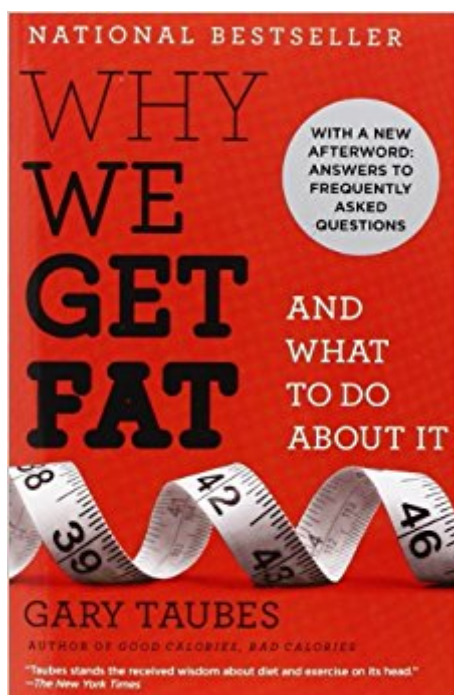


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# Why We Get Fat: And What To Do About It



## Synopsis

What's making us fat? And how can we change? Building upon his critical work in *Good Calories, Bad Calories* and presenting fresh evidence for his claim, bestselling author Gary Taubes revisits these urgent questions. 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. 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? Persuasive, straightforward, and practical, *Why We Get Fat* is an essential guide to nutrition and weight management. Complete with an easy-to-follow diet. Featuring a new afterword with answers to frequently asked questions. Don't miss Gary Taubes's latest book, *The Case Against Sugar*, available now.

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## Customer Reviews

Award-winning science journalist Taubes follows his *Good Calories, Bad Calories* (2007) with this eminently more reader-friendly explanation of the dangers of dietary carbohydrates. If the USDA dietary guidelines—recommending that highly caloric grains and carbohydrates comprise 45 to 65 percent of daily caloric intake—are so healthy, why, he asks, has obesity among Americans been on the upswing? Why has this same diet, endorsed by the American Heart Association, not managed to reduce the incidence of heart disease? And, finally, he asks why mainstream health

experts continue to promote the notably unscientific notion of "calories in/calories out" as the single focus of weight management? After explaining in layperson's terms the science that debunks the idea that weight control is a matter of burning more calories than one consumes, Taubes offers an alternative viewpoint: no carbs. While his recommendation to eliminate carbohydrates (grains, fruits, sugars, etc.) from one's diet is not necessarily a new one, Taubes does present compelling supporting evidence that many, if not all, people should consider at least severely limiting carbohydrates in their diet. --Donna Chavez --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"Taubes stands the received wisdom about diet and exercise on its head." "The New York Times" "Well-researched and thoughtful. . . . Taubes has done us a great service by bringing these issues to the table." "The Boston Globe" "Compelling and convincing. . . . Taubes breaks it down for us from historical and, more importantly, scientific perspectives." "Philadelphia Daily News" "Taubes' critique is so pointed and vociferous that reading him will change the way you look at calories, the food pyramid, and your daily diet." "Men's Journal" "Taubes is a science journalist, who researches topics to the point of obsession" "actually, well beyond that point" "and never dumbs things down for readers." "Scientific American" "Important. . . . This excellent book, built on sound research and common sense, contains essential information." "Tucson Citizen" "This brave, paradigm-shifting man uses logic and the primary literature to unhinge the nutritional mantra of the last eighty years." "Choice" "Less dense and easier to read [than Good Calories, Bad Calories] but no less revelatory." "The Oregonian" "An exhaustive investigation." "The Daily Beast" "Backed by a persuasive amount of detail. . . . As an award-winning scientific journalist who spent the past decade rigorously tracking down and assimilating obesity research, he's uniquely qualified to understand and present the big picture of scientific opinions and results. Despite legions of researchers and billions of government dollars expended, Taubes is the one to painstakingly compile this information, assimilate it, and make it available to the public. . . . Taubes does the important and extraordinary work of pulling it all together for us." "Seattle Post-Intelligencer" "Clear and accessible . . . Taubes' conviction alone makes *Why We Get Fat* well worth considering." "Bookpage" "[Taubes] is helping to reshape the conversation about what makes the American diet so fattening." "Details" "Taubes is a relentless researcher." "The Washington Post Book World" "[Taubes'] major conclusions are somewhat startling yet surprisingly convincing. . . . His writing reflects his passion for scientific

truth.â •â "Chicago Sun-Times

Hard to write a review for a book, and hard to believe someone else's review because it's so much of an opinion. So I will just tell y'all what I told my sister: If you want to learn once and for all WHY carbs are "so bad", and WHY we shouldn't eat sugar, and why "diet and exercise" doesn't actually work for losing weight, then read this book. I did and made the changes he suggests and have lost 20-25 lbs, and kept it off. I'm 5'8" and now weigh 140-145. And now I'll tell you all the rest of the story: I haven't read any of the other "low carb" or "no carb" or Atkins/South Beach or All Meat diet books or plans over the years. I thought they were all just fads and not related to science and that only crazy people would listen to them.... Well, I'm a science teacher, and I like the science Taubes talks about in this book, so I guess I'm that kind of crazy now, too! He gives excellent examples, complete with some photos that seem to tell all... discusses nature vs. nurture, discusses historical changes in human diets in various ethnic groups around the world and the resulting changes in the populations' health. It's some pretty compelling information. I read the book twice before doing anything because I kind of needed to experiment on my own one last time and gather my evidence to be able to make arguments to convince both myself and those around me that this "stuff" about "carbs are bad" really is true! However, it's also important to point out that for some people, carbs aren't a problem. If they aren't for you, then don't change a thing. But for people stuck in a rut of "trying" to lose weight (which really means: 'wanting to lose weight') but nothing is working, or things that used to work don't work any more, or if medication caused you to gain the weight (my case) (along with the other issues above!), then something needs to change, right? Well, this whole carb thing just might be what's hanging you up. And for people who are overweight and say, "But carbs are good for you, and I need to eat my carbs or I get low blood sugar and I feel bad", I say to you... "Really? And how is that working out?" Yeah, that was what I once said, too.... but seriously, read this book and see what you think then!! I had been a vegetarian for the past 25 years... I'm now 46. My family is also vegetarian, but incredibly picky. So we had fallen into a trap of eating pasta, pasta, and more pasta for our main meals. Sure we'd have salads (with caramelized pecans!) and veggies (cheese on top, please!) - plus French toast, coffee cake and banana bread for breakfast (or cold cereal), sandwiches (or fake meat burgers) for lunch and more pasta for dinner. Ice cream for dessert. And smoothies. Sure, it's all vegetarian, and my kids would eat it, but why did the pounds keep creeping on me? I first read the book in the summer of 2013, and immediately was intrigued, grossed out, upset, puzzled, argumentative, in a state of disbelief and just plain confused. I ran a marathon that fall (at my heaviest weight ever... after having trained for 6 months and hardly budged

a pound) and continued my path of eating carbs and sugar until I picked it up again in summer of 2014 (I'm a teacher, so my life proceeds in years bookended by a summer). I started making my plan. But could I do it as a vegetarian? I did the math, I researched products. I decided that in order to "clean out my system" of crazy carb-and-sugar-related hormonal issues, I'd need to just bite the bullet and chew the meat. I decided chicken was going to have to work for me. So I went for it. Once my vacationing days were over, I started going "extreme no carb" for 10 days. August 12, I was 160 lbs. (I had been up as high as 165 a few months before that...I had already started cutting out some sugar just by virtue of re-reading The Book!) August 23, I was at 150. A pound a day, not bad. This was, after all, the "phase 1" of the no-carb thing...eat as much as you want just no carbs! (no more than 20 g a day!) I had been eating chicken, and oddly decide that bacon was now "ok" to eat. Odd to go from vegetarian to "bacon-eater", I know, but it was, after all "for my health!" :) I started adding back carbs to get to a more "normal/sustainable" diet and by Sept 14 I was 145. November 22 I was 142. January 31, 2015 I was at 138. 20 lbs in about 5 months. AND NEVER HUNGRY!!!! That's the part that is hard to understand. I was eating breakfast, lunch and dinner. Like a big 3 or 4 egg omelet with red peppers, mushrooms, tomatoes and hollandaise sauce! Lunch would be a big salad (Like the Chicken and Rosted Beet salad from Trader Joes with less dressing than they give!) and dinner would be some kind of chicken... and veggies of course. I might have 2 or 3 thighs if I was was that hungry. No problem. For snacks, I'd have blackberries with real whipped cream with vanilla and a touch of stevia added in. I am writing this in February 2016 and I am still right at 140. Some weeks I dip under, sometimes as high as 143, but usually after I had some pasta or a bunch of garlic bread. I still cut out extra carbs, but I do eat them. (Onion rings are just GOOD, you know?) I still eat chicken, because I still can't figure out how to get enough protein without the meat products. Lastly, let me mention that I helped my 16 year old son follow this plan and lose weight from 225 lbs. in November 2015 to 185 lbs. now in February 2016. He was eating way too many carbs, way too much food! Now he understands that what he eats is important as is "how much".

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) a 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. Another controversial claim he is that exercise does not help people lose weight permanently. I am a champion of exercise. How could this be? Honestly his arguments made sense, kind of, but didn't completely convince me. However when I pulled out the Biochem book it says, "Muscle retains glucose, its preferred fuel for bursts of activity...In resting muscle, fatty acids are the major fuel, meeting 85 percent of the energy needs." So there you go. If you are trying to lose weight, and are doing so by keeping your blood sugar stable, which is releasing fatty acids into your blood stream, and you want those fatty acids to be used, versus having your body (ie muscles) crave glucose, then intense exercise will not help you. Your body will more readily use those fatty acids if it is resting. The other question is whether ketosis is a desirable state to be in. There is a bit of controversy on this and I haven't resolved an opinion one way or the other. I have epilepsy and know that a ketogenic diet is a viable treatment for epilepsy. I know that there are some societies, particularly the Inuits, that ate a mostly ketogenic diet, so it is not unheard of. Maybe humans are supposed to enter ketosis seasonally? Your brain and muscles do like glucose--can they run as well on a ketogenic diet? Some say they can, it just takes an adjustment period. Either way, I definitely think for a person who has excess weight Atkins is vindicated. Cut your carbs, drop significant amounts of weight (probably feeling crappy in the transition, but resting muscles can use the fuel better anyway so crashing on the couch is fine till you get used to it and end up having more energy than before). When you hit a desirable weight slowly add back a small amount of carbs until you start gaining again, and start an exercise routine with all your new found energy. As exercise is good for weight maintenance, and it's good for you brain (read [Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain](#) by John Ratey). Then do that forever. I would really love to see a long term study where the participants stay on the diet. I found the book very readable and engaging. How much fruit is too much? Will eating more fat really improve your cholesterol profile? How many carbs are too many? I don't know. Taubes makes

some guesses, but nutrition is a very complex science that I don't think anyone completely understands. If you read vegan arguments they make many of the same claims that Taubes does (better cholesterol levels, weight management, etc). However it does seem that every major nutritional philosophy pegs sugar as being a major problem. It may be as simple as that. I'll process this information. Read *Good Calories, Bad Calories: Fats, Carbs, and the Controversial Science of Diet and Health* (Vintage). Experiment on myself (finger pokes here I come), and have increased anxiety about what I feed my kids--especially the pasta, bread, fruit and sugar loving one. (\*I edited this section after my initial review.)

Other reviews explain the gist of this book: Carbohydrates make you fat and sick; remove carbs from your diet and you'll lose weight and feel better. This "review" is my personal experience with this diet regimen that began on March 10, 2016. As of today, June 22, 2016, I have lost 30 pounds. (I am a 60 year old man; my height is 5'7".) I eat three eggs and four slices of turkey bacon (fried in coconut oil) every morning with a few cups of decaf. I don't use cream in my coffee. The rest of my food intake consists of poultry, meat and fish. And salads/vegetables with olive oil, balsamic vinegar and Dijon mustard. I stopped drinking wine. I lost 10 pounds the first two weeks and then ... nothing. This is precisely when most people give up and proclaim "This doesn't work." I was about to do the same but I recalled a passage late in Taubes's book in which he says, in effect, every BODY is different and it might take months, even years, for YOUR body to repair itself after a lifetime of eating carbohydrates. So I stuck it out and after six weeks, I lost a pound or two every two or three weeks. Then the weight loss would plateau and nothing would happen for a week or two. Then, more weight loss. So my advice to you is to BE PATIENT with this "lifestyle." It might take YOUR body months to lose the weight you want. Be patient, this diet does indeed work. Good luck. (And BTW, the beauty of this diet is that you're never hungry and you never feel deprived.)

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