



THE MCDUGALL NEWSLETTER | *It's the food.*



Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us

By Michael Moss

Michael Moss, Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative reporter at the *New York Times*, has written a #1 bestselling book that I recommend you [buy](#) and read.

This is not a diet book or cookbook. No practical solutions for the current obesity and health catastrophes facing our nation and the developed world are offered.

Rather, this book explains how normal unregulated business practices underlie the current epidemics of obesity, heart disease, and diabetes in the US and those parts of the world with increasing prosperity (China, India, Mexico, etc.). No one is purposefully trying to hurt you or your family—this is just raw commerce, where profits rule.

Salt Sugar Fat is an expose of how food companies use and manipulate science to sell the maximum amount of food to consumers. The book makes many important analogies with the selling practices of the tobacco industry. The food industry knows their products are fattening and sickening hundreds of millions of people, and like tobacco, they justify their behavior by claiming, “It’s not our fault, that’s what the consumer wants—we’re not making them buy our products.”

However, the truth is that by spending billions of dollars on developing and marketing highly irresistible and convenient foods, the food industry has forced consumers, against their will, into unhealthy eating habits. (Without the truth and a choice of alternatives, there is no free will.)

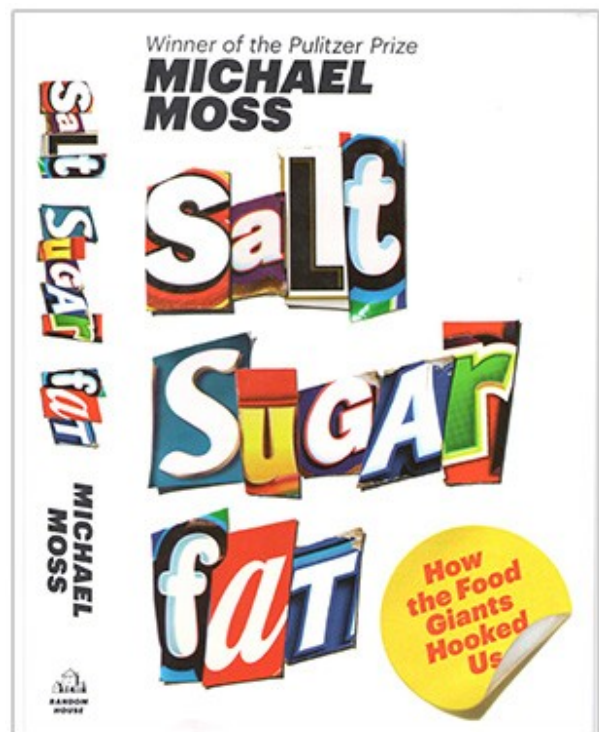
Food scientists use cutting-edge technology to calculate just the right amount of sugar to add to a food or beverage in order to make it most appealing. A “U” shaped pleasure curve exists, where more sugar adds to the appeal of a product, to a point. This amount is referred to as the “bliss point.” Beyond that amount, excess sweetness is a taste turn-off.

Salt’s powerful flavor turns even the poorest quality foods into pleasurable experiences. Fortunately, excess saltiness is distasteful, and the amount of salt needed for enjoyment is reduced after a short period of adaptation.

The third pillar used by the food giants to hook us is fat, which can be added in almost limitless quantities—making it the most toxic of the three ingredients, especially when it comes to obesity and diabetes. Remember what I say: “The fat you eat is the fat you wear.”

When health concerns about salt, sugar, or fat in their products arise, food marketers respond by dialing back on one ingredient and then pumping up the other two. They advertise the new food line as “no sugar added,” “fat-free,” or “low-sodium.” These taglines attract new customers and lower “the guilt factor,” which helps keep the most loyal patrons, called “heavy users,” buying their products.

The food industries’ win-at-all-costs strategy has led the average American to eat 33 pounds of cheese (triple of the amount eaten in 1970) and 70 pounds of sugar annually. Nondiscretionary salt (the salt hidden in foods, like cheese and lunchmeat) obligates



consumers to eat twice the sodium that is recommended. After reading this book you will be left asking yourself how human beings can possibly survive on the chemical concoctions created by food companies.

Unfortunately, *Salt Sugar Fat* simply ends with no way out. After providing a detailed and very readable historical account of how we became a nation of fat, sick people, Mr. Moss offers no practical solutions. Apparently, his years of exhaustive research failed to uncover for him the basic problem: Over the past century the human diet has been transformed from primary starches (rice, corn, potatoes, and beans) into meals based on meat and cheeses followed by desserts fit for a king (all effortlessly served to the consumer as if prepared especially for them by a full court of servants).

The Starch Solution Answers the Problems Identified by Mr. Moss

The basic problem is that our primary sources of calories are now coming from fats found in meat, dairy, and vegetable oils, and refined sugars, with an overpowering load of salty flavor added. More manipulation of these unhealthy ingredients (*Salt Sugar Fat*) can never result in good health. Rather, the simple solution is to exchange them for rice, corn, potatoes, and beans with whole fruits and vegetables.

Sensible Government Actions Recommended by Dr. McDougall:

Reintroduce and expand upon the 1977 Dietary Guidelines for the US.

Update and implement the 1988 Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health.

Insist on truth in advertising. Provide warning labels on meat, dairy, oil, sugar, etc.

Remove all prejudicial affiliations between the food industry and government.

Require congress to stop subsidizing unhealthy farming (like the livestock industries).

Place a food tax on meat, dairy, and other unhealthy foods, a "fat tax."

"Food stamp programs" must pay only for starches, vegetables, and fruits.

Develop television and Internet advertising policies aimed at feeding our children proper diets.

Require all government-supported nutrition programs (schools, military, etc.) to serve starch-based meals.

Require that all medical schools teach students about proper human nutrition.

Require continuing medical education (CME) on human nutrition for all newly licensed and relicensed physicians and dietitians.

Have doctors prescribe diet therapy under Obama care.

Audit medical practices for the appropriate use of diet therapy (as opposed to drugs and surgery).

Reformulate Medicare and all other health insurance plans so that they pay for better outcomes (healthier patients with fewer medications and hospitalizations). Currently they pay for doctors' visits and procedures, regardless of the outcome.

Allocate funds for a massive reeducation campaign to counteract a half-century of dishonest information from the food

People naturally love salt and sugar. We crave sugar because this is our primary source of energy, and our love for salt insures adequate minerals for our body. Nothing is going to change our basic human physiology. Meat and cheese contain almost no sugar or salt. To entice people to eat these bland-tasting foundations they must be infused and coated with large amounts of salt and/or sugar. Breaded with a batter made of flour, salt, and sugar, unappealing chicken becomes a national bestseller (KFC). Starches have a big head start in appealing to consumers' tastes because rice, corn, potatoes, and beans are naturally about 80% sugar (the healthy, unrefined kind). People like these foods so much that they call them "comfort foods." Starches are also naturally low in sodium, refined sugar, fats, and cholesterol and are jam-packed with essential nutrients.

In order to make these basic starches competitive with the creations engineered by the processed food industry, the McDougall

Diet adds sensible amounts of salt, sugar, and spice (primarily to the surface of the foods at the dinner table). Dr. McDougall wants people to eat and enjoy their meals and will compromise a little to reach this necessary goal. The title of the song from Walt Disney's 1964 movie Mary Poppins, "A Spoonful of Sugar Helps the Medicine Go Down," encapsulates his philosophy. A half-teaspoon of sugar sprinkled over a bowl of oatmeal reaches the "bliss point" for sweetness. A little salt added to the rice and beans hooks people into a program that allows them to regain their lost health and appearance. (Rarely, people cannot tolerate small amounts of salt and sugar and these few must avoid them.)