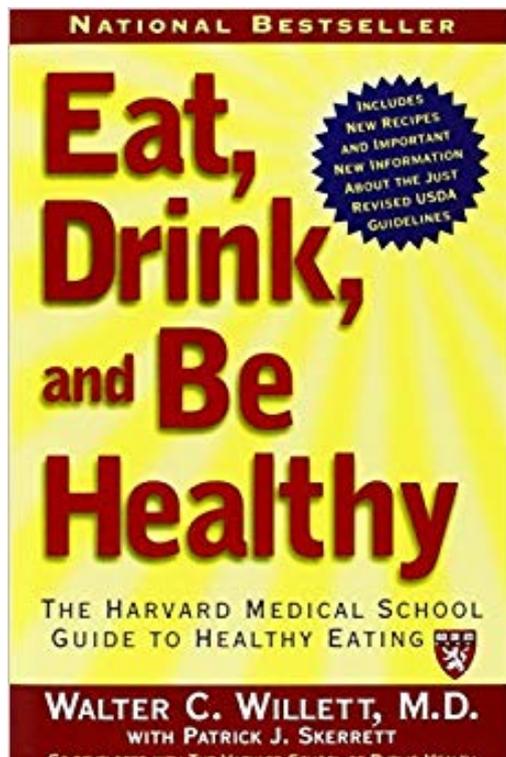


Eat, Drink, and Be Healthy: The Harvard Medical School Guide to Healthy Eating by M.D. Walter C. Willett, P.J. Skerrett



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The bestselling guide to healthy eating, debunking dietary myths, and proposing the radical benefits of low-carbohydrate diet, *Eat, Drink, and Be Healthy* is “filled with advice backed up by documented research” (Tara Parker-Pope, *The Wall Street Journal*). Dr. Walter Willett’s research is rooted in studies that tracked the health of dieters over twenty years, and in this groundbreaking book, he critiques the carbohydrate-laden diet proposed by the USDA. Exposing the problems of popular diets such as the Zone, South Beach, and Atkins, Dr. Willett offers eye-opening research on the optimum ratio of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins, and the relative importance of various food groups and supplements. Find out how to choose wisely between different types of fats, which fruits and vegetables provide the best health insurance, and the proportions of each to integrate into their daily diet.



Reviews of the **Eat, Drink, and Be Healthy: The Harvard Medical School Guide to Healthy Eating** by M.D. Walter C. Willett, P.J. Skerrett

invasion

Very nearly all that you can want from a nutrition book - research based, sober, practical and readable. The text directly opposes the then current USDA food pyramid and its demonisation of all fats combined with heavy emphasis on refined carbohydrates and dairy. Dr. Willett presents his own food pyramid, built on whole-grains, unsaturated fats and lean meat - in many aspects similar to the Mediterranean diet.

I could personally do without the entire recipes section, but other readers might find them useful. Definitely recommended.

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Most of us would like to know how to go about eating in a way that will optimize our longevity and vitality.

Unfortunately, there is a super-abundance of information about eating thrown at us, much of which is rife with half-truths or is just plain wrong. Some sources have an agenda, such as selling us products that enrich their bottom line but line our bottoms with unhealthy fat. Others are well-meaning but are working from an inadequate scientific base - witness the diet fads that have come and gone with regularity.

Dr. Willett has been to the mountaintop and received the wisdom to guide us in our quest. As the principal investigator for path-breaking studies observing two large populations followed over time, he has had the unique opportunity to correlate their nutritional habits with their health outcomes. That research has provided some of the best evidence of the benefits and limitations of specific dietary elements that is available today.

This book distills the insights gained from these studies and other parallel studies by other investigators into a practical guide for planning one's own optimal diet. The good news is that there are many degrees of freedom to the individual in planning his or her diet. It isn't necessary to eliminate carbs, or reduce fats, or stock up on proteins. The emphasis is on the right kind of carbs and fats and proteins. Within those boundaries, there are many different ways to accomplish the goal.

I highly recommend this book for those who want to improve their chances of avoiding strokes, heart attacks, diabetes and a host of other chronic diseases. You will still have work to do to determine which of the choices works best as a plan you can stick with in the long haul, but that's a lot better than bouncing from pillar to post with the latest fads.

I'm a medical doctor with experience in critically reviewing the medical literature and judging the strength of evidence in research papers. There have been some new developments since this book was published that are worth knowing about, but you will hardly go wrong by studying it carefully, re-reading several times and drawing from its wisdom.

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I found this book to be a very solid approach to the subject of nutrition, grounded in good science and free of any extremist thinking that can make so many diet plans impossible to follow. It did a really great job of describing how scientific thinking goes back and forth, and how studies and recommendations are so frequently based on accommodations and politics. I would recommend it to just about everyone, with a few reservations:

1. As one reviewer stated, the book is ten years old (with a six year old revision), so it's no longer cutting edge. Lots of what is said is all over the media, like the benefits of nuts. And much as I appreciated the discussion of overhyping calcium, there is more to dairy than just calcium and it's quite possible that milk products may be much better than the author thought in 2000. Yogurt especially should be considered as a potential health food. None of this is a reflection on the author, of course, but just the inevitable impact of age on a book of this sort.
2. Like so many books about food, the author is a bit sanguine about the difficulties of adopting a new diet. His diet plan is far less restrictive than some, but readers should still be prepared for just how much they will still crave foods like white bread and sweets. Far from being a social construct as the book suggests in one spot, the human preference for rich and highly refined foods is inborn and (I would speculate) based on the fact that such foods are simply easier to eat and digest.
3. My personal approach is to buy the most natural food I can under most circumstances. Much as it recommends whole foods like grains and nuts, the book does not really discourage use certain margarines and artificial sweeteners. I would generally avoid such things simply based on the past experience that many factory foods have turned out to have more problems than anticipated.
4. I would make more assertive use of supplements than the book recommends. I typically take 8 or 9 different tablets daily, including extra D and a B complex, and I think it is helpful.

When it comes to exercise, healthy eating and weight loss, there is no such thing as "easy". There is such a thing as "possible", and this author does a pretty good job of getting us thinking on that track.

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