

Book Review of Captain Fit's Guide to Good Health, by Matthew E. Alleyne
- Reviewed by New York Times best-selling author Ellen Tanner Marsh.

Children nowadays are bombarded with societal influences that could easily lead to ill health, including the ready availability of sugar-packed food and beverages and a modern lifestyle that makes them less physically active and thus more overweight than their parents. Given how much interest young children have in cartoons, it would be helpful if someone were to develop an imaginary character who devotes his efforts not to punching out the bad guys, but instead pummeling the bad habits that can lead to ill health among the young.

Physical trainer and entrepreneur Matthew Alleyne has done just that by creating the cartoon character Captain Fit, who makes his debut in *Captain Fit's Guide to Good Health*. The book focuses on safe and sensible ideas that children and their parents can use to improve and maintain the health of all the children in the family. In fact, given the lack of health knowledge among so many adults, even most parents could learn a thing or two from Captain Fit.

The book bills itself as "A delightful collection of games, recipes, a look inside the human body and bunches of fun—all to make you healthier, stronger and happier."

Despite this seemingly tall order, the book delivers on its promise, providing many interesting nutritional facts and descriptions of fun fitness games that are easy for children to understand, including sections devoted to word puzzles and family activities. The author also provides advice about water conservation and age-appropriate anatomical illustrations with labels that simply and tastefully describe the human body's various systems.

In addition, Alleyne has included many easy recipes for healthy meals and snacks, as well as information on food trivia, buying, preparation, storage, and safety. Parents concerned about fad dieting need not worry, as Alleyne's book does not advocate the use of any weight-loss diets for kids. Instead, it offers healthful substitutes for the types of empty calories children tend to consume these days.

Best of all, *Captain Fit's Guide to Good Health* avoids the pedantic lecturing that can quickly turn children off from nutritional advice, regardless of how good it would be for them to follow, while the colorful diagrams and a sense of humor help to further encourage young readers. Parents and children alike should get a lot out of this book, and will probably have fun in the process.