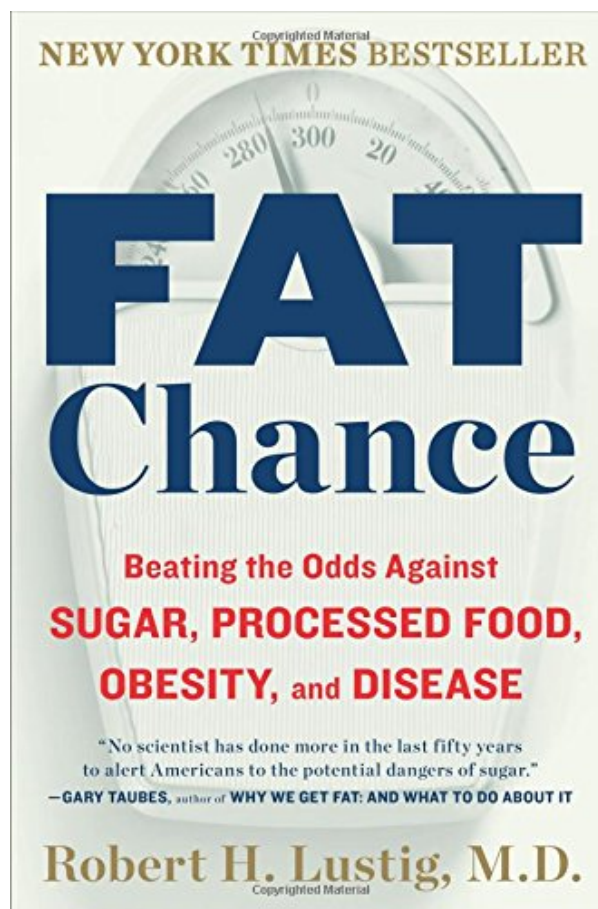


**FAT CHANCE: BEATING THE ODDS  
AGAINST SUGAR, PROCESSED FOOD,  
OBESITY, AND DISEASE BY ROBERT H.  
LUSTIG**



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# FAT Chance

Beating the Odds Against  
**SUGAR, PROCESSED FOOD,  
OBESITY, and DISEASE**

“No scientist has done more in the last fifty years  
to alert Americans to the potential dangers of sugar.”

—GARY TAUBES, author of **WHY WE GET FAT: AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT**

**Robert H. Lustig, M.D.**

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## Review

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--Gary Taubes, author of Good Calories, Bad Calories and Why We Get Fat

“Our eating habits are killing us. In this timely and important book, Dr. Robert Lustig presents the scientific evidence for the toxicity of sugar and the disastrous effects of modern industrial food on the hormones that control hunger, satiety, and weight. He gives recommendations for a personal solution to the problem we face and also suggests a public policy solution. Fat Chance is the best book I've read on the relationship between diet and health and the clearest explanation of epidemic obesity in our society.”

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## Paleo Diet movement

“Robert Lustig is neither ringing an alarm bell nor giving us a gentle, paternalistic nudge. His message is more authentic. He is a medical doctor issuing a prescription. In order to address a current cocktail of health threats, Americans must alter their diets and do so radically. Those alterations must begin with a dramatic reduction in the consumption of sugars.”

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New York Times Bestseller

Robert Lustig's 90-minute YouTube video "Sugar: The Bitter Truth", has been viewed more than six million times. Now, in this much anticipated book, he documents the science and the politics that have led to the pandemic of chronic disease over the last 30 years.

In the late 1970s when the government mandated we get the fat out of our food, the food industry responded by pouring more sugar in. The result has been a perfect storm, disastrously altering our biochemistry and driving our eating habits out of our control.

To help us lose weight and recover our health, Lustig presents personal strategies to readjust the key hormones that regulate hunger, reward, and stress; and societal strategies to improve the health of the next generation. Compelling, controversial, and completely based in science, Fat Chance debunks the widely held notion to prove "a calorie is NOT a calorie." More timely than ever now that newest edition of The Dietary Guidelines for Americans has for the first time placed hard limits on the amount of sugar we should consume, Fat Chance takes science to its logical conclusion to improve health worldwide.

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Here's what's in the real Mediterranean diet: high olive oil consumption (mono-unsaturated fat); legumes (beans, lentils, peas); fruits, vegetables, and unrefined grains (fiber); dairy products (saturated fat); eggs (high-quality protein); fish (omega-3s); and wine in moderation (resveratrol, flavonoids, and likely other factors). Americans misunderstand the Mediterranean diet, because they think it is all about pasta, which is

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366 of 377 people found the following review helpful.

Life changing nutritional education

By Amazon customer

I had hit a wall in terms of eating right and dieting. Then my sister shared with me how much she was able to lower her LDL in her cholesterol by reducing her sugar intake. I started to Google articles on sugar and came across Dr Lustig's You Tube video. It was 90 minutes but it was, in a word, captivating. I was then fortunate to find out that he was coming out with a book at the end of December. I had it delivered to my Kindle while on a beach vacation during the Christmas/ New Year's holidays.

Well, as much as that does not sound like a good vacation book (I did read 2 other novels), it was fantastic on multiple levels. Dr Lustig has a gift because not only is he obviously educated in his field but he is articulate and extremely thorough.

Specifically, his book details how sugar is bad for you but he takes it to a level where you totally get it. He explains it from angles that you have never even realized existed...politically, economically, socially and of course, scientifically. And it is not just sugar. He gets into every corner of nutrition....fiber, insulin, leptin, stress, exercise. The book covers everything. It is obvious he put a tremendous amount of effort into this book. He also states very clearly that he has scientific back-up to all of his statements.

As I mentioned above, I was looking for a "new diet book" but this book is much more than that. Realizing what is going on in my body because I absolutely love and eat so many carbs was mind boggling. He teaches you all about food labels and let me tell you, it is an education. I am married over 25 years and my wife always does the food shopping. This book had such an effect on me, that I went food shopping by myself so that I could take the time and read the food labels. You cannot believe how much sugar is in your food. I am not even viewing my change in eating as a diet. This is about understanding what is going on with all of the garbage that we consume. For me, it is a change of life. The book just clicked with me.

If you want to live longer( in addition to many other benefits such as losing weight), read this book cover to cover. I also love the fact that he endorses the glass of red wine I am drinking right now.

391 of 413 people found the following review helpful.

A book that might change how you eat!

By Christina Dudley

I devoured this book.

Lustig, a pediatric endocrinologist at UCSF whose "Sugar: The Bitter Truth" lecture video got lots of hits on YouTube, has been watching the rise of obesity and its attendant ills in his practice over the last umpteen years. While not every obese person is unhealthy (and many people with acceptable BMIs still suffer from metabolic syndrome), obesity frequently brings in train "the cluster of chronic metabolic diseases...which includes...type 2 diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), lipid (blood fat) disorders, and cardiovascular disease," along with "co-morbidities associated with obesity, such as orthopedic problems, sleep apnea, gallstones, and depression." Lustig even mentioned the increase of dementia as tied to this whole mess, as insulin resistance leads to dementia!

Consider some of his alarming statistics:

- 1/4 of U.S. children are now obese;



- Greater than 40% of death certificates now list diabetes as the cause of death, up from 13% 20 years ago;
- The percentage of obese humans GLOBALLY has doubled in the last 28 years; there are now 30% more overnourished (obese) people than undernourished, worldwide;
- Fructose (all the sugars you can think of, apart from the sugar in milk) is "inevitably metabolized to fat";
- Fructose consumption has doubled in the past 30 years and increased six-fold in the last century;
- The majority of humans, regardless of weight, release double the insulin today as we did 30 years ago for the same amount of glucose; this hyperinsulinemia leads to insulin resistance, the body thinking it's starving, and increased eating, especially for foods high in fat and sugar because our dopamine receptors aren't getting cleared--a vicious cycle;
- The processed food industry has turned to increased sugars of all kinds to improve flavor and shelf life; we eat lots of processed foods; therefore, 20-25% of all calories we consume on average come from sugars; in adolescents this number can approach 40% of daily calories.

Because I was blitzing through this, I didn't absorb the science as well as I might have, but Lustig helped me understand that how often, how much, and how unhealthily we eat can be a function not of choice but of our biochemistry. The feedback systems and processing systems which served humans so well for eons were not built to handle as much food as we eat nowadays, particularly the avalanche of empty sugar calories. Sweets and fats used to be hard for us to come by--if we hit a surplus, of course our bodies stored it up (as fat) for a rainy day! Unfortunately, there are no more rainy days, so we keep storing and storing and overloading the system.

Lustig's book is not about dieting or losing weight--in fact he says we have natural weights we gravitate toward, and there isn't a heckuva lot we can do about it, exercise or no exercise. But obesity is a new thing that is environmentally-aided, and that can be fought against.

His conclusion? You can probably guess. Lots of fruits and vegetables and fiber. The fiber in fruits requires enough work to digest that it effectively negates the fructose. Milk or water to drink (lactose is not processed like fructose). Meats (not corn-fed) and dairy (ditto) are fine, but don't skip the produce. Whole grains (all the brown in them--exactly how my son doesn't like them), but even then there's no need for tons of grain. And, if it has a nutrition label, it's a processed food. Use sparingly.

The low-hanging fruit Lustig tackles first is ridding your life of soda, smoothies, frappuccinos, and fruit juice. (8 ozs of orange juice has more sugar than 8 ozs of Coke.) If you do alcohol, do just enough wine to get the resveratrol benefits and then lay off.

As Lustig points out, changing one's food environment is all but impossible for the poor. After all, corn and soy receive massive government subsidies, making the processed foods based on them cheap, cheap, cheap. Even if you had access to fresh produce, your money goes farther on the stuff in boxes, and food stamps cover soda. One of the more disheartening bits of the book was when he talked about meeting with Michelle Obama's personal chef Sam Kass, the point person for the White House Obesity Task Force. Kass admitted everyone in the White House (incl the Pres) had read Lustig's NYTimes article "Is sugar toxic?" but they would do nothing to help. "Because they don't want the fight, this Administration has enough enemies." Sigh. Not that the Republicans mentioned fared any better. Basically, changing our food landscape is up to us. For those of us with the dollars, vote with our dollars! If we don't buy it, not all the food stamps in the

world will make it profitable.

Kind of a bummer to read this going into Christmas-cookie season, but one of my New Year's Resolutions will be to improve the food environment for my kids. (How I wish I had a time machine! I would never have introduced our biggest consumption area for processed foods--breakfast cereal. I can only comfort myself that we don't eat any off of his "Ten Worst Children's Breakfast Cereals" list!)

Highly recommend.

(Thank you to NetGalley and Hudson Street Press for the ARC.)

214 of 250 people found the following review helpful.

Well credentialed physician provides valuable insight into major problem

By Susanna Hutcheson

As a health and fitness researcher and reviewer, I have a keen interest in why people get sick and how we can stay healthy. There is so much clutter out there. So much half-baked information, little of which is based on science.

The author tells us upfront, "I'll make a promise to you right now: there is not one statement made in this entire book that can't be backed up by hard science."

And so, it was with great pleasure that I read this book by a doctor who understands the problem of sugar in the diet on all levels. My only real disappointment was that he is a pediatrician and an awful lot of what he writes is about children and their problems. While this is of great importance, I prefer to read about mature people and their problems. Having said that, sugar is a problem for us all.

The parts in the book about the government and its relationship with the food industry is all well-known and you can just pass over this part if you already know it. And, a lot of it is available in his YouTube video. But, if you're unfamiliar with the topic, you may find it fascinating.

But you will find how to read a food label. I find this really an eye-opener. I sort of knew what to look for but not totally. This book filled the gap for me.

The author believes that all sweeteners are bad. But, he lays it out in a way that is most persuasive. He says, "All caloric sweeteners contain fructose: white sugar, cane sugar, beet sugar, fruit sugar, table sugar, brown sugar, and its cheaper cousin HFCS. Add to this maple syrup, honey, and agave nectar. It's all the same. The vehicle is irrelevant; it's the payload that matters."

The book starts out with a lot of high-toned medical jargon that really should have been eliminated for the layperson. It's quite boring unless you're a medical professional. But, I guess if you read it several times it might make sense on some level.

The author provides a fairly extensive shopping list of foods you can have in any amount, those you can have about five times a week or so and those either not at all or once a week. I found the list helpful. But, I was surprised after he had claimed agave, honey, etc to be safe alternatives to table sugar, that he put them in the "red" or once a week part of the list.

I was a bit concerned when the doctor writes that he gained 45 pounds during his residency and has not taken them off yet. I appreciate his candor. But question why he has failed to take his own extra weight off. He

may feel his weight is ok and it may be. I just found it curious.

He did say that, "Indeed, overweight people with BMIs between 25 and 30 live longer than thin people with BMIs of less than 19." So, he may be somewhere between those two figures. Whatever the case, I found the book a delightful and important read and highly recommend it to you.

-- Susanna K. Hutcheson

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