

***Good Calories, Bad Calories*, by Gary Taubes** (Hardcover, Knopf, 640 pages, 2007, ISBN-10: 1400040787, ISBN-13: 978-1400040780, \$27.95).

Gary Taubes' book, *Good Calories, Bad Calories*, is a brilliantly researched myth buster. His book is a powerful indictment against the popular dietary recommendations that surfaced in the 20th Century promoting the health benefits of a low-fat diet. This questionable, new dietary recommendation has been well entrenched in our minds because of these highly recognizable dietary factoids¹: "fat causes fat," "cholesterol causes heart disease," "calories count," and "eat more fruits and vegetables." Taubes' book is a very revealing exposé about the weak science behind these modern dietary beliefs as well as a very strong validation for the wise dietary patterns of our ancestors.

Since the 1950s, our ancestral nutritional wisdom has been trumped by two unproven and damaging theories – one theory suggests that animal fats cause heart disease and obesity, the second theory is that we can lose weight or improve our health by increasing our consumption of carbohydrates (grains, fruits, and vegetables). These theories have convinced millions of unsuspecting people to follow a more "vegetable based" diet – a low-animal-fat, high-carbohydrate diet that is less nutrient-dense than the high-animal-fat, low-carbohydrate diet that sustained our ancestors for millennia. It is important to note that our ancestors did not suffer from the devastatingly-high rates of chronic disease that we see today and yet they ate diets high in animal fats (including fatty meats and fish, butter, cream, cheese, lard, duck, and goose fat) and low in carbohydrates (tubers, berries, and greens).

One reason why we have seen such a dramatic shift in our diet has to do with the fact that, as cities have become more crowded since the 1800s, governments and "Big Food" have discovered that it is more practical (and more profitable) to feed large populations with plant-based foods over animal-based foods (hence, the shift from foods like butter and lard to margarine, and from meats to grain).

As we have decreased the consumption of animal fats, we have increased our consumption of carbohydrates (fruits, vegetables, and grains). Due to the taxing nature the overconsumption of carbohydrates can have on the pancreas, this is yet another very damaging dietary trend. Taubes is not suggesting that we remove grains, fruits, and vegetables from our diets; but he is pointing out that the increase in obesity and chronic disease correlates very closely with the increase in consumption of carbohydrates and is warning us that we could be eating too many of these foods.

Taubes does a very detailed job describing examples of several research projects which have successfully shown that


diets that mimic our ancestral diets (high in animal fats and low in carbohydrate) have led to weight loss, increased energy, and improved sense of well-being.

Even though there is plenty of encouraging research showing the health benefits of diets high in animal fat and low in carbohydrate, many opponents call the traditional high-fat/low-carb diet "controversial." Strange, considering that the

low-fat/high-carb diet fad that surfaced in the 20th century is extremely new and therefore much more controversial than a diet that kept us free from epidemic rates of chronic and degenerative diseases for millennia.

Since the government, scientific community, physicians, and food industry began promoting the health benefits of a diet low in animal fats, we are both sicker and fatter. Despite the fact that the low-fat foods have not been successful at controlling our weight or improving our health, the low-fat industry has been a boon for the food conglomerates. And, by default, now that we are sicker, Big Pharma also gets to make huge profits from the damaging health effects of such bad dietary advice.

Good Calories, Bad Calories is a brilliantly written book about the reasons why we need to return to common sense by integrating traditional dietary habits back into our meals. Thanks to Taubes, we have a lot to celebrate – animal fats have now been vindicated and can return to their rightful place on our dinner plate. If your ancestral lines happen to be Irish, you can now feel "guilt free" and return to your traditional "meat and potato" diet (just make sure your potato is loaded with plenty of high-fat sour cream and real butter).

Oh, and by the way, when you are done with the book, be sure to loan it to your physician (92% of misinformed physicians still promote the low-fat diet). 

Pam Killeen is the health researcher and writer as well as the co-author of the New York Times bestselling book, The Great Bird Flu Hoax. She is a "recovering vegan," an advocate for real food, and a grateful member of the Weston A. Price Foundation. Her website is: www.pamkilleen.com and email: healthmaps@hotmail.com.

References

- 1 Because the theories that "fat makes you fat" and "cholesterol causes heart disease" have never been proven, they could be referred to as "factoids." By definition, according to dictionary.com, factoids are pieces "of unverified or inaccurate information that is presented in the press as factual, often as part of a publicity effort, and that is then accepted as true because of frequent repetition."

