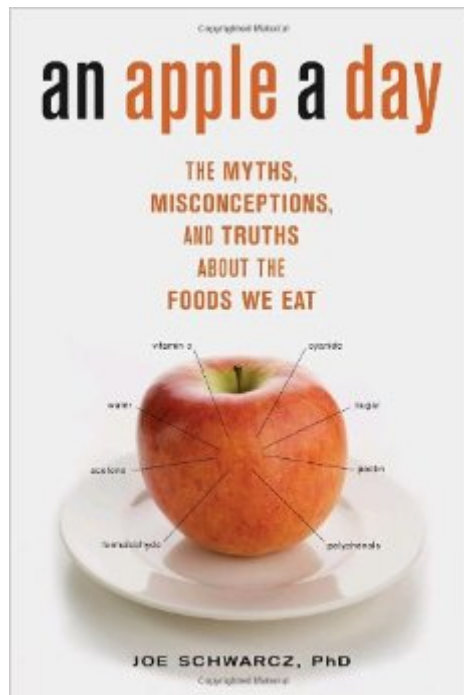


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An Apple A Day: The Myths, Misconceptions, And Truths About The Foods We Eat



Synopsis

Eat salmon. It's full of good omega-3 fats. Don't eat salmon. It's full of PCBs and mercury. Eat more veggies. They're full of good antioxidants. Don't eat more veggies. The pesticides will give you cancer. Forget your dinner jacket and put on your lab coat: you have to be a nutritional scientist these days before you sit down to eat "which is why we need Dr. Joe Schwarcz, the expert in connecting chemistry to everyday life. In *An Apple a Day*, he's taken his thorough knowledge of food chemistry, applied it to today's top food fears, trends, and questions, and leavened it with his trademark lighthearted approach. The result is both an entertaining revelation of the miracles of science happening in our bodies every time we bite into a morsel of food, and a telling exploration of the myths, claims, and misconceptions surrounding our obsession with diets, nutrition, and weight. Looking first at how food affects our health, Dr. Joe examines what's in tomatoes, soy, and broccoli that can keep us healthy and how the hundreds of compounds in a single food react when they hit our bodies. Then he investigates how we manipulate our food supply, delving into the science of food additives and what benefits we might realize from adding bacteria to certain foods. He clears up the confusion about contaminants, examining everything from pesticide residues, remnants of antibiotics, the dreaded trans fats, and chemicals that may leach from cookware. And he takes a studied look at the science of calories and weighs in on popular diets.

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Customer Reviews

"Phew! That was a lot to digest, wasn't it?" Those are the words author Joe Schwarcz uses at the

conclusion of his book which is jam-packed with the latest data, debates, and drama about the foods (and chemicals therein) we eat. His book is indeed a full-course meal...and then some. First, he leads us through a tour of naturally occurring substances in our food supply, including flax, fiber, omega-3 fats, antioxidants, flavanols, vitamins, and minerals. Next, he presents the most controversial issues related to the manipulation of our food supply: fortifying with iron and fluoride; sweetening with natural and artificial sweeteners; manipulating genes in our food; and preserving with sulphites, viruses, and radiation. Then, he takes us up close and personal with the contaminants in our food supply, including pesticides, hormones, BPA, PCBs, and dioxins. And, finally, Joe leads us through the nutritional hype surrounding some of the latest nutritional fads such as goji juice, detoxing, DHEA, and green tea. It's likely your head will be spinning after consuming all the nutritional chemistry, controversy and commentary that Joe serves up. (And, to answer his question above: yes, it is a lot to digest!) He does do an impressive job in guiding us through the maze of myths, misconceptions and truths about the foods we eat, but--as food science is rarely a conclusive one--be prepared to be confused at times. Fortunately, Joe offers relief at the end of the book, to help us digest it all: "There is more to life than worrying about every morsel of food we put into our mouths. What matters is the overall diet..."

If you have certain existing beliefs about the efficacy of certain foods, you will most likely find yourself maddened or upset with certain chapters, but there are a lot of good points made throughout the book to make up for it. As there are 67 short chapters on everything from milk, to flax, to pesticides and artificial sweeteners, there is a little bit of something for everybody with questions about the science of food. I can honestly say that the majority (though not all) of it falls in line with the research I've personally gone through on a variety of the subject matter. One of the pitfalls of nutrition though is reductionism (science at its core being), whereby we are more and more starting to view food as chemical compounds, rather than food. You don't eat calcium (unless it's a supplement), you consume food. Overall this book is a good reference book that offers the scientists point of view on food. Like it or not we have entered a scientific food era, and as the world's population increases so will our nutritional demands and the impact of science on that (somewhat unfortunately) will be prevalent as we try to squeeze more efficiency out of limited amounts of land, while trying to minimize our environmental impact and other public health factors. Luckily enough you still have a choice surrounding the other 'non-scientific' components of food, like where your food comes from, what conditions was it raised in, where will you eat it, and with whom. Take this book as only one very small component of diet and nutrition. Two of the most important concepts: 1 -

Toxicity (Poison) is a matter of dosage.

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