

Diet

Grandma was right

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SUPPOSE you are a fat New Yorker. Suppose, furthermore, that you are increasingly susceptible to heart disease and you have to get the pounds off. Time is not on your side, and there are more than 25,000 diet books in print. Where do you go to find dependable counsel? The man you need, many cardiac specialists will tell you, is a New Jersey doctor named Joel Fuhrman who specialises in nutrition.

Dr Fuhrman dislikes what he regards as faddish regimes: Barry Sears's "zone diet", Dr Atkins's low-carb solution and James D'Adamo's controversial advice for people with different blood groups. Nor is he a fan of the USDA diet recommendations that, he says, have created the paradox of a population that is overfed but undernourished.

The pitfall of most diets, Dr Fuhrman argues, is that they tend to regulate macronutrients—proteins, fats and carbohydrates. The focus of "Eat to Live" is on micronutrients—vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and phytochemicals that promote health. The goal of a healthy diet, he says, is to get the most micronutrients from the fewest calories.

Dr Fuhrman suggests almost eliminating fats and starches in favour of greens, beans and fruit. His regime even works if you don't do a lot of exercise. This reviewer, who has become something of an expert on diets over the years, lost ten pounds (4.5 kilos) in one month; the norm, Dr Fuhrman claims, is 15. Empty calories from soft drinks, dairy products, meat and starches or processed foods with little to no micronutrition are easily converted to fat and extra poundage. So-called "2 percent" milk claims to be a diet food, but 35% of its calories come from fat. On the other hand, green vegetables are an excellent source of protein as well as antioxidants that reduce risk of cancer and heart disease. By weight, the amount of protein they contain is insignificant, but in terms of calories broccoli is 45% protein, while a cheeseburger contains only 21%.

Sit up, George Bush senior, scourge of broccoli. Without the protein in greens, how else could your Texan cattle develop all that tasty muscle?

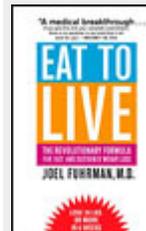
Eat to Live: The Revolutionary Formula for Fast and Sustained Weight Loss.

By Joel Fuhrman.

Little Brown; 224 pages; \$23.95. Piatkus Books; £6.99

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