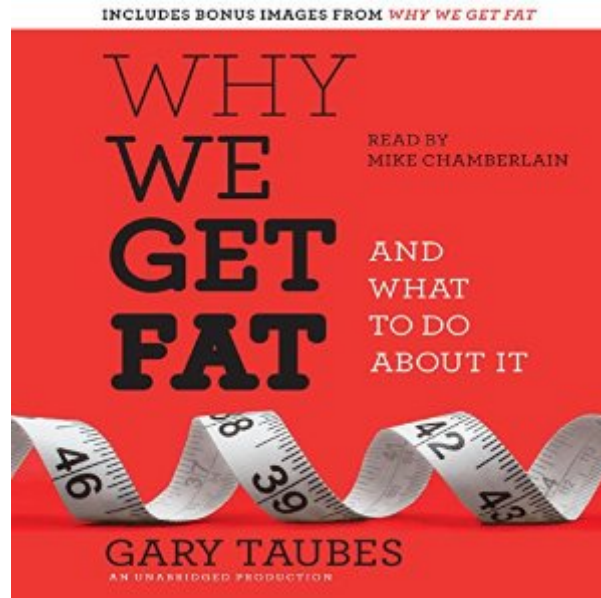


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Why We Get Fat: And What To Do About It



Synopsis

An eye-opening, myth-shattering examination of what makes us fat, from acclaimed science writer Gary Taubes. In his New York Times best seller, *Good Calories, Bad Calories*, Taubes argued that our diet's overemphasis on certain kinds of carbohydrates—not fats and not simply excess calories—has led directly to the obesity epidemic we face today. The result of thorough research, keen insight, and unassailable common sense, *Good Calories, Bad Calories* immediately stirred controversy and acclaim among academics, journalists, and writers alike. Michael Pollan heralded it as "a vitally important book, destined to change the way we think about food." Building upon this critical work in *Good Calories, Bad Calories* and presenting fresh evidence for his claim, Taubes now revisits the urgent question of what's making us fat—and how we can change—in this exciting new book. Persuasive, straightforward, and practical, *Why We Get Fat* makes Taubes's crucial argument newly accessible to a wider audience. Taubes reveals the bad nutritional science of the last century, none more damaging or misguided than the "calories-in, calories-out" model of why we get fat, and the good science that has been ignored, especially regarding insulin's regulation of our fat tissue. He also answers the most persistent questions: Why are some people thin and others fat? What roles do exercise and genetics play in our weight? What foods should we eat, and what foods should we avoid? Packed with essential information and concluding with an easy-to-follow diet, *Why We Get Fat* is an invaluable key in our understanding of an international epidemic and a guide to what each of us can do about it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've read quite a few books that make some of the same points this one does about nutrition. I was already convinced saturated fat wasn't bad, and didn't cause heart disease. I was already convinced that sugar wasn't good for you--nor was a lot of bread and pasta. BUT I had never questioned the calories in/calories out theory. I knew plenty of people carrying extra pounds who exercised a lot and who didn't appear to eat any worse than I did (as a thin person), but I figured they must. I never questioned to think WHY do people eat more than need. The short answer is: glucose drives insulin drives fat. Taubes states that this is inarguable. I thought, well if it is inarguable than if I go read this Biochemistry, Fifth Edition: International Version (hardcover) book sitting on my bookshelf it will say the same thing. Sure enough it did, granted using a lot bigger words than Taubes does. Fatty acids will not be released into the blood stream to be used as energy if the glucose level is high. Thus it is logical to conclude that if you eat a diet that causes your blood sugar to frequently be high, all energy you consume that is not immediately needed will be stored in your fat cells and will not be released. You will not get to use all of the 800 calories you eat at one meal, only the 100 or so you need immediately, and thus you will soon be hungry again, and will overeat. And in contrast if your blood sugar is stable and you can access that stored energy you will not be hungry and won't overeat. Also it doesn't matter if you are eating fat or glucose your body will convert what its got to what it needs.

The brilliant thing about science is that when something is disproved once, it's disproved forever. The not-so-brilliant thing about public health policy is that it has little to do with science. Everyone in the developed world knows what's causing our obesity epidemic. BBC nailed it: "We eat too much, and too much of the wrong things," and Michelle Obama tells us "We have to move more." Clearly what we need is a balanced diet of lean meats, some good fats, and complex carbohydrates like fruit, vegetables and whole grain bread, and exercise of 30 to 90 minutes per day. Their prescription is completely reasonable and makes intuitive sense. It is neat, plausible, and wrong. It has in fact been disproved, as nearly as "disproof" can exist in nutrition science. In his previous book, Good Calories Bad Calories, respected science journalist Gary Taubes exhaustively researched and cited two centuries worth of research in nutrition. He came to the conclusion that none of those recommendations is supported by science, because the fundamental theory on which they're based is wrong. Why We Get Fat is an updated summary of that earlier work, much quicker and easier to read, with some significant points clarified. The most important point of the book is that all those public recommendations -- the food pyramid, the "eat food, not too much" approach, everything we know about a balanced lifestyle -- is founded on the premise of Calories In vs. Calories Out. That we

get fat because we eat too many calories, or we don't burn enough of them through movement. But this is nonsense. It's not just wrong, it is actually not a statement about what causes obesity at all (or heart disease, cancer or diabetes, for that matter).

Taubes' book is one of the most important books ever written on nutrition. There are thousands of books written on diet and obesity, and the overwhelming majority of them are deeply flawed at best. The so-called advice offered (and now even forcibly mandated by public and corporate powers) is also dead wrong, as will be most of those who trust said advice. There are many thoughts on why this is the case, and many "conspiracy" theories as to how it came about, some with substantial evidence and outright smoking guns. This area of health is rife with disinformation, misinformation, ignorance, and outright lies. Taubes does not deal with any of that directly. He does something quite different and important: he uses solid research from the hard literature to make his case in a very precise and focused way. The case he makes is airtight and irrefutable, even from the most hard-nosed skeptic's viewpoint. The first thrust of this book is to show that the old "calories in - calories out" steam engine view of obesity is not only mildly incorrect, it is so very obviously wrong on so many levels as to completely defy rational thought. While he does not deal with the reasons behind this deadly myopia in the professional, corporate, and governmental world, he does systematically dismember this superstitious silliness with glorious logic and hard evidence. From the misunderstanding of the application of thermodynamic "laws" in biological systems to the research on obesity and disease connections, he deftly leads the reader to a greater understanding of what the real research on obesity actually says, and what that means in terms of personal health and public policy.

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