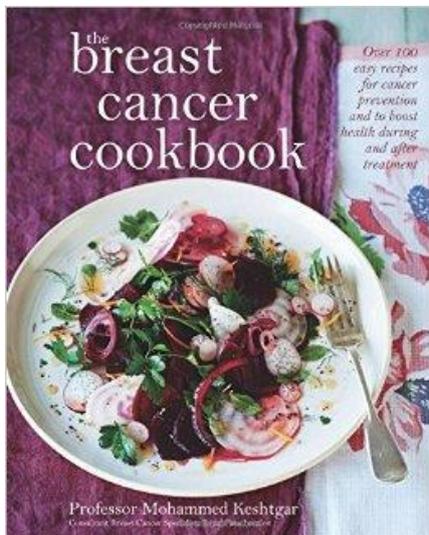


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# BOOK REVIEWS

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## **The breast cancer cookbook (2015)**

Keshtgar M.

London: Quadrille Publishing Ltd, 2015.

176pp.

ISBN 9781849495561.

**Average star rating 4.2 (out of 5)**

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This great book would be of help from diagnosis to moving forward after treatment. It is very easy to read and I had no issues navigating round the chapters. The recipes are arranged by meals, e.g. Breakfast, Lunch, and there is an index. The recipes are easy to follow and I didn't have any issues with the availability or cost of ingredients, but it will depend on your budget; if I bought what was in season and kept my eye on any BOGOFs it wasn't too bad. Even though not every recipe has a photo, it didn't stop me marking the page to make it another time; the recipes that do have a photo are clear and made me feel I could achieve the same look. I love the layout, the ease of use and that it doesn't bombard you with jargon. The author also includes '5 ways with' in every section, which I found very useful.

**Breast cancer patient (46-55) (January 2016)**

This is informative with great, simple recipes. It will be useful for patients and carers and health professionals could recommend it to patients. It is useful at all stages, particularly diagnosis as one wants to do anything that will help beat the disease and diet is a big factor.

It is easy to understand the layout follows the pattern of most cookbooks. It is a very attractive book and the photos present the food well and make it look very appetising. My friend and I found the recipes easy to follow and very appetising. There is a reassurance about trying the recipes in this book rather than trying to work out the healthy options for yourself. I would like to see more recipes for drinks; chemo has adverse effects on the mouth and it is often easier to take drinks than chew food.

**Friend and carer of breast cancer patient (66-75) (January 2016)**

This book could be useful at any stage as it provides an insight into nutrition and information about certain food groups and their association with breast cancer. It is arranged in good clear sections and put together very well; the quality of the paper and pictures is very professional and appealing to the eye. The recipes are clear, simple and easy to follow. When the ingredients are seasonal they are readily

available and not too expensive. I tend to buy organic when it's available and that can be expensive. I like the additional notes provided in each recipe but it would have been helpful to know the calorific value of the recipes and the percentage of sugar, fat, and carbohydrates.

It's great to see books such as these targeted to help people deal with having cancer. There is so much emphasis on diet and health these days and so much still unknown about what you should eat/not eat when you are having treatment. I think this book will certainly help answer some of those questions.

### **Breast cancer patient, in remission (56-65) (December 2015)**

I took a long, hard look at my diet when I was diagnosed and although I didn't give it much attention during treatment because my appetite was poor, I threw myself into better eating habits when treatment finished. As well as wanting to improve my chances of keeping a recurrence at bay, I also needed to lose weight so it was a no brainer! Two years on, I still look for new healthy meal ideas and this book is a great addition to my recipe book collection. It is a lovely size and beautifully illustrated with colourful, appetising photos of the recipes. The introduction is very interesting and informative and most recipes are easy to follow; the ingredients should be available at big-name supermarkets. I'm looking forward to trying more recipes.

### **Triple-negative breast cancer diagnosis in 2012 and finished treatment in 2013 (56-65) (November 2015)**

This book would be useful for patients, carers or relatives, but most useful for someone recently diagnosed or e who wants to try to reduce their risk of cancer. I found it easy to understand; words are explained in the glossary and I like the brief summaries in the text. The recipes are very easy to follow and most ingredients are readily available, although some may be a little expensive; the recipes are not everyday cooking for a busy mum, but I like them. It is a very appealing book, the design of the front cover and the layout of the recipes is eye catching. The photographs are excellent and make the recipes very appealing. The typeface is easy to read and the paper quality very good.

It is one of the best cookbooks I have read, even better than my Jamie Oliver books (I'm a great fan). There are some wonderful recipes and combinations of foods that aren't obvious but the main reason I love it is the introduction. It is one of the best and most informative introductions I have read in a cancer-related book. This is why I think it should be recommended not only to breast cancer patients but also to women who are looking to change their lifestyle to try to reduce their risk. It explains what breast cancer is, the risk factors, treatment, diet and lifestyle influences and how to move towards a healthier diet and lifestyle. It also answered some of my questions on phyto-oestrogens (soya intake and hormonal treatments).

### **Breast cancer patient (56-65) (November 2015)**

This is useful at all stages. It looks appealing and I had no problems understanding it. I like the introduction; my only comment is that I did not have hormonal cancer but the protein type and had Herceptin. This is rarely mentioned. The recipes are nicely illustrated and easy to follow. I am looking forward to trying some.

### **Breast cancer patient (66-75) (November 2015)**

This book will be useful during and after diagnosis. It is very easy to follow, with good pictures and descriptions. The index is great – it is easy to find recipes by main ingredient – and there is also a list of useful websites at the back. The design, layout and quality of the book make it lovely to handle. Not every recipe has a photo but that does not detract from the content. The recipes are clear, concise and easy to follow.

### **Breast cancer patient (36-45) (November 2015)**

This book is specifically aimed at anyone with breast cancer to promote cancer prevention and boost health during and after treatment. It could be used any time after diagnosis and is targeted for use on an ongoing basis to improve health and attempt to prevent cancer in the future by following a healthy lifestyle. It explains what breast cancer is, and provides basic, easy to understand information about risk factors, treatments, and lifestyle choices, facilitating informed decision making. This said, it could be used by anyone wishing to follow a healthier diet.

The recipes are easy to follow, and provide succinct explanations of methods. The lists of ingredients list are easy to work from and provide quantities required and how many people the food will serve. The recipes are quite appealing, and overall the ingredients are basic, healthy, fresh foods that can be sourced from supermarkets at a reasonable cost. A few recipes are more exotic, but choice of recipe is personal.

It is very easy to understand. All the information is written in a simple, succinct way and technical words are kept to a minimum. Information is easy to find; a contents page lists all sections and the different sections have a heading and a subheading, which makes it easy to find what you are looking for quickly. The tone is neutral throughout and he even adds a simple thankful dedication to his patients who have inspired him to write it. He is a consultant breast cancer specialist and should therefore be up to date, knowledgeable and experienced.

The cover is appealing, the title is easily identifiable, and the picture complements the topic well. The hardback cover is sturdy, durable (it can be wiped clean), colourful and eye catching. The pages inside are glossy and font size is good. Most recipes are accompanied by a colour picture of the finished dish, which will encourage the reader to try out the recipe (I would like a photograph of every dish).

I like the simplicity of this book, easy to follow, inexpensive recipes of food that I know I should eat to improve my diet and maintain a healthy lifestyle, which is vital following diagnosis.

### **Breast cancer patient (46-55) (November 2015)**

This book is such a positive for breast cancer patients. Cancer feels outside of your control and eating healthy food can have a positive effect. The recipes give the feeling that you can do something to reduce your risk of cancer or a recurrence by changing your diet and lifestyle. Without a doubt, it can help those who have a mind to reduce their risk, but more so those determined to stop a recurrence. It will be useful at any stage. It's difficult to cope with the uncertainty but the idea that you can make small changes to your diet without feeling compromised or going without your favourite foods most certainly helps.

I am uplifted by this book. I like the detail about breast cancer; the preface is so informative. It's good to know that it's based on research, so only positive things can come from this book. The appealing thing is that making changes or avoiding certain foods can have an impact on wellbeing. The layout is straightforward and the appetising images encouraged me to try the recipes with the assurance that this could have an input into improving my health while also tasting great. The recipes are easy to follow. To cook recipes that taste great and look as good and appetising as they do in this book is quite a task on occasion, but hassle free in this case. The ingredients are readily available in most supermarkets. Shop around and you can buy many reasonably. (TIP: Some of the lower-end supermarkets are the best. I understand they don't have huge storage facilities, so goods are delivered daily.)

A lot of this book is common sense. However, the information about what food to eat, what to avoid or limit, together with lifestyle changes that may reduce the risk of breast cancer, is good in the sense of bringing back some control – making great tasty meals that can help you to a healthier life and potentially a cancer free life.

I am very happy with this book. The recipes are healthy and easy to prepare. My family enjoy the meals and commented that there's certainly no compromise on taste; the food is full of flavour, and the recipes included our old favourites, curry for example, and there are lots of chicken and fish dishes. And gorgeous puddings! If food looks and tastes good, is of course great for your health, and could potentially help to reduce the risk of cancer then this can only be a win-win recipe book.

### **Living with breast cancer (46-55) (November 2015)**

This is a good quality cookbook with some lovely ideas. It may be a bit daunting for someone who is not used to healthy eating as there are some ingredients that they may not have used or heard of before. It will be most useful after chemotherapy as it is difficult to follow a healthy diet while suffering chemo cravings. All the instructions make sense and the index is easy to use. I did note that the Pumpkin pie slices (p. 160) doesn't contain pumpkin, but butternut squash. Most ingredients are readily available but there are a few that I can only get in a health food shop; however, I live in a small rural town and they may be more accessible in larger towns. Some items are initially more expensive than less healthy alternatives.

I have lots of healthy eating cookbooks but this has some new and interesting ideas. It is targeted at breast cancer but it could benefit anyone.

### **Breast cancer in 2005 (46-55) (November 2015)**

This lovely book will be useful for patients, carers, family and health professionals. However, patients may feel too sick, tired, or not hungry. For carers, there are simple recipes if time is short and more involved ones if you have people coming to visit.

It is written in plain English and the recipes appear to be in a logical order. If you can concentrate – something I found difficult during treatment – the recipes are explained step by step. Most ingredients are in supermarkets; if not I substituted them with similar ingredients, without problem. The book is a good size and the layout is just right; it's nice to look at but I had to wear my glasses because my eyes have deteriorated since diagnosis. There are some great photos of the finished dishes! Some of the recipes are lovely for entertaining. I like the fact that there are cold dishes for when you may have a sore mouth and warm dishes that you can make as spicy as you enjoy. Some recipes seem aimed at people that are feeling reasonably well. Some didn't appeal to me but I wouldn't expect to like them all.

There is something here for everyone. I enjoyed the introduction; it gave a good understanding of breast cancer, especially if it is new to you. I wish I had had it when I was having treatment; I'm sure I would have enjoyed some of recipes when I was feeling off colour. And it's a great way of treating people that have looked after you.

### **Living with HER2-positive breast cancer (46-55) (November 2015)**

This would be useful for patients at any stage. The introduction is very clear and details useful aspects of the diet and, to a degree, how patients may find their treatment. I can imagine that this will be comforting and a good point of reference for those at the start of their journey. For me – five months into treatment – it details some great new ideas that have the reassurance of being approved by experts. The long-term health recommendations at the start are really useful.

The recipes are easy to follow. I found the '5 ways with' section at the end of each section useful and informative and great for future reference. Some ingredients are obscure, but this is balanced by the easiness of the recipes. The layout is clear and concise and the order of the recipes makes it easy to refer to. The appearance is clean and easy to follow. There is no glossary but terms are self explanatory and I was automatically tuned into the language from treatment. The images are beautiful and appealing (when you are trying to regain a normal sense of appetite!) The paper feels expensive and the typeface is clear and extremely easy to read. The tone is friendly yet informative.

My only criticism is that information as to when the recipe could help patients would be useful, for example: "...ginger is an excellent source of x and is a great way of adding heat and spice to dishes". When your taste buds are feeling flat, it can be helpful to have suggestions, tips and as much information as possible to make food appealing and as easy as possible to make! Also, although the bibliography and websites are useful, they are in columns and not easy to refer to. It may be better to make more of a feature of them (especially the websites), perhaps at the beginning. This would really help readers who are starting their treatment!

### **Breast cancer patient (26-35) (November 2015)**

I wonder why this is targeted at breast cancer patients; is it because they are one of the biggest cancer groups? It has good information and recipes for any cancer, not just breast cancer. Good nutrition is vital for everyone with cancer and the recipes are interesting and different. There is also good information in the introduction.

It is easy to read and understand, with a good index and other information at the back. I didn't know some of the ingredients so I Googled them and found that most were readily available; like most, they are only expensive on first purchase and many will last for a long time.

I like this book; it looks and feels good, although some of the print maybe a little too faint for those with poor eyesight. The pictures are colourful and eye catching. It may be pricey for some but, all in all, it is good value. I especially like the explanations of each food group and advice on what not to eat and the pages after each section called '5 ways with...', the relevant food group. A calorie count for each recipe per serving would be useful.

### **Laryngeal cancer survivor (66-75) (October 2015)**

Anyone who reads this book could be encouraged to look at their diet to help possibly reduce their risk of breast cancer. It is most useful for encouraging patients with breast cancer to change their lifestyle through diet and exercise and for anyone who is going through treatment (especially chemotherapy) and after treatment to maintain good health and weight control. Chemotherapy can affect appetite and the author expresses the importance of trying to eat well and keep hydrated. Many of the recipes would be appealing to patients with difficulties and side effects of treatment. The author has done a lot of research about the benefits and myths of certain foods.

It is very easy to understand. It's easy to find sections you're looking for, e.g. 'The soup section'. The author explains the value of foods etc. The recipes look great and are easy to follow and I will try many of them; most are affordable for low budgets – all fresh food is a little more expensive than processed food – and there is plenty of choice to suit all pockets. All the ingredients are easy to find and most of us have some of the dry ingredients in our cupboards. There are also tips at the end of each section on alternative ways of using the ingredients. Plus, on some pages there are healthy tips on the values of certain foods contained in the recipe – all very useful.

I love the front cover. The picture of a plate of food is attractive. The quality of the paper is good, the typeface is good although it could be larger in the introduction – it is quite small for some people. The photos are good.

I loved this book and I will be making and sharing some recipes with my friends. I can't fault any part of it; the recipes are not complicated and don't take a long time to prepare and cook. It's not just focused on women, it's appropriate for men with breast cancer too. My only concern is the cost; £20 is a lot to pay for a cook book and would put me off if I was thinking of buying it! I hope it will be available in the library!

### **Breast cancer in 2011 (56-65) (October 2015)**

This book is clearly targeted at people affected by breast cancer; however, as someone with ovarian cancer I found it useful in terms of the introductory chapter on the importance of good diet and lifestyle. It contains plenty of useful information on good healthy eating practices, even if not specific to my cancer type.

It is useful to anyone seeking to adopt a healthy diet, specifically those motivated to adapt their diet to reduce the risk of breast cancer or to reduce the risk of recurrence. It is helpful for someone with a recent cancer diagnosis as it provides practical steps to help regain some control at a typically overwhelming time. It is particularly useful for friends/carers; it would constitute a thoughtful gift, as would a dish prepared from this book during treatment.

The introductory session conveys the role of diet and lifestyle in reducing the risk of developing cancer and recurrence. The sub-section on “specific dietary associations with breast cancer” is particularly good as many references in the media to links between cancer and diet fail to mention the cancer type(s) relating to the research. It also includes a useful summary of what to eat more of, what to eat in moderation and what to be cautious of.

The recipes are grouped logically into sections. Each recipe is contained to a page and the recipe layout is easy to follow. Most ingredients are commonly available in supermarkets and anything out of the ordinary is explained in more detail. The recipes are punctuated with brief reminders about the nutritional properties of key ingredients in relation to cancer prevention or treatment. The quantities are all metric and each recipe clearly states how many people the recipe serves, making it relatively easy to change quantities to alter the number of portions. It would be helpful to know which dishes can be frozen.

The cover design is attractive and contemporary. The reference on the cover to the author being a consultant specialising in breast cancer immediately adds credibility to the book. The book contains a good number of attractive photos throughout. There is an extensive bibliography of further reading on research findings supporting the advice but I'd have liked the author to include a brief reference to his medical background to affirm his authority on the advice given.

### **Living with ovarian cancer (36-45) (October 2015)**

This is most useful for eating a good diet before, during and after breast cancer and at all stages. It is very easy to understand and the recipes are very easy to follow; the ingredients are readily available, there are no strange, awkward or expensive ones. The pictures of the dishes are beautiful.

I like that it's easy to follow and that the ingredients are easily available and I don't have to go out my way to find them. I also like the section at the front about breast cancer and treatments.

### **Breast cancer patient (36-45) (October 2015)**

Food is one thing that everyone can relate to and continue to learn about. This book can be used in several ways: as a preventative measure to reduce the risk of cancer; as a supportive measure during treatment; and as a focus when moving forward after treatment – as a way of managing change and regaining some control.

The hardback has vibrant colours throughout, be it pictures or key messages. The brief information on breast cancer and its relationship with food is a bonus. The tone is encouraging and the language fine for the intended audience but there is no glossary. Those who cook will find the recipes very straight forward; those taking up cooking can try simple recipes before moving on to something more adventurous. I tried a couple and was able to obtain ingredients from my local supermarket/health food store. The cost of the recipes varies but there are ample to choose from if budget is an issue. It is not a dislike as such, simply an observation, but I feel breast cancer is still predominantly a disease of age and many of the recipes may not feel the norm to a high percentage of the generation concerned, regardless of diversity.

There are many things I like about this book:

- one recipe per page supported by a colour picture of the completed dish makes it appetising; it tempts the reader to try out something new without feeling overwhelmed;
- 5 ways of using a single key ingredient offers choice to the palate particularly during treatment;
- every so often, at the bottom of the recipe, it explains nutritional/health benefit of a key ingredient;
- simple background on breast cancer, its treatment and potential risk factors;
- balanced approach on possible new foods to consider;
- the language of moderation, not total abandonment, when consuming food you enjoy to support a healthy lifestyle;
- evidence-based research to support views/recommendations.

I wish something like this had been around when I was diagnosed 13 years ago – simple, manageable and empowering!

### **Living with the consequences of breast cancer (46-55) (October 2015)**

This is a great, supportive cookbook that will provide culinary tips during the entire experience and help for those around a patient with breast, or any other, cancer. In addition, anyone could buy this book and not be disappointed.

We have not tried all the recipes but reading a wide selection gives a great feeling of confidence. The book is very well presented and appealing as a cookbook in every way. The layout is classical, all descriptions are clear and my wife was very much impressed! It is very easy to follow (I am told!). The photography is extremely good and shows considerable care has been taken to present the material openly. The index is clear and helpful. The culinary tips and the health information combine well to give an appealing, informative book that is very well presented.

My wife is usually very critical of cookbooks but this one delighted her from day one! It is beautifully presented and pleasant to read. Her only critical comment is that there are few onion-free recipes, but she did admit they could always be omitted! An excellent well-structured cookbook; well worth a place on anyone's shelf.

### **Living with prostate cancer (Over 75) (October 2015)**

I am not sure for which aspects of living or coping with breast cancer this book would be most useful. There is a lot about how to prevent breast cancer but, for those already diagnosed there is a word of warning to check with your specialist about the effect of diet on treatment. There is a very useful introduction that explains breast cancer, factors, treatment and dietary factors that will be of interest to anyone.

It looks beautiful. The cover is appealing and the layout excellent. I like the size and pictures. Some of the information in the introduction is helpful for explaining the types of breast cancer and treatment. I also like the interesting and informative 'hints/ additional information' next to some recipes. The format is traditional (e.g. breakfast, soups, salads) and each recipe includes a useful explanation. Some technical terms may be confusing, e.g.: 'Approximately 30% of cancers and their sequelae.' (p. 6) and 'epidemiological research indicates' (p. 8). I had not heard of these terms.

There is a note that all recipes have been analysed for their calorie, fat, sugar and salt content, but the figures are not quoted. This would make the recipes more useful. Also, some of the guidance in the introduction is misleading. There is talk of risk factors, but sometimes it's just bad luck; none of the risk factors apply, but it still happens. The section on diet and lifestyle influences is more of a narrative; the author discusses research, but the words 'may', 'research suggests', 'despite clear evidence for decreased risk of breast cancer... further studies are needed' mean that, overall, no clear, constructive advice is given. I was confused as to what foods are good and what are not, especially as I have already been diagnosed.

It is a lovely cookbook, but not really a guide to help prevent breast cancer. The cover claims that the book has 'Over 100 recipes for cancer prevention and to boost health during and after treatment.' It would be useful if these recipes were highlighted in the book. There is nothing to indicate which recipes are good to boost health during and after treatment. A simple symbol against these recipes would be useful.

### **Breast cancer patient (56-65) (October 2015)**



This will be useful when you are diagnosed to help you feel you are doing something to help yourself and provide a distraction from all the medical aspects of treatment. It could also be used after treatment as a way of nourishing your body with good food.

The cover is attractive and the information inside is easy to understand and set out well and the pictures are nicely presented. I like the wide variety of recipes, the

narrative at the beginning and the author's writing style. It is a good, general, healthy eating type of recipe book; you could take out all references to breast cancer and it would still be relevant to a lot of people. The recipes I tried worked well. I wasn't sure about a couple of ingredients but they mostly seem to be accessible.

Overall, it is a nice book but I was left wanting more about the benefits of certain foods. The information at the beginning could be expanded, explaining a bit more some of the research referred to with regards to the effects of different foods and why. For example, it mentions that soya may interfere with some hormonal treatments, but that more research is needed – it leaves you feeling more uncertain rather than less. I hope there is more to follow!

### **Former breast cancer patient (36-45) (January 2016)**

This will be useful for breast cancer patients at any stage; it will also be useful for family and friends. I would also recommend it to anyone who is looking at their diet to see how they can have an impact on their health.

It looks good and the pictures help draw you in. It is very easy to understand. The introduction is excellent with good all-round information on the links between diet and cancer. The recipes are very easy to follow; most ingredients are readily available with one or two that might not be in the store cupboard. I tried five of the recipes and found them all tasty with some of the suggested substitutes, like cauliflower rice, surprisingly good options.

This is an excellent book that anyone could pick up under the healthy eating banner without having the cancer link. I particularly like the introduction where it clearly spells out the links with diet; I would have liked more up-front information in the introduction but that's perhaps because I am down the road in terms of a diagnosis and treatment and it might put off those simply looking at the healthy living aspects.

### **Living with breast cancer (46-55) (January 2016)**

This is a great resource for anyone going through breast cancer treatment who is interested in supporting their treatment with nutrition and healthy eating. I like the recipes and the added health information on the nutritional science behind the foods. The recipes are easy to follow and the information is very insightful. It is a very appealing book – the cover makes you want to dive in and try the recipes and the photos of the food are colorful and appealing. Cookbooks that have lots of photos are very enjoyable to read and the photos help with the cooking process as well.

### **Breast cancer survivor (46-55) (January 2016)**

This is a good quality cookery book which, while relevant to breast cancer, would also be interesting to anyone interested in a healthy diet. It would be equally useful during treatment or after. There are recipes and information specifically aimed at people going through chemotherapy, as well as recipes to keep up your strength and aid recovery and general health. It would make an excellent and thoughtful gift for someone going through breast cancer, more useful than flowers! It's also tough for those supporting someone with cancer and a meal cooked by a friend or partner for someone going through treatment would be a lovely gesture and much appreciated!

The opening section is clear and well laid out with outline information about breast cancer, risks, treatment, diet and lifestyle, and some more specific diet information. Each recipe has very clear instructions, (including reminders to preheat the oven, get meat out of the fridge 15 minutes before cooking), which meant that the cooking went quite smoothly! Similarly, the lists of ingredients are clear and I could source everything locally. I tried a recipe from each section and they all turned out ok, which is good going for me! Most ingredients are reasonably priced, although that obviously depends on your budget. I was put off a few recipes by very long lists of ingredients, but that's the case with any cookery book! There is a useful section in each chapter entitled '5 ways with...' featuring ingredients such as nuts and seeds, tomatoes, chicken breasts, and there are some good simple ideas – we loved the coconut and lime roasted chicken, really easy and yummy!!

It is a very attractive book, with good quality glossy paper and lovely bright photos that make the dishes look very appetising without being too fussy. The recipe pages are clear, with one recipe per page. The print is small but clear. The sections are laid out sensibly (starting with breakfast, ending with treats and drinks) and cater for carnivores and vegetarians. There is an index and a bibliography of all the research mentioned in the opening section, so it is easy to do further reading if required. The author writes knowledgably, as you would expect from a consultant breast cancer specialist, and as it is a recent book the information should be up to date.

You do not need to be an accomplished cook to succeed with these recipes (though I can vouch only for those I tried). I can recommend Apple and cinnamon porridge, Butternut squash and peanut soup, Fennel and citrus salad, Coconut fish curry, (I didn't make the cauliflower rice) Coconut and Lime Roasted Chicken, Roasted kale with parmesan and Chocolate mousse with raspberries. The number of calories or fat content, for example, is not given for individual recipes, but the author states that all recipes 'have been analysed to ensure they are appropriate for inclusion in a healthy balanced diet'. Each recipe serves four people, which some might find irritating.

This is, essentially, a useful book for anyone wanting to eat healthily. It's not faddy, and most importantly it is easy to follow; the recipes are manageable and the text is informative without being overwhelming. It's nice to see a cookbook dedicated to breast cancer, although any cookery book directed at healthy eating would contain similar recipes. The big issue I have is that the recipes are described as 'for Cancer PREVENTION and to boost health before, during and after treatment'. Eating healthily may contribute to preventing some cancers and to improving health during and after treatment, but I question whether the recipes can prevent cancer.

**Breast cancer survivor (46-55) (January 2016)**

This is an extremely appealing book. When I first opened the package, I was excited by the cover – bright colours and healthy looking – and couldn't wait to flick through and check out some of the recipes. Although it is primarily aimed at anyone living with breast cancer, it will appeal to anyone trying to eat healthily. The hypotheses by Prof Keshtgar at the beginning are most relevant for those with, or who have survived, breast cancer.

The introduction is easy to read and understand. The language flows well and the advice is, on the whole, common sense. The tone of the author is factual without being pompous, and quite conversational. The recipes are really easy to follow! The list of ingredients is not too onerous and most of them are store cupboard, with a few extra fresh items required. The recipes I have tried have all worked out with a little tweaking with the seasoning (as for any recipe it's personal taste). However, although the 'facts' at the beginning have a common thread with most of us knowing not to eat too much processed meat and basically moderation in everything, the risk factor section is already out of date with the latest opinion on HRT stating there is no link!

I like the kerb appeal; the vibrant presentation instantly makes me want to open it and see what other lovely recipes are inside. I did of course read the introduction and formed my own opinion as to what was written. Most of it is common sense regarding Western lifestyle and nothing new, but it is interesting to read. The recipes are simple to follow and as a lover of Asian cuisine the blends of herbs and spices really appeal to me. The food is fragrant, tasty, appetising, not overly fussy or too filling and calorific and, in most cases, the photograph of the recipe helps!

### **Breast cancer survivor (56-65) (November 2015)**

This is very useful for people who are health aware in general, regardless of whether they are affected by breast cancer. For cancer patients or carers, I think it would be useful in just raising general awareness about food. It will be useful at all stages, but perhaps particularly interesting in the early stages of cancer; the introduction has a lot of useful information that I'm not sure I was given when diagnosed, in particular, lifestyle patterns that can contribute. It gives useful information about the good qualities of certain foods. It would be good before chemo for someone to read for ideas; from my experience of chemotherapy, preparing meals can become a chore and I found I just wanted something quick and easy – although nutritious if possible.

The recipes are relatively simple and easy to follow although the preparation time for some could discourage those patients not feeling too well. Overall though, for a recently diagnosed or recovering patient, I think the recipes are appealing and easy to follow. Not all ingredients could be found in your local store (e.g. the Co-op) and you would need to visit larger supermarkets but I didn't come across anything that I felt I would struggle to find. In terms of cost it will depend on individual circumstances as to whether the ingredients are expensive or not. Cost is individual; what some people feel is expensive, others may find cheap and good value.

It is well written and easy to read and understand. The layout is good and easy to follow and I could find everything I was looking for easily. It looks and reads like a

normal cookbook and that is what cancer patients want – to be treated normally and not singled out. The front cover is colourful and inviting, with a nice meal. The quality of the book – paper and pictures – is of a high standard. It's colourful and not depressing, despite being aimed at cancer patients.

Some recipes are a bit fussy and I'm not sure they will be appealing. When we are feeling ill it's easier to go for more down-to-earth options rather than fussy meals. Only around 50% of the recipes are to my taste. Readers will need to be interested in making healthy lifestyle changes and so it will not appeal to all cancer patients.

### **Breast cancer patient (46-55) (November 2015)**

This book is a mine of useful information about healthy eating and has recipes that would benefit almost anyone interested in taking care of their health, whether they are affected by cancer or not. It would be useful at all stages, from pre-diagnosis to living well after the end of treatment. It would also be useful for anyone interested in boosting their general health by increasing the amount of fruit, vegetables and whole grains in their diet and reducing salt and sugar.

The introduction should be particularly useful for those caring for someone with breast cancer, or for someone who wants to know more about breast cancer, maybe because they are concerned about their risk. More in-depth information about what breast cancer is and how it is treated is available to those who have had a diagnosis and although this part of the introduction might be interesting for them, it would probably not add to what they already know. The end of the introduction contains details about different food types and how they may be beneficial or harmful. I found this section useful for an overview of what foods to eat and what to avoid.

I found it very easy to understand. The introduction is well written and easy to read and the recipes are clear. I like how the book is divided into different sections and I find it easy to navigate. There are plenty of recipes but not so many that you get frustrated looking for something. The recipes that I tried are all easy to follow. I looked first for the ingredients in my local Morrison's supermarket and was able to find most of them. I had to go to a whole food shop for spelt flakes, quinoa flakes and flax seeds. I could not find lemongrass, tempeh, shiitake mushrooms or sumac locally (all in recipes I didn't try), but found a lemongrass paste in the supermarket. The most expensive thing I bought was saffron. Many of the ingredients were things that I already had, or buy regularly anyway. For someone who does not already buy nuts, dried fruit, seeds and grains, it might initially be expensive to stock up with the ingredients for many of these recipes.

I found only one mistake in the recipes: the braised chicory and fennel is in the vegetarian section (p. 142) but it requires chicken stock. Hopefully anyone cooking for a vegetarian would notice this and replace it with vegetable stock. I also want to sound a warning, again for vegetarians, that the recipe for sweet potato and sugar snap curry (p. 130) includes red Thai curry paste. It is possible to find vegetarian versions of this but be aware that a lot of them contain fish.

This is a cookbook that can stand up to the kitchen! The cover is appealing to look at but also robust and easy to wipe clean, and the paper is good quality and easy to wipe if splashed. I like the mixture of typefaces in the recipes and the photographs of the finished dishes are all very appetising. The additional notes on some pages about the ingredients used in that recipe, or the reasons for eating certain foods, are interesting and thought-provoking.

I like the simple recipes and the fact that most of them use ingredients that are easily available. I don't like recipe books with long lists of ingredients – they put you off before you start – but none of the recipes were like that. I also like the fact that many recipes can be used as a starting point and changed to suit yourself, for example, the muesli (p. 24) is delicious with the addition of mixed nuts and dried apricots, and the fritters (p. 128) are good with mint instead of dill. My diet was reasonably healthy before I started reviewing this book – I made sure that I always had my five a day, and avoided refined sugars – but after trying some of these recipes I've increased the number of different whole grains and seeds that I eat and feel that my diet is even more varied now and therefore better.

As a vegetarian, I'm not keen on recipe books containing meat and fish dishes; they seem a waste of paper to me! I also found that many of the recipes I tried had a lot of cinnamon and/or almonds in them, and I got a bit bored with the flavours. I have given this book four stars simply because I'm a vegetarian and there are too many meat and fish recipes, as well as soups and salads that are not vegetarian. However, having said that, I will continue to use this book long after reviewing it and will recommend it to other vegetarians. I will definitely recommend it to others affected by breast cancer and to those who just want to improve their diet.

Comments on the recipes I tried:

- Bircher muesli (p. 23) is really good. I had reservations before I tasted it, but it has a lovely mix of textures – soft oats, crunchy apples and almonds and explosions of blueberry. The only problem is the preparation time; I need to be able to eat fast before work, so this is a weekend breakfast for me.
- Muesli with dried fruit, almonds and sunflower seeds (p. 24). I have made this several times now. It's really good as it is, but I like it with a quarter rolled oats and three quarters jumbo oats, mixed nuts, and dried apricots in addition to the dates and figs.
- Apple and cinnamon porridge (p. 25) is another delicious recipe but time-consuming if you're on your way to work, so another weekend breakfast.
- Home-baked beans on toast (p. 30). This is a lovely recipe. I think it needs more beans for the amount of sauce. I've made it twice; the second time with butter beans, which was really good as a main meal. The original recipe is good with pasta or with the soda bread (p. 36).
- Quinoa, flax and chia seed bread (p. 34) is quite heavy and crumbly but tastes delicious.
- Oat and spelt soda bread (p. 36) is also delicious. I've made it several times. As I'm usually cooking just for myself I've found I can halve the ingredients and cook for just 30 minutes to get a loaf that is easier to eat before it goes stale.

- Blueberry buckwheat pancakes (p. 38) are really good but a bit bland; I served them with a dollop of natural yoghurt and that really brought them to life.
- Butternut squash and peanut soup (p. 45) is a lovely creamy soup. I made it with cashews, but intend to try it again with peanuts.
- Spiced red lentil and tomato soup (p. 48). I've been making lentil soup for years and never done it without salt before. This recipe is a revelation – you don't need any salt! I will definitely make this again.
- Roasted cauliflower and garlic soup (p. 52) is really good with the soda bread from page 36. Cut the cauliflower up small before roasting or it'll take a lot longer than the recipe says it will. This soup only works if you like caraway seeds. A friend of mine made it without the caraway and liked it that way.
- Fresh tomato and herb dressing (p. 81) is easy to make; it looks unappetising but tastes really good.
- Turkey and pearl barley risotto with tarragon (p. 107). I made a vegetarian version of this with Quorn mince and vegetable stock instead of turkey mince and chicken stock, and it was excellent with a sprinkling of paprika on top.
- Courgette, pea and feta fritters (p. 128) are delicious. I've made them twice, the second time with mint instead of dill and I'll make them like that again. I served them with homemade sweet potato oven chips and the tomato sauce from the pizza recipe on page 136.
- Split pea and coconut dhal with carrot and coriander salad (p. 131). I made the dhal without the salad and I will make it again. Spicy and delicious.
- Saffron and spring vegetable quinoa pilaf (p. 132). I really enjoyed this; it tastes good and has to be good for you with all those lovely green vegetables! It's a bit too much effort if you're cooking for one, and the quinoa I bought needed more cooking than this recipe allowed. However, I still recommend it.
- Speedy spelt pizzas (p. 136) looked messy but tasted great. The base is very crunchy and the flavours lovely. I have made the sauce separately and cooked it for longer to make it thicker; it is a really good substitute for tomato ketchup and can be served hot or cold.
- Oaty pear and blackberry crumble (p. 148) is very good indeed. I couldn't get blackberries so used raspberries. It kept well in the fridge for a couple of days. I'll definitely make it again.
- Chocolate mousse with raspberries (p. 154) was too rich for me. I'll try it again but use less chocolate, I think, and more dates.
- Pumpkin pie slices (p. 160). My only major disaster! I don't know what went wrong but this was just horrible. The texture is weird and the flavour nasty.
- Apple, almond and cinnamon cake (p. 162) was a surprising success. It's a lovely light cake with really good flavours. The only problem is that it's made with four egg whites and you're left with four yolks.
- Chocolate and date truffles (p. 163) are so good I'll be making them again for Christmas. I used deglet noor dates instead of Medjool dates, and added a teaspoon of water to help it bind together.
- Healthy fruit bars (p. 163), are extremely more-ish and keep well in the fridge. I'll be making them again.

### **Breast cancer survivor (46-55) (November 2015)**

This book offers some great understanding on how to live well with the aim of reducing the risk of breast cancer recurrence by incorporating the right ingredients into daily meals. For anyone who has experienced breast cancer, the thought of recurrence is very real. It is most useful in helping readers to choose and cook the ingredients that may reduce the risk of breast cancer and help reduce the side effects or symptoms of treatment. It also helps readers to have a general understanding of why and how diet and lifestyle can contribute to wellness during and after treatment.

This is a well-designed book with attractive graphics, photos, and clean and clear layout. It is easy to understand, and it is written in plain English. There is an index for easy referencing, but there is no glossary of unfamiliar terms, for example, Tahini (p. 71), Sumac (p. 70), and edamame beans (p. 65). The recipes are easy to follow and the resulting dishes are appealing to the eye and taste. There are some expensive ingredients, such as sea bass, and saffron; but most ingredients are readily available from most supermarkets. Suggestions for alternative ingredients would be useful. There is no mention of how to use the oil in the recipe on page 162.

Some recipes have a side note with more insightful information, for example the caution (p. 68) not to eat grapefruit during treatment as it may interfere with the drugs, rendering them less efficient. At the end of each section, there are tips to enhance the reader's understanding or knowledge, such as the note on page 81: '5 ways with tomatoes', highlighting the benefits of eating tomatoes and five different ways to cook it. The author uses a gently guiding tone to draw the readers' attention.

This is the first book I have read that offers the reader concise and practical information on how to live well and reduce the risk of recurrence. The introduction is eloquently written and covers a whole spectrum of trustworthy information, including: what might contribute to breast cancer; how to reduce the risk; what food to eat to keep cancer at bay; whether to eat red meat; how and why soya is beneficial; and why physical exercise is good for breast cancer patients. I have tried some of the foods suggested and felt more satisfied and didn't get hungry so quickly after the meal. I also found I have more energy.

I like the book very much but some areas could be improved to send a clearer message. The author discusses in the introduction the health benefits of using olive oil due to its high content of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat, but there is no discussion on other fats/oils, such as vegetable or sunflower oil. Some recipes use olive oil, some vegetable or sunflower oil. For each of these recipes, the oil is cooked in the same way, medium-low heat. As we know, vegetable oil comprises unspecified oil sources that may not be good for breast cancer patients. Many of the recipes use light soya sauce instead of salt, but there is no explanation of the benefits of light soya sauce vs. salt. It would be helpful to suggest cheaper alternatives for some of the more expensive ingredients. Although the author discusses the importance of physical exercise, it would be more helpful to recommend specific exercises.

**Breast cancer survivor, in remission for eight years (56-65) (November 2015)**

This book would be excellent for anyone worried about reducing their risk of breast cancer or surviving following treatment for breast cancer. It is useful at any stage from preventative steps to post-operative recovery, to remove the focus of cancer and look to a healthier lifestyle.

There is a brief explanation about breast cancer but it is presented in a non-threatening manner and explains the different possible treatments. There is a section of useful websites as well to allow the reader to source more information if required. I really like the descriptions of the 'foods to be cautious of' as well as the 'foods to eat more of'. These tend to be easily found and inexpensive ingredients like fresh fruit and vegetables as well as beans and pulses' can be found in any supermarket. The emphasis of the book is not on a 'diet' as such but much more on maintaining a healthy weight by eating a healthy diet and taking regular exercise and staying in shape. It makes a point of 'enjoying your food', thinking about what you eat, shopping wisely, taking time to prepare meals and most important of all, enjoying your food.

I really like the layout (although page 160 has a strange 'overprinting' that does not appear on any other page). There is an index but there is no glossary as such (a glossary would be helpful as some of the names of the dishes were new to me). The language is simple and the instructions are easy to follow. It is clearly laid out and the separate sections make it easy to find a specific recipe (e.g. breakfast, soups, salads, fish and shellfish, poultry and meat, vegetarian main meal, dessert and drinks).

The fact that this book has the authority of a cancer consultant is refreshing; this is someone who understands that there may be problems with eating when undergoing treatment for breast cancer that can impact and reduce the patient's willingness to eat well. The recipes are colourful and tempting and there is something for everyone, from a light soup to a full three-course meal. It will encourage people to eat and the recipes are suitable for the whole family. The fact that it is suitable for cancer prevention as well means that it will appeal to women of all ages.

I really like this book and will recommend it; it is a good diversion from wholly medical texts and concentrates on 'wellness' rather than being ill. There is a good balance between proactive healthy eating and good diet to aid recovery; this book would be really useful for all women, not just those facing cancer. It will make a thoughtful gift for someone at diagnosis as well, because the emphasis is on health and well-being and not just on aspects of the disease; it will help to promote psychological optimism, so important for cancer survival.

### **Breast cancer patient (56-65) (November 2015)**

This book is most useful for anyone affected by cancer because it tries to clear up some myths around breast cancer and diet. However, the recipes and the book's general message that we should have a balanced diet, is relevant to everyone. It is meant for every stage of treatment as well as pre- and post-cancer, because it seeks to promote a healthy diet to reduce the risk of cancer and its recurrence. The book is useful during different stages of treatment too, for maintaining a nutritious diet.

The introduction, which deals with breast cancer, diet and lifestyle, is easy to read. Any unfamiliar words occur in the recipes. There is no glossary, but occasionally a recipe has a helpful note. For instance, I did not know what Edamame beans were, but the recipe for 'Edamame bean, pea and lemon salad' notes that they are green soy beans that are a 'super vegetable' for their nutritional content. I would like to check them out, but wonder if they are readily available and if they are expensive. A photograph of the salad gives me a good idea of what Edamame beans look like. But there are a good many other ingredients in this book that remain a mystery. The recipe for 'Puy lentil and halloumi salad with lemon and garlic', for instance, is not accompanied by a photograph and I don't know what halloumi or puy lentils are.

The recipes are not difficult to follow and anyone who enjoys cooking will be glad to try out some of them. But many are a little on the exotic side, with dishes from Mexico, Italy, Thailand, Vietnam and other parts of the world – not all the ingredients will be familiar or readily available. Some ingredients are certainly expensive, but they can be avoided as there are plenty of recipes to choose from.

Professor Keshtgar gives three lists of food: 'Foods to eat more of...', 'Foods to eat in moderation...' and 'Foods to be cautious of...'. There is nothing that he forbids. I think I would have been harder on the foods in the third category; foods such as processed meat and trans-fatty acids should really be described as 'Foods to be best avoided'. One important food item has been omitted from the three lists, namely eggs! This looks like an oversight as several recipes use eggs. Eggs are a very important part of my diet, particularly as I do not consume meat, poultry and dairy products. I consider eggs to belong in the first list of 'Foods to eat more of...'

The book is an A4 hardback with an attractive cover and many beautiful photographs of dishes in full colour. There is a 'coffee-table' look and feel to it, with lots of blank space on every page. It is an attractive book with many dishes that look tasty and nutritious. It makes me want to find out if my local market and supermarket have some ingredients that are new to me, and to try out – or at least adapt – some of the recipes. The bibliography is helpful. I noticed a minor proofreading lapse on the last page; in the list of people who have contributed to the book – photographer, designer, editor, and so on – Professor Keshtgar, who may be the most important contributor, has his name spelt wrong.

Many cancer survivors wish to take an active role in treatment. Through diet, exercise and other lifestyle factors, we can regain some measure of control over our lives. This is something that Professor Keshtgar recognises. I wish all cancer specialists would do the same. Although I would recommend this beautiful book, I would also express my reservations. At £20 it is not cheap, nor are some of the ingredients; cancer already deals patients and their carers a hard financial blow. It also contains the occasional sweeping remark that perhaps readers are expected to accept because the author is a 'leading' breast cancer oncologist. For instance, Professor Keshtgar says that there is no evidence that 'dairy products increase breast cancer risk, or affect prognosis after a breast cancer diagnosis'. He admits that there is little breast cancer in countries like China where dairy food consumption is low, but goes on to say: 'However, researchers believe that the low incidence is mainly due to other lifestyle differences.' I believe that opinion is divided. As a breast cancer survivor, I, for one, am following some form of the Professor Plant Diet, which

advocates avoidance of dairy products and consumption of soy products instead. And I know plenty of other breast cancer survivors who are doing the same. Research results on substituting dairy products with soya products may still be inconclusive, but that is no reason for dismissing them – there are arguments on both sides. Professor Keshtgar wishes to debunk the ‘myth’ of dairy products contributing to cancer, but as he offers no evidence, I don’t find him persuasive on this point; I think doctors still need to keep an open mind, and, after two breast cancers, I cannot take the risk of not replacing dairy with soy products.

### **Inflammatory breast cancer survivor (56-65) (October 2015)**



This has some lovely recipes and a helpful explanation at the beginning about nutritional value, dietary associations and foods to eat more, or less, of. It also includes advice on how to make food appetising when your mouth is dry or you have lost your sense of taste. It will be useful throughout all stages, so through treatment and beyond.

The recipes are easy to follow, and the ingredients are generally easily sourced, but some of the dishes can be quite expensive, so it might be more suited for occasions rather than daily use. They also use a lot of herbs and spices for flavour and I’m not sure I would have been able to tolerate some when I was on chemo. Most recipes are for four and it would be nice if they could be reduced for smaller portions.

The layout is good, with helpful summaries at the heading of each recipe. “The 5 ways with” at the end of each chapter is really helpful and provides some very useful quick options with basic ingredients such as chicken, tomatoes, nuts and seeds.

The introduction is very useful as it sets the context of the book; it is well worth a read but some recipes are not to my taste, so I am not sure I would pay for this book.

### **Two-times cancer survivor (breast cancer 2012; lymphoma 2008) (36-45) (March 2016)**

The layout is good and the typeface easy to read. The photographs are appealing and made me want to get cooking. Most of the recipes are easy to follow but cooking from scratch, with good fresh ingredients, is more expensive. Some of the ingredients, e.g. Samphire, are difficult to find.

I like a great many of the recipes and the fact there is a vegetarian section. The recipes and the introduction are clear but I would not have managed to cook food from scratch pre- or post-surgery or during chemotherapy. There was too much else going on and I had no energy. I am using it now, one year after treatment ended.

### **Endometrial cancer survivor (56-65) (January 2016)**

Although specifically for those with breast cancer, the recipes are aligned with the Mediterranean diet and may be of interest to a wider audience, or to anyone with an interest in cooking. The recipes I tried were easy to follow and quick to make. Some require expensive items; maple syrup at about £5.00 for a 330g bottle in Tesco is not something I normally buy. Vanilla essence, raw almonds, tamarind paste, quinoa, ground sumac and dark chocolate are other pricey items not normally found in my cupboards, however, the recipes can be adapted or some ingredients left out. Many of the vegetables are inexpensive to buy and if you like growing your own herbs, there are plenty of opportunities to put them together in new and interesting ways.

There are some imaginative combinations of foods. I particularly like the Coconut fish curry with cauliflower rice. The recipe calls for cod fillet but you could use any white fish. The blitzed cauliflower makes a lighter alternative to the usual rice and works very well. The dairy free Chocolate mousse with raspberries uses ripe avocado and dates for body and texture, and with dark chocolate plus vanilla extract the result is heavenly, seriously. The oatly pear and blackberry crumble is a great alternative to apple and blackberry. The crumble uses maple syrup instead of margarine or butter, and works very well with a bit of oil to keep the crumble from crumbling. I also tried the Apple, almond and cinnamon cake, which uses egg whites to keep it “light and fluffy”, unfortunately my whites didn’t peak, and I ran out of apple before the concentric circles were complete. With limited time for shopping I have not located spelt flour for the pizza recipe yet. Roasting vegetables, and some fruit, is a key theme throughout. I tried Roasted cauliflower and garlic soup (highly recommended) and Roasted butternut squash (with cinnamon) and pearl barley salad calls for ground sumac; I hunted this down in Waitrose but am not convinced it is worth it as there is already the juice of two lemons in the salad. I also tried roasting plums with orange juice and vanilla extract – well worth the dish scouring required afterwards.

The book is glossy with plenty of colourful pictures, which while nice to handle, gives the impression of image before content. The language is clear but borders on something out of Janet and John, for instance “What is breast cancer?” “When the DNA changes, it leads to cells starting to grow out of control and ultimately results in cancer”. There ends the biology. Some of the author’s advice didn’t add up for me. His preamble is very much, “this is how it is” without the need to provide references to the science behind the claims. For example, (p. 25) “As certain cancer treatments lead to a reduction of oestrogen levels and/or earlier initiation of menopause, the inclusion of dairy products within our diets has increasing importance. This warming porridge offers a sustaining breakfast that is packed with calcium”. This suggests that the reduced bank of oestrogen works as fast as the pace of calcium thrown at it.

The author begins his introduction as if empowerment and self-determination are key objectives of the lifestyle and dietary changes he believes are necessary, however, compared with other books on nutrition, the introduction lacks conviction, is poorly resourced and at times illogical. He acknowledges that the incidence of breast cancer in Northern Europe is about three times than that of Eastern Asia. He writes that, “one of the main foodstuffs consumed in high quantities in Eastern diets is soy” and that examples of soy food includes pulses, cereals, tofu, green vegetables and soya milk. He agrees that phyto-oestrogens in soy products may have a protective role and that, “consumption of soy and fermented soy is linked to a decreased risk of developing breast cancer” but does not pursue this. I was surprised to find no recipes

using tofu or soya milk, and only half a dozen using beans or pulses. The author is also keen that we consume dairy daily but provides no compelling evidence to do so, simply that we need to pack in the calcium to protect our bones.

As a cookery book, it is fine, but as an authority on how to become empowered either to avoid or to recover from breast cancer and go on to lead a healthier life it does not deliver. He lists the commonly heard risk factors – placing the blame on being overweight, inactive or enjoying your alcohol. The tone is trust me I'm a doctor, and that is just it, he provides advice, often in bite size chunks so as not to overwhelm us, with very little substance. On dairy, he states that, "some laboratory studies have suggested that certain proteins in milk can stimulate cell growth but these results have not been replicated in humans." Here he may be referring to insulin-like growth factors, which appear to have been extensively researched. Why doesn't he signpost to other authors on the subject? This is not a book to engage or inform the reader. The advice about sweets is to avoid refined sugar as elevated insulin concentrations are a "known risk". But insulin-like growth factors are not a known risk?

I have mixed feelings about this book, I'd recommend it on the basis of plenty of tasty recipes, but I don't think it can claim to be, "for cancer prevention and to boost health during and after treatment." The fruit and veg may just be a front for the inclusion of the recommended "daily dairy" that the author seems too keen to promote.

### **Living with breast cancer (46-55) (December 2015)**

Although the title suggests a book specific to breast cancer, much of the content is applicable to anyone seeking to eat healthily. In addition, it's a useful guide for those caring for someone going through cancer treatment as it not only provides a selection of appealing yet, in the main, easy to prepare dishes but also explains the whys and wherefores of eating specific food groups and the need to restrict intake of others. People caring for cancer patients need to understand why some dietary changes might be needed as the temptation can be to only provide previous favourites or treats that may not be what the person with cancer should be eating.

It could be of interest to anyone, regardless of stage, and for women whose aim is to minimise the risk of developing the disease, perhaps where there is a family history. I was offered little information on diet and nutrition on diagnosis and during chemotherapy it was aimed more at ensuring an adequate intake of calories than the source or nutritional value of those calories. In that respect, raising awareness of this book would be valuable. As a common-sense guide to healthy eating it's a cookbook that could find a place in the kitchen both during and long after treatment.

I found the recipes easy to follow and well laid out in easy steps. Recipes with many ingredients can be off-putting, especially when you're not feeling much like cooking, but there were only a few where this was the case, and even then, when I looked more closely, a lot of the ingredients were staples. However, I did raise an eyebrow more than once at some of the suggestions. In the middle of cancer fatigue and nausea, do I really feel like making my own hummous? No, I don't! I live in a fairly rural area, but with a couple of reasonably sized supermarkets and a health food shop in the local town the only items I haven't been able to find are Medjool dates

(expensive in any case) and tempeh. I imagine, however, that in places that are less well served more ingredients could be difficult to source.

A couple of the recipes could be a bit pricey but few are overly expensive (as mentioned above a lot include staples) and there are some that can be made very cheaply such as the Italian bean soup, Fish curry with cauliflower 'rice', Turkey and pearl barley risotto. Some of the meat dishes use cheaper cuts, more expensive items such as monkfish and cod could easily be substituted with less costly fish, turmeric can be used instead of pricey saffron for colour and so on. Where I didn't have an ingredient, or felt it was too expensive or unnecessary, I just left it out or substituted something else. It would have been helpful to have possible substitutions highlighted somewhere in the recipes themselves however.

The recipes themselves are written in clear plain language and anyone who's ever picked up a cookery book will be familiar with the style. When it comes to the introductory pages, some parts that require more effort. However, as this section focuses on the research and scientific side of cancer, diet, and nutrition, that's probably not surprising and to be fair it's as straightforward as possible. Terms like mutation, adiposity and endorphins are explained in simple terms in the text (no flicking to glossaries or footnotes) and for those who just want to cut to the chase, the section entitled 'Moving towards a healthier diet and lifestyle' provides concise and straightforward advice on foods to eat more of, what to eat in moderation and foods to keep to a minimum. There is a bibliography of research towards the end for those who want it and a useful list of websites relating to breast cancer and nutrition.

I didn't notice any inaccuracies, but I did find a couple of things surprising and others controversial. On the surprising side, my own experience of chemotherapy included clear advice not to eat undercooked eggs or shellfish; they carry a higher risk of infection and are best avoided when immunity is low. So, I was surprised to see mussels and prawns in a couple of recipes in the Fish chapter and runny eggs in the Breakfast section. I know they're not raw but the advice given to me by the hospital has always been to cook right through. On the controversial side, I have hormone-sensitive ovarian cancer, which has links with some breast cancers, and I have looked at many sources of nutritional and dietary advice supposedly based on scientific research, most specifically on eating dairy products. Some advocate carrying on as normal, while others recommend giving up dairy entirely. I have erred towards the latter, though not entirely. As I have been prescribed medication to lower the levels of oestrogen in the body because my cancer is hormone sensitive, I can't see why it is sensible to consume a lot of dairy foods that contain it. I'm aware that many women with breast cancer are also prescribed such medication for the same reason. In the introduction (p. 8, para 2), Professor Keshtgar points to oestrogen as a risk factor in women with breast cancer and states that 'Preventing long-term exposure to oestrogen reduces the risk of breast cancer'. So, although I was pleased that dairy is listed in the 'Foods to eat in moderation' section, I was surprised that alternative strategies are not suggested for those who have decided to omit it or reduce their dairy intake to a very low level because their cancer is hormone responsive, or are lactose intolerant. To be fair, alternatives such as almond milk are used but it would be appropriate to include some information in this specific section.

Secondly, there's been a lot of coverage recently about our sugar consumption in the UK, some of it in relation to cancer, yet on page 13, the subsection on Sugar and Carbs skates over its dubious role in our dietary habits, devoting only a few lines to carbohydrates in general. The more important information on page 19 (Sweets), should be included, if not expanded upon, in the Sugar and Carbs section. How often do we hear people say 'there's just as much sugar in fruit juice or an orange as there is in a biscuit/ cake/doughnut without understanding that one has additional nutrients that are good for you while the other is just empty calories. This book could have done more to explain why some sugars are worth eating, but refined sugar, with which we have a big problem generally in this country, isn't. Many other writers on cancer and diet have made the point better. It would also be helpful to include some information about sugar substitutes, which to avoid and which to consider.

It is a really attractive book, hardback at present and therefore a bit heavy, which can be an issue when strength and energy levels are low. The front cover clearly states the title and intention of the book and inside it's well laid out in sections covering breakfasts, soups, salad, fish and shellfish, poultry and meat, vegetarian, desserts and treats and drinks. The paper quality is really nice and there are attractive photographs of the finished dishes to whet the appetite – important when you're finding it hard to have much enthusiasm for food. A small number of pages have black type on coloured paper although only one (page 11, black on darkish blue) gave me any trouble. Similarly, I had no problem with the typeface or size and liked that in the recipe section the description of the dish is in a different typeface to the recipe. In terms of layout, having the Recipe Notes on the page opposite the contents is the wrong place and they should be at the start of the recipes section as it contains important information, specifically in relation to eggs.

There are many things to like about this book. It looks and feels like any good quality cookbook, it has a clear layout and beautiful photographs of food that doesn't look tempting. None of the recipes take up more than a page and the photos are always on the same page as the dish you're cooking! The recipes I've tried are themselves delicious and you don't have to have cancer to enjoy them! I'd use some of them for entertaining as well as everyday use. At the end of each chapter there's a helpful '5 Ways With' (smoothies, salmon, chicken breasts, leafy greens etc) just for some added ideas and I like the footnotes to some recipes explaining the health benefits of specific ingredients; I would like more of these.

Of course, it's more than a cookbook and the introductory pages contain information about the nature of breast cancer, the risk factors associated with it and the steps that anyone affected by it can take to ensure their diet and lifestyle give them the best chance of preventing or surviving the disease. It is difficult to know how much information individual readers will want or be able to absorb, but Professor Keshtgar has struck a reasonable balance by covering the main areas that people are likely to have questions about and there are links to other sources for those who want to do further research. It's a section to dip in and out of if you find it too heavy in one go, or are primarily interested in the recipes.

The intention behind the book and the nutrition advice is good, but the recipes are written from the perspective of a food writer rather than someone who understands what it's like living, or caring for someone, with cancer; at first glance they might give

the impression that it is aimed at a certain demographic, which is a shame as cancer is an inclusive disease. Asian sea bass en papillote with stir-fried greens, Roasted pork tenderloin with celeriac, edamame beans and gremolata, Ginger tempeh skewers with soba noodle salad, Pineapple and star anis carpaccio? These are all very well if you've got a keen and adventurous cook in the kitchen but many people struggle to rustle up some beans and toast during treatment and can manage a pot of homemade soup on a good day. It is different after treatment, when strength and interest in food and in cooking has returned. Then I'd be as tempted as I would be with any other of the books on my kitchen shelf and more than willing to spend however long it took in the kitchen to make it but not when energy and an appetite are distant memories. For that reason, I would have liked, if not a division between recipes to prepare 'during treatment' and 'staying healthy', at least an indicator as to those that are quick and easy and those that take a bit more time along with realistic preparation and cooking times. Although I have said elsewhere that many of the ingredients are staples (although I don't routinely have a jar of tahini or a supply of sumac in my store cupboard!), and expensive ingredients can be substituted, a few more quick and easy down-to-earth recipes could have been included, in addition to the more adventurous sounding, but no doubt delicious, dishes.

There are missed opportunities to make the book more user friendly. It is frustrating that some good ideas such as the footnotes to some recipes, explaining the health benefits of key ingredients, haven't been followed through in them all. I couldn't help comparing the layout of the recipes with that of Nourish, The Cancer Care Cookbook from Penny Brohn Cancer Care, which uses simple symbols to indicate recipes that are particularly helpful for nausea, constipation, sore mouth, gluten/dairy/ sugar free...; nutritional information per serving; preparation and cooking time; and whether the dish is suitable for freezing (it's often helpful to plan ahead for those days when you can't face the preparation that goes with making something nutritious and tasty). It would also be hugely helpful to have weights in ounces as well as grams – many of us still have kitchen scales that are only in pounds and ounces!

I did like this book and will probably use it, though not for everyday and it wouldn't be my 'go to' cancer cookbook. Although the introduction provides useful specific information on breast cancer there are other cookbooks that cover other areas better and take a more holistic view, providing helpful dietary and lifestyle advice on managing nausea, fatigue, lowered immunity, digestive and bowel problems as well as other concerns such as stress and mood. These are such common problems during cancer treatment and it's a pity this cookbook didn't take this wider approach.

### **Living with ovarian cancer (56-65) (January 2016)**

This is useful for anyone wanting a summary of information on breast cancer, diet and lifestyle and lots of recipe ideas. Some people don't have the time or the inclination to read in depth so brevity can be a positive as well as a negative. It is suitable for anyone at any stage. The introduction covers what breast cancer is, risk factors, treatment, diet and lifestyle influences followed by 'Moving towards a healthier diet and lifestyle'. The main section of the book (pp 20-170) is recipes.

It looks appealing and the subject is very clear from the cover. The layout is easy to follow and the book is easy to understand. There is a bibliography, a list of useful websites and an index. There are some short bullet points in the introduction. The contents list the sections, so you can easily find what you are looking for or go to a section for ideas. There are some added explanations about beneficial ingredients with the recipes. The recipes look easy to follow and the ingredients seem to be mostly readily available and there are plenty of affordable ingredients. I will definitely be trying some; others don't appeal but this is normal for any recipe book.

It's very helpful to have foods listed in sections: Foods to eat more of; Foods to eat in moderation; Foods to be cautious of. It's excellent that the dessert recipes use maple syrup and the advice is to limit or avoid refined sugar. However, he puts dairy in the 'Foods to eat in moderation' list; this is contrary to other guidelines I have seen, which put dairy in 'Foods to be cautious of'. I believe red meat should also be in this group. He mentions the Mediterranean diet but doesn't explain what it is. He talks about weight gain in relation to chemo drugs but does not cover weight loss and how to include good calories and build-up drinks to add weight. He doesn't mention organic ingredients. He talks about breast cancer risk factors and mentions the environment but does not highlight any chemicals that are best avoided.

It is brilliant that a cancer specialist recognises the importance of diet and lifestyle and is taking action to get the message across. I don't think it goes far enough, but the fact that a medical professional is talking about diet and lifestyle sends a powerful message to take it seriously and will benefit some people. However, I can think of two other cancer-related books I would recommend before this to someone seriously looking at diet and lifestyle. It's a useful recipe book but £20 seems expensive.

### **Breast cancer patient (56-65) (November 2015)**



This is not suitable for someone with breast cancer; it's hard enough to live with cancer and its side effects let alone find the energy to look at lists of ingredients and buy new ones that I might use only sparingly, or plan meals without guidance. A carer might be more able to plan meals and compile list of things required but they are busy caring for the patient. It may be useful for a friend or relative if they offer to help regularly but in my experience help dwindles and you are left to carry on.

It could be beneficial at diagnosis as the introduction is useful if you don't already have extensive knowledge. The recipes and the part about recommended foods could inspire someone to change their diet but whether they would have the energy to cook and coordinate meals during chemotherapy is questionable.

The recipes are somewhat hard to follow if you are tired. I don't have a lot of the ingredients and would have to purchase many. This isn't practical for someone with cancer. Some of the ingredients are expensive and probably not stocked at my local Co-op and I'd have to take a trip to Waitrose, which is expensive and exhausting. If you buy online, more exotic ingredients are often not delivered and that would mess

up your plans. It would be a real help if the key ingredients were highlighted at the start, i.e. a shopping list, and the author explained how many meals you can create from these ingredients. This might give someone an idea of whether it's worth purchasing them. There is no indication of how long each recipe might take; some idea of time would help those who are tired or caring for a patient plan their time.

The meal on the cover looks busy and consists of lots of ingredients, which I find overwhelming. It doesn't look like a cookbook for a younger person or family; it looks like one aimed at older people. The claim about easy recipes is misleading – easy for whom, anyone? The idea of boosting health during and after treatment is appealing, but will cancer patients feel like following the complex ideas; are they realistic and achievable? It could recommend cooking certain dishes in bulk and identify those that freeze well.

It's pitched at the correct level and uses appropriate language but more use of colour might make it more appealing and easier to follow. It looks and feels like a quality cookbook. The images throughout are appealing, but, even though I'm a good cook, I feel a little stressed about whether I would have the energy to rustle up the recipes. Most cancer patients struggle to get up each day let alone cook breakfast. The recipes need to be simplified and reflect what people are well enough to do. The ingredients list should be in a bigger font as many cancer patients' eyes are affected by treatment. Many of the dishes serve four but I have two small children who will not eat these dishes. It would be lovely to have a child friendly recipe alongside. If I was going to the trouble of buying all the ingredients I would want to be able to feed my whole family. More images of the ingredients throughout would be good and maybe suggestions of where to buy the ingredients, e.g. the market is best and cheapest for spices, buy a large pot of honey as it's used in xxx dishes. More guidance is needed on the ingredients list along with time to prepare and cook the dishes.

I like the information section at the front that tells the reader which foods are good and which to avoid but the book would be better with time guidelines, shopping lists or suggested meal plans for different times during treatment, e.g. what to cook in bulk when you are feeling ok and can freeze portions, which meals are easy when you are tired or to boost you when feeling tired. Labelled sections would be good (e.g. 1. Sore mouth; 2. Diarrhoea; 3. Constipation; 4. Tiredness; 5. Sickness) with appropriate meals for these common side effects. I like the images but the book needs more of them. For example, the '5 ways with' sections on the coloured background are interesting but I'm not drawn in to read them; images would hook the reader in.

I would not pay £20.00 for this book unless it had everything I have mentioned above. It would be easier to use if it had tabs to enable you to flick to the relevant section. It is the type of book that you might flick through if you were given it as a present but then never pick back up again. I am not inspired to cook any of the suggested meals/ items and struggled to read most of it as the text is too small.

**Living with secondary breast cancer (36-45) (November 2015)**

I think this book would be most suitable for someone who has finished treatment. Most of the recipes are quite long with several ingredients. From my experience of chemotherapy and radiotherapy, I would not find them very appealing.

It is easy to understand and the recipes are easy to follow but for someone on a low budget, some would be quite expensive, e.g. Venison and chestnut stew. There are a few ingredients that I have not heard of, e.g. Soba Noodles and Sumac, which are not really store cupboard ingredients.

The cover is bright and appealing, the print size and photographs showing the completed meals are good. I also like the explanations under some of the recipes that give the benefits of an ingredient. However, if I saw the book on sale and just glanced at the title, I would think it was aimed at patients who have already been diagnosed with breast cancer.

I found this book quite disappointing. The recipes would not encourage me to cook any of the meals; when you are having treatment, you want fast, nutritious food and this book does not fulfil these criteria. The soups are quite good but I don't think you would have the energy to prepare the ingredients and then cook them for 30-45 minutes. I did not find the recipes very appealing. Regarding the medical information, there is nothing in this book that I have not read or heard of before.

### **Breast cancer in 2003 (56-65) (October 2015)**



This is a good-looking book with an excellent layout, printed on good quality paper with attractive illustrations of the finished dishes. The recipes are simple and easy to follow and ingredients readily available. However, I would recommend it only to those interested in healthy eating, not those with breast cancer or anyone connected to them. I do not feel that it would be beneficial for anyone with breast cancer.

I did not notice any mistakes or inaccuracies particularly but I did feel alarmed at the lack of evidence to back up the claims made in the book. The introduction contains many sweeping statements and qualified only by vaguely referring to 'studies' without citing the relevant ones. The strap line on the cover is 'Over 100 easy recipes for cancer prevention...'; I find it inconceivable that any cancer specialist would make such a claim. Was this the publisher's idea I wonder or did Professor Keshtgar really sanction this? It seems to buy into blame culture: 'you ate the wrong things so it is your fault you got cancer'. Cancer patients have enough to put up with without being blamed for their plight! The professor claims that "9% of cancer cases may be prevented by changing diet" and "5% could be avoided by maintaining a healthy body weight". It is interesting that the claims are softened by the words 'may' and 'could', unlike the promises on the cover. The statements about cancer prevention claim to be based upon scientific evidence but there are no citations for specific claims. There is a bibliography but the lack of links to specific claims make it impossible to use.

I will be very interested to see what other readers make of this book. It is more of a guide to healthy eating and will be useful for anyone interested in following a healthy eating plan. I felt embarrassed to see it claiming to be 'The breast cancer cookbook'.

**Breast cancer patient (66-75) (October 2015)**

# Further information

## Why does Macmillan Cancer Support review books?

We use reviews to help us compile a list of suggested cancer books, the [Macmillan Core Book List](#). Cancer information centres and public libraries can use this list to select appropriate and relevant books for people affected by cancer.

We add reviews to the [Directory of information materials for people affected by cancer](#) so that people affected by cancer can see what others in a similar situation think about a book. You can also see details of all the books reviewed in the [Book reviews listing](#), which also has links to all the reviews.

We recruit most of our reviewers through the [Volunteering Village](#) and the [Cancer Voices Network](#), people affected by cancer who have signed up to help Macmillan Cancer Support in a number of ways. Volunteers are a vital part of our book review process; since 2007, over 1,500 Macmillan volunteers have written more than 6,000 reviews of over 500 different books.

If you are a health professional who would like to review books for us, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

## Information and support for people affected by cancer

If you are looking for support to help you live life with cancer, you may wish to contact one of [Macmillan's cancer information and support services](#). Or you can call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00** (Mon-Fri 9am–8pm). We have an interpreting service in over 200 languages. Just state, in English, the language you wish to use. If you are deaf or hard of hearing you can use textphone no 0808 808 0121 or Text Relay.

You can also email us using the [website enquiry form](#). Alternatively, [visit our website](#).

## Feedback

If you have any comments, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

**Being told ‘you have cancer’ can affect so much more than your health – it can also affect your family, your job, even your ability to pay the bills. But you’re still you. We get that. And, after over 100 years of helping people through cancer, we get what’s most important: that you’re treated as a person, not just a patient.**

**It’s why we’ll take the time to understand you and all that matters to you, so we can help you get the support you need to take care of your health, protect your personal relationships and deal with money and work worries.**

**We’re here to help you find your best way through from the moment of diagnosis, so you’re able to live life as fully as you can. For information, support or just someone to talk to, call 0808 808 00 00 or visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)**

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