

Foods that Fight Cancer. Preventing Cancer through Diet

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Published by: McClelland & Stewart, 2006

Reviewed: Jan 2008

Pros

Chemistry is dished up with lots of appeal and beautiful photos communicating a deep passion for food. The reader is taken beyond the Nutrition Facts Table to the mysteries of nutrition, with ample scientific facts supporting the connection between making wise food choices and reducing the risk of cancer. Well over 150,000 copies have been sold and this shows that consumers are hungry to learn about the foods that will prevent cancer.

The charts, layout of chapters, and summaries make this book easy to follow. It's not often that a book with so much scientific background can be such a temptation to the senses. Through the use of solid evidence, the reader is motivated to see that food choices can make a difference to their health. A powerful chart of the risk factors for cancer shows that a poor diet is just as detrimental as smoking.

With a practical approach, the authors alleviate fears about genetic modification and the use of pesticides. Readers are given permission to enjoy produce by understanding that the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables outweigh any risks.

Cons

The use of chemical structures and high level language like 'organoleptic' seems overly complex for average consumers. Even though most of the book is very practical, there are times when the authors need to go further with facts to make it more useful, such as specific ingredients to look for when label reading, and how to incorporate the recommended foods into daily meals.

A few facts made us stop and ponder and want to look deeper, for example, the point about chewing your cruciferous vegetables thoroughly to fully release the active molecules. Some points are incorrect, for example, not all margarines have trans fat, as the author states.

Some statements need further explanation. For example, could a longer life expectancy among Americans be the reason for the huge disparities in rates of certain cancers in India versus the US? There also needs to be a better description of the type of peppers that have more health benefits. Finally, where guidance is given on how to choose the best soy beverages, we are left wondering if isolated soy proteins are a bad choice.

Occasionally we were skeptical, for example where the authors state that frozen vegetables are vastly inferior to fresh vegetables.

Bottom line

It's a keeper, a trusted source and a very good reference for health professionals and consumers. The flare in which chemistry and food are presented as art and the way that nutrition is portrayed as a fascinating discovery give this book strong consumer appeal. Even though the language and scientific terms are at times too high level, the take home message is as nutritionally sound as it is loud and clear.