

THE **Men's Health**

**Your
completely
delicious guide
to eating well,
looking great,
and staying
lean for life!**

***By Joel Weber,
with Mike
Zimmerman***

BIG BOOK OF FOOD & NUTRITION



THE Men'sHealth

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& NUTRITION

This book is intended as a reference volume only, not as a medical manual.
The information given here is designed to help you make informed decisions about your health. It is not intended as a substitute for any treatment that may have been prescribed by your doctor. If you suspect that you have a medical problem, we urge you to seek competent medical help.

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We inspire and enable people to improve their lives and the world around them.

Acknowledgments

Many good people helped *The Men's Health Big Book of Food & Nutrition* arrive in your hands, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank them.

First among them are Rodale Inc. chairman and CEO Maria Rodale and the members of the Rodale family. Rodale is a truly unique publishing company and never ceases "to inspire and enable people to improve their lives and the world around them." My parents were *Organic Gardening* subscribers many decades ago, and the wisdom from those pages nurtured the gardens that fed me during my childhood. Thank you. I also praise *Men's Health* senior vice president, editor-in-chief, and brand leader David Zinczenko. DZ's Midas touch is simply phenomenal, and it's been an honor to work with him. Ditto Stephen Perrine, vice president and editor-in-chief of *Men's Health* Books, who has opened so many doors for me that I'll probably never be able to fully thank him. A sincere, heartfelt thanks for giving me so many wonderful opportunities.

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Last but not least: my wife, Laurel. In many ways we first bonded over food, and I look forward to cooking many meals together and tasting a multitude of flavors for years to come.

Eat wisely, America.

—Joel Weber

Introduction:
Indulge Your Way to a Better Body

**Eating is
easy.**

But making smart choices about
what to eat seems harder and harder each day.
Well, that's about to change.





Here in 21st-century America, where we've become experts at building bridges, erecting skyscrapers, and posting cat videos to YouTube, we've also become experts at producing food. In 1920, the average American farmer could harvest 20 bushels of corn an acre. Ninety years later, his great-grandson can bag upward of 180 bushels on the same acre. Food is everywhere in America, and it's dirt cheap: 89¢ crunchy tacos, \$1 cheeseburgers, and \$5 footlongs. Take your pick—it's all been engineered to taste pretty darn good.

The problem with all that easy food? Humans are hardwired to feed. We're animals, after all, so when it's feeding time, our instinct is to feast mindlessly until we can feast no more, just like pigs lining up at a trough, cows entering a pasture, or chickens wandering a coop. If there's still soup in the bowl, you'll slurp it. If there's still food on a plate, you'll eat it. If there's still Coke in your Big Gulp, you'll drink it. Your gut basically just steamrolls over your brain; it'll alert you once you've chewed

through the takeout and hit Styrofoam or reached an inedible wrapper. Food researchers call this phenomenon “mindless eating.”

And mindless eating is exactly why so many of us carry *too much weight*—even as we’re taking in *too little nutrition*.

Feeding has become so easy that since the Carter administration, Americans have added the equivalent of two extra meals to their days. We now consume 2,533 calories daily—21 percent more than we did in 1977, according to a 2010 study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. And the results are predictable: Obesity and diabetes rates have grown as much as 50 percent since 1960.

We’ve given ourselves the power to produce and consume food at will. But we haven’t given ourselves the information we need to manage all that power. What we’ve done is the equivalent of giving a brand-new Harley to a 9-year-old who’s been taught to ride a 10-speed. No instructions, no training, no speed limits—just a lot of horsepower, set loose on a dangerous obstacle course. It’s no wonder there are so many wrecks.

Well, here at last is the rule book, the authoritative guide to eating in the 21st century—the book they should have given all of us the first time we picked up a fork and a knife. Armed with the information within, you’ll become a much smarter eater, one capable of harnessing the power of food. You’ll learn to eat what you want, but in a smarter, leaner, healthier way. You’ll learn to enjoy more, better, and less-expensive food. And, to quote that hairy guy from the Men’s Warehouse commercials, you’re going to like the way you look.

15 reasons you can't go another meal without this book.

1. You'll Eat Your Way to a Leaner Body

This is not a “diet” book. Most diet plans force you to cut calories until you're practically starving, leading you to lose not just fat but valuable muscle as well. And muscle is crucial to protecting you from injury, helping you burn fat, and developing the lean, firm shape you desire. What's more, it also keeps your metabolism—your body's internal furnace—firing. Sacrifice muscle by restricting calories, and you're priming your body to gain weight back more easily than before. That's what happens in “yo-yo dieting,”

and it's exactly why this book won't teach you to eat less. It will teach you to eat better.

2. You'll Enjoy Better Food

Not rabbit food. In fact, *The Big Book of Food & Nutrition* will establish some easy rules to eat by. You'll learn about E-A-T-S, the easiest nutrition plan ever, which will help you enjoy foods like, oh, steaks, burgers, ribs . . . the stuff you crave! Because humans crave protein, and protein is good—it helps us maintain muscle, enhances metabolism, and leads the assault on body fat.

64

Percentage of men who spend little or no time preparing their daily meals.

Not only does protein promote satiety by slowing down your appetite and making you feel full more quickly than either carbohydrates or fats, your body uses more energy to digest protein than it does to process carbohydrates or fat. “That means that the more protein you eat, the harder your body has to work to digest it, and the more calories you’ll burn in the process,” says Douglas Kalman, MS, RD, director of nutrition and research at Miami Research Associates. When a high-protein diet was compared with a high-carbohydrate diet at Arizona State University, for instance, people who ate the former burned more than twice as many calories in the hours following their meal as those eating carbs. And people who begin their days with high-protein eggs lose 65 percent more weight than those who eat a bagel with the same number of calories, according to a study in the *International Journal of Obesity*.

3. You’ll Eat More and Weigh Less

It probably sounds counterintuitive: In order to weigh less, you need to eat more often. Skipping a meal creates a biological billboard that says, “We’re starving here!” Your body responds by slowing your metabolism—its calorie-burning furnace—in order to hold on to its existing energy stores. If the food shortage continues, you’ll begin burning muscle tissue,

which will lower your metabolic rate further. Even something as minor as rushing out the door without eating breakfast can reduce your metabolic rate by 10 percent, according to Leslie Bonci, RD, MPH, director of sports nutrition at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. With *The Big Book of Food & Nutrition*, you’ll learn to snack—smartly and often—to keep your metabolism’s furnace stoked. Five small meals is a good number to strive for—breakfast, lunch, and dinner, as well as two protein-packed snacks, such as almonds or cheese—but you can even try for seven or eight. “People tend to eat around their cravings, snacking and nibbling until they’ve taken in 500 calories and still aren’t satisfied,” says D. Milton Stokes, MPH, RD. Instead of fighting your food urges, you’ll just find a healthier way to satisfy them.

4. You’ll Lose More Fat—Without Going “Low-Fat”

Contrary to popular belief, you actually have to eat fat in order to lose fat. But you don’t have to go whole hog on a low-carb diet to see results. Swapping just a few hundred carb calories for fat calories a day—by, say, using butter instead of jam on toast or drinking milk instead of a sports drink after you work out—will help you stay fuller longer and gain fewer pounds, according to a recent study at the University of Alabama.

5. You'll Keep Your Brain Young

Rush University researchers discovered that eating certain nutrients (highlighted throughout *The Big Book of Food & Nutrition*) may keep your brain young. In a study of 3,000 people age 65 and over, scientists calculated that those who ate more than two servings of vegetables a day had a 40 percent slower rate of cognitive decline than those who ate one serving or less. Specifically, green leafy vegetables, such as collard greens, kale, romaine lettuce, and spinach, were the most effective mental medicine. The likely reason: They're all rich in folate and vitamin E, a potent compound that fights the oxidative stress and inflammation that age your brain.

6. You'll Sleep Better

In these pages, you'll discover which foods trigger the neurochemicals that induce sleepiness—and help you wake up feeling refreshed. Eating better may even lead to a more interesting night's sleep, scientists at Santa Clara University report. In their study, people who maintained healthy diets experienced more-vivid dreams, including the sexual kind, than those who regularly ate the most fast food. The researchers aren't sure how specific foods affect dreaming, but emerging research suggests that higher blood-sugar levels, which are often the result of weight gain or high

carbohydrate intake, may reduce the amount of time spent in deep slumber.

7. You'll Be More Productive

If you need to stay sharp and focused for an afternoon business meeting, parking yourself at the local Starbucks will only go so far. Instead, eat foods known to enhance energy and sharpness, says Oxford University biochemist John Stanley, PhD. Choosing a combination of protein (which produces neurotransmitters, supporters of cognitive performance); minerals and vitamins like magnesium, iron, and B vitamins that help battle fatigue; and secret mind/body foods (like the Indian spice turmeric) that improve brain cell function could make the difference in your day. You'll discover a list of foods with such brain- and energy-boosting effects in the coming pages.

8. You'll Derail Diabetes

Although not an infectious disease, type 2 diabetes seems to be spreading like mono at a kissing booth. Since 1980, its prevalence in the United States has risen by 47 percent, a trend that's expected to hike northward during the next decade, as more than 1.6 million new cases will be diagnosed each year. Nearly half of American men today either have the condition or are on the verge of developing it, according to one report from the National Institutes of

47,000

The number of products in the average American grocery store.

Health. The consequences of this potential increase will be considerable: Diabetes is already the primary cause of cardiovascular disease, and can slash a man's life span by an average of 13 years. Can preventing diabetes and its complications be as simple as eating the right foods? Certain foods, especially carbohydrates, can cause blood sugar levels to spike, whereas nutrients in other foods—such as the calcium in dairy products, according to a research review in the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition*—may reduce the risk of metabolic syndrome, a precursor to diabetes. And a 2010 article in the journal *Clinical Diabetes* found that, in addition to just 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week, people at risk for diabetes should 1) cap their caloric intake from fat at 30 percent, 2) reduce their overall calorie intake, and 3) eat as many fruits, vegetables, and fiber-rich foods as possible. You'll get a better understanding of each recommendation in this book.

9. You'll Look Younger

After researchers in Australia, Indonesia, and Sweden studied the diets of 400 elderly men and women, they found that those who ate the most leafy green vegetables and beans had the fewest wrinkles. Spinach and beans—two all-stars explored in-depth in *The Big Book of Food & Nutrition*—are full of compounds that help prevent and repair damaged skin cells as you get

older. Keep orange-colored foods, such as sweet potatoes, in your pantry, too. They're loaded with vitamin C, which smoothes out wrinkles by stimulating the production of collagen. A study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that volunteers who consumed 4 milligrams of vitamin C, about half a small sweet potato, daily for three years decreased the appearance of wrinkles by 11 percent.

10. You'll Cut Your Cancer Risk

If pharmaceutical companies were allowed to patent vegetables, we'd all need a prescription to buy tomatoes. "Tomatoes are loaded with lycopene, an important phytochemical with antioxidant properties, as well as glutamic acid, an amino acid, which work together to prevent prostate cancer," says Keith Block, MD, medical director of the Block Center for Integrative Cancer Treatment in Evanston, Illinois. You may have also heard that cooked tomato products contain the highest levels of lycopene, but only in *The Big Book of Food & Nutrition* will you learn cool tips on maximizing its effects. Example: adding a carrot, which is rich in beta-carotene, to your Bolognese will guide the lycopene to your prostate gland. USDA researchers found that when men were simultaneously given beta-carotene and lycopene supplements, more lycopene ended up in their bodies. And eating spaghetti is obviously a lot

3,000

The number of ingredients on the FDA's list of "safe" food additives.

more fun than eating pills. There are dozens of similar food combinations that have the same miraculous disease-fighting effects. You'll discover them in this book.

11. You'll Build Stronger Bones—with Beer

You probably know that a glass of milk can help cut your risk of osteoporosis by giving your body a much-needed blast of calcium and vitamin D. But another overlooked nutrient the body uses for maintaining strong bones is silicon, and to consume enough to keep your bones healthy, you may need to eat more whole grains and drink some beer, according to a report in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Most men's consumption of silicon goes down as they grow older, and that lower consumption could help explain why a man's bones become more fragile as he ages, says Douglas Kiel, MD, the study's author. "Increasing the amount of silicon in your diet by eating more whole grains and drinking more beer could help fight the problem," he says. *The Big Book of Food & Nutrition* will fill you up with everything else that's been missing from your diet.

12. You'll Improve Your Fitness and Your Physique

Every guy in the gym knows he should consume some protein before and after

a workout. Resistance training breaks down muscle, which requires a fresh infusion of amino acids to repair and rebuild it. "If you're lifting weights and you don't consume protein, it's almost counterproductive," says Jeffrey Volek, PhD, RD, a nutrition and exercise researcher at the University of Connecticut. "When you work out, your muscles are primed to respond to protein," he says, "and you have a window of opportunity to promote muscle growth." Protein also helps build enzymes that allow your body to adapt to endurance sports like running and biking. But how much protein, and when, and what kind? *The Big Book of Food & Nutrition* will help you time your meals and snacks for peak performance. Volek recommends splitting your dose of protein, eating half 30 minutes before the workout and the other half 30 minutes after. (One study, published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, pinpointed 20 grams as the best amount of post-workout protein to maximize muscle growth.) A simple protein shake or nutrition bar is most portable and convenient. But the more time and thought you put into it, the more benefits you'll receive, because the quickest option isn't always the best one. "Whole foods provide a higher quality of the proteins, carbs, and fats your body needs," says Alan Aragon, MS. For a quick fix, pair a protein with a carbohydrate—some turkey or almond butter with a slice of bread, for instance.

20

Percentage of people who eat the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

13. You'll Handle Stress Better

You may not be able to escape to a beachside hammock every time stress sets in, but you might find the same effect just by hitting the kitchen. Example: A piece of fruit may have caused a good deal of strife in the Garden of Eden, but here in modern times, it's actually a great chaos reducer. That's because the sugar in fruit will give you the little burst of energy that your adrenaline-charged body is craving. Any kind of fruit is fine, but reach for oranges on particularly crazy days, recommends Pam Peeke, MD, MPH, an assistant professor of medicine at the University of Maryland. Not only can the vitamin C help lower your body's production of cortisol, a stress hormone that breaks down muscle, but peeling an orange will also keep your hands and mouth busy. What's more, there might even be some truth to that old wives' tale that people who eat produce—an important element of the E-A-T-S plan—never get fat. According to Louisiana State University researchers, people who ate half a grapefruit three times a day lost 4 pounds in 12 weeks, even though they hadn't deliberately altered any other part of their diets. They also lowered their blood pressure by 6 points, enough to reduce their risk of stroke by 40 percent. The mechanism isn't clear, but the researchers speculate that

grapefruit's acidity may slow your rate of digestion, helping to keep you full longer.

14. You'll Add (Happy, Healthy) Years to Your Life

Every day, you make hundreds of decisions that are pointing you toward a longer life or a shorter one. Nowhere are those decisions more clear than at the dinner table, and *The Big Book of Food & Nutrition* will help you understand just how easy healthier decisions can be. For example, when Loma Linda University researchers tracked the lifestyle habits of 34,000 Seventh-Day Adventists—a population famous for its longevity—they discovered that those who munched nuts five days a week earned an extra 2.9 years on the planet. Similarly, Italian researchers found that eating as little as one cup of raw vegetables daily can add two years to your life. (Why raw? Cooking can deplete up to 30 percent of the antioxidants in vegetables.) And as long as you're going to seriously consider eating a salad before your next meal, stop bothering with those low-fat dressings. A recent Ohio State University study showed that salads eaten with full-fat dressings help with the absorption of a carotenoid called lutein, which is found in leafy green vegetables and has been shown to benefit vision.

20

Percentage of calories in a typical fast-food meal that come just from the oil used to fry the french fries.

15. You'll Still Be at the Top of Your Game—in 2055!

More and more research indicates that, just like the body, the brain ages relative to the way it's fed and exercised. For example, did you know that 35 percent of your brain is pure fatty acids, and that you can lose fat from your brain even as you're gaining it around your belly? But eating the right kinds of fats can help your brain stay as highly functioning as the day you took your SATs. A 2008 University of Cincinnati study, for instance, found that the brain tissue of 65- to 80-year-olds contained 22 percent less docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), an important type of omega-3 fatty acid, than the brain tissue of 29- to 35-year-olds. "If you want to keep your wits about you as you age, start consuming omega-3s now," says William Harris, PhD, a nutrition researcher at the University of South Dakota. You'll find them in fatty fish like tuna and

sardines and in certain nuts and seeds, like flax and walnuts, and *The Big Book of Food & Nutrition* will help you understand why the average guy isn't getting enough of them.

That's a lot of promises for one book, but it doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of the nutritional information you'll find in these pages. From simple food swaps that can strip away calories (just having two glasses of 1 percent milk instead of whole milk every day will save you more than 32,000 calories, or 9 pounds, a year), to simple ways to maximize your nutritional intake (pick a red bell pepper over a green one and get nine times as much vitamin A), *The Big Book of Food & Nutrition* is packed with essential information that will make your nutritional life healthier than ever.

Yes, eating is easy.

Now eating smart has become even easier!

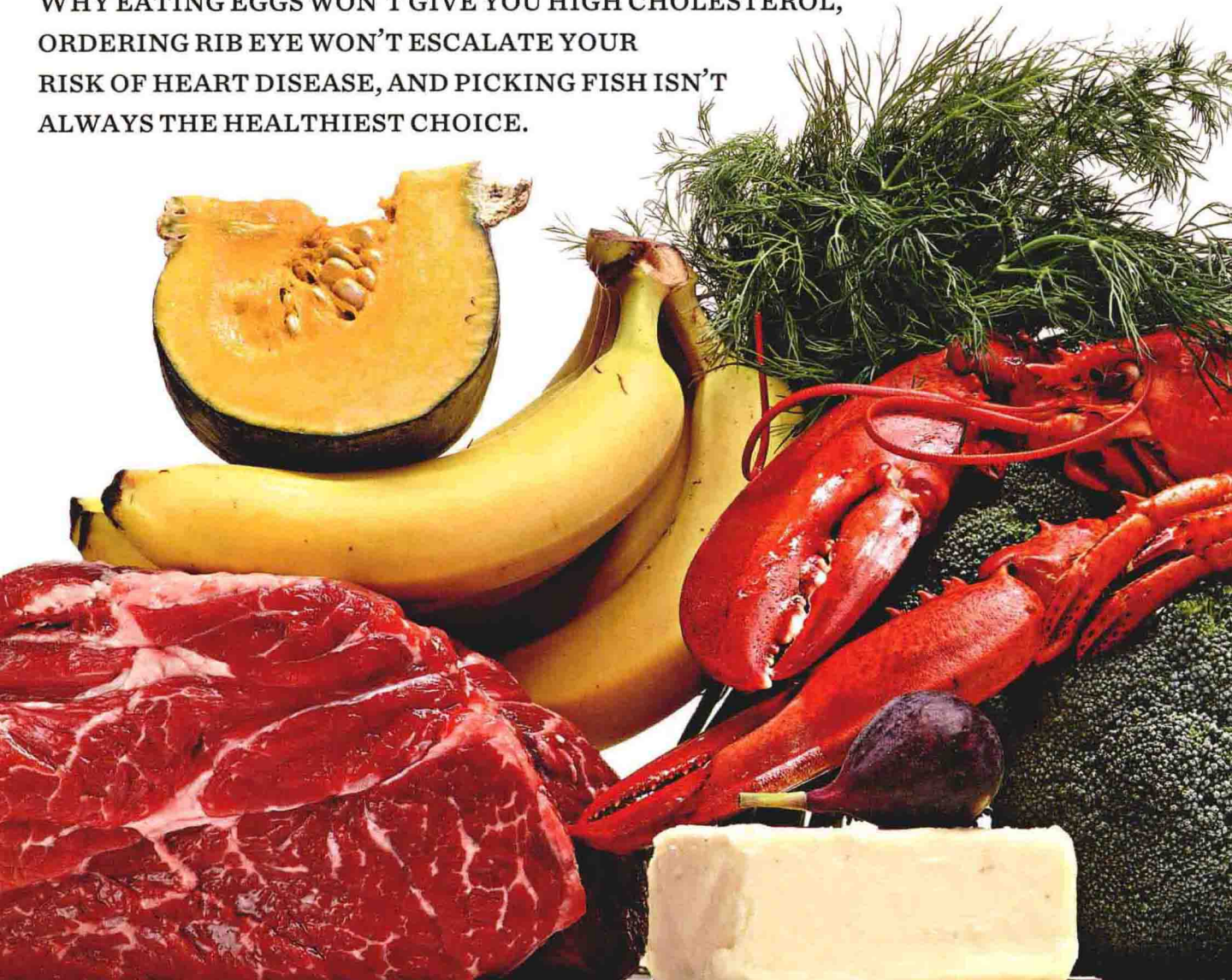
459

Number of calories the average person consumes from beverages each day.

Chapter 1:

Your Most Frequently Asked Food Questions, Answered

WHY EATING EGGS WON'T GIVE YOU HIGH CHOLESTEROL,
ORDERING RIB EYE WON'T ESCALATE YOUR
RISK OF HEART DISEASE, AND PICKING FISH ISN'T
ALWAYS THE HEALTHIEST CHOICE.



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