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Food Allergy and Gluten-Free Weight Loss: Control Your Body Chemistry, Reduce Inflammation and Improve Your Health

Nicolette M. Dumke

Allergy Adapt (2011)

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Reviewed by Olivera Baumgartner-Jackson for Reader Views (4/11)

Most approaches to the weight loss I've ever seen tend to fall into two categories: super complicated, science (or pseudo-science) based combinations of different factors into a specific pattern or extremely restrictive and boring diets (cabbage soup three times a day for a month, anybody?). I never found either of those appealing, or really feasible. Yet most of us could use some help in either losing weight or keeping it in the healthy range over a long period of time. I found Nicolette M. Dumke's "Food Allergy and Gluten-Free Weight Loss" a valuable resource in such a quest. Before you turn away, saying that this does not apply to you, since you are not gluten intolerant and/or do not have food allergies, let me reassure you that the book offers a sensible approach for a much wider population than what the title itself would lead you to believe, which is actually expressed very well in the sub-title, namely "Control your Body Chemistry, Reduce Inflammation and Improve Your Health." Suddenly the book sounds much more appealing to you, doesn't it?

Ms. Dumke's introductory chapters deftly deal with the underlying science for the approach suggested in this book, mostly based on glycemic index, glycemic load, hormones and inflammation in the body. While those chapters are pretty technical, they are written in a down-to-earth manner, and easy to understand even without substantial scientific background. I found her approach very sensible and most of all, extremely doable. My favorite parts were those where she affirms, time and again, that nothing is set in stone; and that the best thing one can – and should! – do is to listen to one's body and its reactions. No two people are exactly identical and our reactions to the same factors will invariably be different to a certain extent. She also acknowledges that we are not perfect, that temptations are real and will happen and succumbing to them now and then will not jeopardize your success at all. She offers neat little tips and tricks for dealing with such circumstances and dispels quite a few myths. Another favorite part was her insistence that we should rethink what breakfast foods consist of. I feel much less of weirdo now, finding out that somebody else does not find it strange to have leftover fish and vegetables for breakfast quite acceptable. Joking aside, Ms. Dumke's approach to healthier nutrition is simple, feasible and appetizing.

A review of the recipes revealed many old friends, but prepared in new and exciting ways. I found quite a few recipes that I am impatient to try, mostly those with less well known grains, such as buckwheat, quinoa and amaranth. Though technically not true grains, but seeds, they are an exciting addition to sensible nutrition. I've also discovered some new things, such as chana dal, which I am impatient to try. The recipes are straightforward and best of all, they include the nutritional information about carbohydrate and protein units as well as fat content, so they will make planning for well-balanced meals much easier.

Overall I found Nicolette M. Dumke's "Food Allergy and Gluten-Free Weight Loss" to be a very helpful and inspirational book for anybody who is willing to make some relatively easy changes to attain greater health and balance in their life, and I am looking forward to more books from this author.