

“EATING FOR BETTER HEALTH”

The Foreword

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This is a book that you will find hard to put down. It is not just fascinating and informative: it is also intensely practical. For many, it may well be a life saver. Indeed, it should probably be compulsory reading for every adult and every household. For the uninitiated, much of its content will be new and inspirational, but even the most experienced doctor and therapist will find something new.

‘We are what we eat’ has become a cliché, but ‘healthy eating’ for much of the British population is an oxymoron. It is predicted that in fifteen years time almost half of the adult population will be obese. It is also predicted that our children will die younger than ourselves, simply because of obesity. Yet the UK spends less on its food, in proportion to its gross domestic product, than any other developed country. Diabetes, heart disease, cancer and a whole range of other chronic diseases are, in many cases, the result of a poor diet and, in an equal number, can be remedied by getting our diet right. Yet for the majority it is almost a question of ‘we don’t care what we eat’. This book illustrates wonderfully why we should care and, more importantly, shows us exactly how we can improve our health and resistance to disease in clear and practical ways.

The problems that this book seeks to solve go beyond the health and wellbeing of each of us as individuals, going to the heart of issues of public health and affordability of the health service. Getting our diet right costs very little when compared with the expense of treatment. The cost of pills, technology and hospital care to overcome the problems of bad diet will soon make every health service unaffordable. If we help ourselves and each other by eating more healthily, exercising more and living more fulfilling lives then we will be able to afford expensive technology for when it is appropriate and necessary. A good diet is not a panacea, but it is something that we can adopt fairly easily with a little bit of determination.

It is always flattering to be asked to write a foreword to a book. The downside too often is that you also have to read it! Not so this book. Once I opened it, I found find it difficult to stop reading. You will find it compulsive reading, and thereafter it will serve as a valuable work of reference, with its clear headings and index.

It is much more than simply a ‘good read’, however. It is packed with the best evidence that we have on healthy eating. Academics may quibble about the weight of evidence for some of the assertions, but they will be missing the point. The point is that in real life we have to make the best use of the best available evidence, and anyone taking advice from this book will be 90 per cent on the route towards better eating and health. They will also have a far better understanding of food itself and how different foods contribute to different aspects of our health. This may lead to a greater interest and connection with the different foods and how and where they are grown. For too many of us, food is simply a fuel. Fats, carbohydrates and proteins are just the diesel, leaded and unleaded petrol that keep us going. In reality, we should regard our eating habits as a complex and wonderful mixture of art and science. We should appreciate its complexity and also its power to heal and improve health. By being both practical and interesting and with a vast range of recipes to illustrate its lessons, this book should create a new generation of healthy-eating advocates, who will influence and interest those around them and improve their health and wellbeing.

As a GP, I will be recommending this book to my patients, ensuring that we have several copies in our patients’ library, and I shall take a copy home to try and influence those younger members of my family who think that they will live for ever and assume that healthy eating is just for health-conscious adults. So by all means use this book as a practical set of tips and recipes to guide your own path to better health, but do not be afraid to be an evangelist and pass the word on to those who might otherwise suffer. Congratulations to both authors on a courageous, inspiring and brilliant book.

