachment of junk into our diet. A chapter on dietary diseases shows how the plagues of our time—cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and mental illness—are associated with high-tech foods. How so? High-tech food is incompatible with health because the natural biochemical complexity (fiber, vitamins, minerals, fatty acids) is engineered out and replaced with the qualities which encourage easier and faster consumption. In his chapter on “public malnutrition” Dr. Hoffer tells us of the the social costs of poor nutrition. He shows how the high-tech food industry has become so pervasive in society that

it has formed a symbiotic relationship with our health care system. Today the lion’s share of our health care budget goes towards the treatment of the very diseases which are strongly associated with engineered foods.

Part three shows us the health benefits of a natural diet. Because the speed of industrial progress is so much faster than our evolutionary adaptation, we must return to the diet that our bodies were designed to assimilate. As a counterpoint to his definition of high-tech foods, Dr. Hoffer provides us with an eight-point definition of what constitutes a natural diet: foods are whole, alive, varied, non-toxic, scarce, endogenous, naturally flavoured and simple. Also included is a detailed discussion of the role vitamins, minerals, amino acids and fatty acids in the prevention and treatment of disease.

Part four is entitled *The Twenty-first Century Direction in Health* and begins with an interesting collection of case studies. These show how many health problems can only be improved by addressing the biochemistry of the disorder. Hoffer also elaborates on the economic benefits—primarily faster recoveries and reduced use of drugs—which would accrue if the the orthomolecular paradigm were fully implemented. The final section tables the nutrient content of common foods in detail, so we can use food as much as possible to supply essential nutrients.

This is a valuable and necessary book. We know that the foundation of optimum health is dependent on nourishing food. Food technologists have robbed us not only of our supply of natural foods but of the very capacity to identify unadulterated food. By following the common sense laws of natural nutrition in Dr. Hoffer’s book, we can regain control over our food supply and our health.

Review by Gregory Schilhab

The Natural Way to a Healthy Prostate: Preventing Prostate Problems with Nutritional and Herbal Treatments By Michael Schacter, Keats Publishing. 27 Pine St. New Canaan, CT 06840-0876, Paperback, 48 pages, \$3.95, 1995.

Dr. Michael Schacter has been practicing orthomolecular medicine for over 21 years. Orthomolecular psychiatry began in the U.S.A. about 1960, when Dr. T. Robie, a New Jersey psychiatrist, became the first psychiatrist to use niacin for his paranoid schizophrenic patients. In 1960 he wrote to me that he wanted to thank me, because for the first time in a long and distinguished career as a psychiatrist, his paranoid patients had become friends. Before that they could not, but with high doses of vitamin B₃ they lost their paranoia, and therefore could become friends, as do other patients who recover. Within a few years about twenty U.S.A. physicians became involved, including Dr. Schacter.

We were the first generation of orthomolecular physicians, but we did not know we were practicing orthomolecular medicine until Linus Pauling published his important paper in *Science* in 1968. Therefore, when Dr. Schacter writes about the treatment of any condition, he speaks from decades of experience and must be listened to seriously.

Prostate cancer is one of the most common male cancers, accounting for 43,500 deaths per year in the U.S.A. But in most cases it is preventable, and in nearly every case when treatment includes orthomolecular treatment the results are much superior to those achieved by surgery, chemotherapy or radiation alone, if it is caught before it has metastasized.

Prevention includes lifestyle, especially nutrition and the use of supplements, and early diagnosis. Nutrition is improved by avoiding sugar, alcohol, stimulants, and by following the kind of diet we have all been adapted to over thousands of years. In simple terms, one

eats fresh foods which are high in fiber, free of additives and toxic metals (such as aluminum). These are described in this little booklet. Lifestyle includes avoiding mercury amalgams, and excessive exposure to electromagnetic energy from high voltage power lines, waterbeds, electric blankets, and so on. Early diagnosis is the patient's responsibility. Men should have rectal examinations with increasing frequency as they get older.

When cancer is found, the tempo of treatment is increased by adding vitamins, minerals and herbs, as well as other complementary treatments. Standard treatment should always be considered and may be needed. If chemotherapy and radiation are used in conjunction with nutritional treatment, the side effects are greatly diminished and the therapeutic effect enhanced.

I have been treating patients with prostate cancer since 1978. Eighteen were seen before December 31, 1991. Ten were alive after six years and eight are well today. Twenty-three were seen after January 1, 1992. From this group there has been one death. Five of them refused to accept standard treatment. All are alive and doing well. The earlier group were most often late stage. The last group were most often early stage. I have no control group since only one patient did not follow the program.

This shows that these men found the program very acceptable. I have concluded that stage one and two prostate cancers will live out their normal life span if they take advantage of every beneficial treatment modality including surgery, radiation and chemotherapy if they are needed for emergency or symptomatic control. Every man over age fifty and some younger should read this book and follow the treatment program discussed. There would certainly be a major decrease in the incidence and prevalence of prostate cancer.

Review by Abram Hoffer, MD, Ph.D.

Look and Feel Half Your Age By Norman Ford, Keats Publishing, 27 Pine St. New Canaan, CT 06840-0876, Paperback, 224 pages, \$10.95, 1996.

This is another book by Ford in which he describes 18 natural ways of retarding the aging process. These 18 ways fall into three main categories: physical, nutritional and psychological. The physical ways are described in detail, and consist of a large number of exercises designed to keep weight down, to build or restore muscle mass, and to improve fitness.

The nutritional ways include attention to diet and to the use of nutrients. He points out that it is normal to experience good health and vitality until we die. It is clear that his dietary or nutritional prescriptions follow the general principle that we should eat what we have adapted to, and we have not adapted to lots of sugar, additives, stimulants, starchy food, low in fiber, and to excess amounts of fat.

Readers of this journal will have noted that for almost every disease or group of diseases described this has been the universal diet. The question therefore arises, why does one universal diet help so many people with so many diverse diseases? There are several answers. The first is that there are not a large number of diseases. There is one universal disease called malnutrition—the result of the modern civilized diet caused by excessive intake of refined sugars and starches, by high fat intake, by excessive consumption of additives, and by low fiber. This has also been called the Saccharine Disease by Cleave.

The manifestations of the greatest human experiment ever conducted by humanity, i.e. the spoiling of our diet to which we had adapted successfully for millions of years by the modern highly experimental diet, which was introduced without any thought of the consequences.

The result has been the modern disease crisis, where in most highly industrialized

nations every second person has one or more chronic diseases. Since there is one major disease which we might call pan-malnutrition, then it is obvious that restoring the diet to which we have been adapted should cure the patients who have this disease, no matter whether it is arthritis or senility.

I agree with Ford's outline of what we need to do to remain youthful, and suggest it can also be most helpful in reversing many of the senile changes already present, but it is best to start early. Twenty-five years ago a patient I had treated successfully with this approach advised his mother-in-law to follow the same program. She did. However, her identical twin sister would not hear of this. Today, mother-in-law is normal, but her sister suffers from Alzheimers disease.

It has been estimated by veterinarian sciences that the quality of data obtained by studying one identical twin pair is equivalent to studying non-related animals using 40 animals in each group, the treated and the untreated group. This result is therefore very significant, but of course not the final proof. But this may be the only identical twin study that is available since orthomolecular nutrition, or nutritional medicine, has only become more common in the past ten years.

Ford does not claim his approach will help Alzheimers disease. By the time it is present, it is generally too late. But if his approach were followed by every one who reaches age 45, perhaps Alzheimers would become a much more uncommon condition. I hope there will be some who will undertake this experiment to undo the harm caused by this most pernicious of modern experiments, the destruction of the nutritional quality of most of our modern diet.

Review by Abram Hoffer, MD, Ph.D.