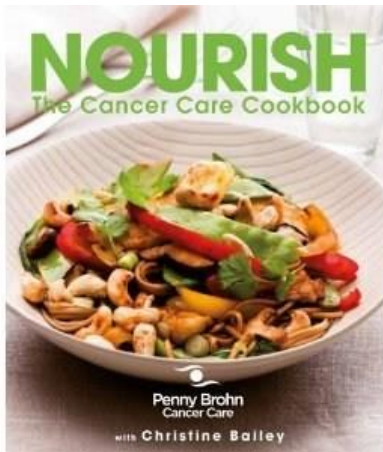


**MACMILLAN
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BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



**Nourish. The cancer care
cookbook (2013)**

Penny Brohn Cancer Care.

Bristol: Penny Brohn Cancer Care, 2013.

160pp.

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Average star rating 3.7 (out of 5)

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This is most useful during diagnosis and after treatment. The introduction and advice pages give an insight into why certain foods are advised. It allows the preparation of suitable meals for the wellbeing of patients and gives family and friends insight into the potential problems that patients can face. I am considering losing some weight and this book will go some way to advising and helping me.

It is easy to understand although there may be problems sourcing some of the ingredients. It is attractive and the cover can be wiped, ideal in the kitchen. It is good to see that the book considers people who require a wheat and gluten-free diet.

Prostate cancer patient (56-65) (September 2013)

This is useful for anyone interested in cooking. It is easy to follow and most of the ingredients are readily available, however there were some that I had not heard of. I like the layout and colour, especially the photos, and the first pages that explain about our approach to healthy eating and where to find the nutrients our bodies need.

Breast cancer patient (46-55) (August 2013)

This wonderful book inspires you to cook and eat foods that have excellent benefits. I'm a vegetarian but all the meat recipes can be adapted. I really enjoyed reading it and trying out the recipes. Most of the ingredients are readily available; some are seasonal, but that's the best way to cook. The layout is fab, with appealing photos; the food looks yummy.

It will be useful at diagnosis or after treatment. It will also appeal to people looking to reduce their risk of cancer. I have recommended it to my cancer support group.

Womb cancer survivor (36-45) (July 2013)

This is an excellent book for people with, or recovering from, cancer (as well as those not affected), providing clear and concise information about how to use diet to support your body. It will be useful at all stages: during diagnosis; during treatment; in recovery; and post cancer. It gives the patient and their family or friends clear and constructive information about the importance of diet in cancer prevention and recovery. I would have found it extremely constructive during diagnosis and treatment for endometrial cancer in 2012 – it enables the individual and family to do something positive to support the patient during and after cancer.

It is a good size; with colourful pictures and a clear type and layout. It feels sturdy and the wipe-able cover is important in a cookbook. The author writes clearly and in a positive, factual tone. The information is presented in sections, allowing the reader to dip in and out as required. One recipe per page gives clarity and where there are two, they are clearly demarcated. The recipes are clear and easy to follow and there is a broad range to appeal to varied tastes. Some ingredients may not typically be in the store cupboard; however most appear to be easily purchased. The dietary information at the start also provides the reader with the potential to adapt recipes if ingredients are not available, or to suit individual taste.

This book made me feel that there are positive steps I can take to support my on-going cancer recovery through diet. I now feel that I can take charge of and control this aspect of my life to improve my health and wellbeing.

Endometrial cancer survivor (46-55) (July 2013)

This book is probably best read after initial diagnosis and treatment as although it's clearly written, there is a lot to take in. It is very easy to understand and technical language is used appropriately and explained where necessary. The recipes don't contain endless ingredients and are relatively simple and straightforward to follow. The herb and spice section with compounds and benefits and the natural condiments from the store cupboard section is particularly interesting and helpful.

It's a fabulous book and I can't recommend any changes, although the key for recipes could be better placed, i.e. at the start of the recipe section not on the contents page so that it's not necessary to have to refer to the beginning of the book each time. It's long enough, but not endless, and the recipes are inviting and tantalising. The title is simple yet effective, the layout is logical and easy to read and the photographs are simple and tempting!

I like the fact this is a delicious cookbook that also explains and educates the reader into understanding the importance of the whole person approach to living with and beyond cancer. Although we are vegetarians, it is great to read an unbiased book in regard to meat eating or not. It does not make the reader feel guilty about their diet choice and offers suggestions and alternatives for meat eaters and vegetarians in equal measure, a delight to read!

Carer (renal cancer and lymphoma) (36-45) (July 2013)

This book has healthy eating advice and recipes for cancer patients or their carers, but useful for anyone with an interest in healthy food. It will be most useful for those having or recovering from treatment as it has tips for healthy eating when suffering from side-effects such as nausea, loss of taste or appetite, or fatigue. The recipes are specifically designed to provide maximum nourishment without too much effort.

The first third is a basic introduction to healthy eating; a useful table (p. 24) lists the possible benefits of certain foods, e.g. Shiitake mushrooms contain certain polysaccharides shown to support immunity and destroy cancer cells. The table is followed by balanced and sensible advice, e.g. “don’t feel that it is essential to eat specific foods because of their healthy properties if they don’t appeal to you” and “choose a food rather than a supplement”. The rest of the book is recipes: juices; smoothies; breakfasts; soups; light dishes; main meals; desserts. Finally, there is a section on specific food remedies for supporting the body through treatment and its side effects. There are also sections on healthy weight maintenance, the relationship between food and mood and menu plans for vegetarians and non-vegetarians.

I am a reasonably experienced cook but was pleasantly surprised at the variety of ingredients and interesting combinations. *Coconut and lime baked mackerel* (p. 81), is an unusual combination of Thai-style sauce and oily fish, not something I would have thought of, but nutritious and delicious. The only niggle is that it is described as possibly appealing when you feel low in energy because it requires minimal preparation. I had to stand for about 10-15 minutes, stirring the coconut milk with the corn flour and other ingredients continuously until thickened; I couldn’t have done this for quite a while after surgery. I also tried *Tamarind-spiced mackerel* (p. 107); again, this includes some Asian-inspired flavours but the addition of mint is unexpected. This is quick, easy and very tasty. Desserts are not overlooked; gooey chocolate and raspberry pudding (p. 120) and almond citrus cake (p. 125) look tempting to try.

It is not too large and unwieldy, useful in the kitchen. I would describe the quality of the paper as “wholemeal”, in keeping with the recipes! It is nicely laid out, with approximately one dish per page, an attractive photo for most dishes and clear lists of ingredients. There is full nutritional information for the dishes as well as useful symbols identifying them as, for example, soya free, dairy free, gluten free. It is nicely written and easy to understand. The recipes are clear and easily followed. A few ingredients were new to me (not a bad thing!), e.g. maca powder (a Peruvian root), although I have seen them in my local (expensive) whole-food shop. I was quite keen to try the Matcha Mango Shake (p. 52), but the matcha was prohibitively expensive.

This book appeals to me because it uses unexpected ingredients and combinations of ingredients, which make me keen to try the new flavours. In this way, you feel you are “tweaking” your diet to improve general nutrition. I like the general tone; the author is not prescriptive and places an emphasis on enjoying food and not making too many changes at once. The recipes are suitable for anybody who is interested in healthy food. I must confess to being a bit biased before I read it; I have stayed at the Penny Brohn Centre and found the food there delicious, so I was looking forward to reviewing it and trying some of the recipes. It did not disappoint. I think it is going to keep me busy with fresh, healthy meal ideas for the foreseeable future.

Recovering from uterine cancer (36-45) (July 2013)

I adore this book and the recipes. I have tried three recipes in each section so far and intend to try most of them. They are easy to read and follow and although I had not heard of a few ingredients, the book explains what they are. Some ingredients are not available in all supermarkets and a health food shop may be needed for some. I don't believe it is necessary to give up dairy products, if used in moderation, but it is possible to substitute non-dairy ingredients for dairy items in the recipes if desired. I do not eat fish due to an allergy, so it is refreshing to find a cookbook that suggests alternatives for the omega oils.

I like the cover and the size of the book. The photographs accompanying the recipes are excellent. I particularly like the section prior to the recipes, explaining the philosophy of Penny Brohn Cancer Care, which has come about after years of research, trial and evaluation.

It suitable for anyone, not just those affected by cancer, and I intend to use it for my whole family. My son is hoping to join the Royal Marines and we have been looking for recipes for him to enhance his well-being in preparation. We are thrilled that this book will give us everything we need. Having experienced cancer for five years, I feel very enthusiastic that this book is available to the public; personally, I feel I can take back some control of my life. A great addition to any home.

Living with breast cancer (46-55) (July 2013)

This excellent book has good information in a format that is easy to read and use. It explains a whole-person approach to staying well, with enough explanation to be meaningful without being too technical or burdensome. I enjoyed reading it straight through and it is easy to refer to individual items.

The recipes are one to a page, which makes them easy to use, and the steps are easy to follow. It is easy to find what you are looking for; the index lists the recipes and the key words that might need an explanation and there is a contents page. The cover looks good and there are appealing photos of some of the dishes.

There is a good range of recipes; some use expensive ingredients, some are more affordable and some need ingredients from a health food shop. The diet information is explained well and includes tables that are easy to refer to. Each recipe includes nutritional information and health benefits. I am enjoying trying the recipes and it has inspired me to use herbs.

Former breast cancer patient (56-65) (June 2013)

There is not enough information available about nutrition for cancer patients. This very useful book has easy recipes and I definitely recommend it.

Living with endometrial cancer (46-55) (June 2013)

This will interest anyone aware of current issues around food and health. It will be most useful post treatment. I have finished treatment and was ready to address the idea that my diet could help, e.g. in relation to inflammation. The Weekly Diet Plan is good for those who aren't regular cooks but who want to develop a better lifestyle.

The book has been executed with thought and one chapter follows another with ease. Headings point the way and the charts are excellent back up for the book's theories. It is easy to understand – the word for the sugar substitute was the only one that stumped me when I first leafed through to get a feel of the text. The tone is friendly without being patronising or taking on the tone of a 'bible for perfect health' following a disease that drastically illuminates the breakdown of the reader's health.

I found myself wanting to know more about the relationship between food and health. This is a good first step in that journey. I now think that I'll look out for the next development in this field without being drawn to the more sensational revelations that appear in the press. I may have switched off in the past, becoming weary of the latest do's and don'ts'. I appreciated the author's gentle approach; no finger wagging, no patronising, just an opening to something that makes sense without too much effort but with many plus points. A signpost towards recovery and something informed.

I might begin by working through the recipes. I have had head and neck cancer, resulting in a left neck dissection, so every mouthful of food that I can swallow is of enormous importance – I can't waste the energy it takes to eat and swallow. My sense of taste is impaired so food that has flavour without burning my mouth and artificial tongue is very important (I have been through a painful 'trial and error'). A book on what and how to eat is needed for those who have had a neck dissection.

Living with head and neck cancer (56-65) (May 2013)

This has lots of good information for anyone, not just cancer patients. The recipes are clear, nothing that a novice can't follow. The quality is better than I expected with good photos of the recipes. I like the clear guidance about the importance of nutrition.

Living with testicular cancer (46-55) (May 2013)



This has good pointers for a healthy diet through treatment and beyond. The advice is about sensible eating, which should be enjoyable and life enhancing. It is easy to navigate, starting with the nutritional and health ideas that underpin the recipes. The recipes are in sections and it is easy to find a recipe. They sound and look very appetising and are beautifully photographed. It is easy to read and the recipes are easy to follow. However, I haven't heard of some ingredients and wonder how easy they are to buy – an issue if you are cooking for yourself during treatment.

Living with breast cancer (46-55) (July 2013)

This is useful for carers, family, or health professionals. Newly diagnosed patients can hold very little information as their thoughts are always somewhere else, so simplicity is of the utmost importance; we need basic, nutritious meals that are easy to prepare; for this reason, it is best for patients after treatment has finished.

I like the explanation of food values and why it is important for us to eat these foods, how they help our immune system and keep us well. The cover is good on the eye, fresh, colourful, clean, and healthy and the green also gives it somehow a caring feel.

The recipes use lots of ingredients I have not heard of and that might be difficult to get hold of (I haven't tried yet). The recipes for supporting your body should be at the front instead of having to read through all the informative, but important, information. I would like an index at the front to make it easy to find a recipe instead of having to flick through it all again. Although I found it easy to understand, I would prefer it to explain the best way to reheat recipes, rather than how long they can be kept in the fridge/freezer and I would like more suggestions for side dishes.

Breast cancer survivor (56-65) (June 2013)

This is an appealing book; the design is excellent and the recipes tempting and well balanced nutritionally – the author knows her audience. It covers many questions that people with cancer worry about and will be most useful when moving forward after treatment. The dietary information and how to deal with side effects is very useful. A footnote to each recipe also states the health benefits of the ingredients.

The recipes are easy to follow and it is easy to understand; footnotes explain and give nutritional information. My main concern is that many of the ingredients are not ordinary store cupboard ingredients and would need some searching out, for example in specialist outlets. This could be expensive and time consuming and people with cancer do not always have the energy for this.

I would need to be having a good day, energy wise, to attempt many of the recipes and this may apply to many people living with cancer. However, some recipes are quick and simple and the nutritional information is very useful. Carers will find this book very useful if they are caring for someone with cancer who has a poor appetite as many recipes are very tasty and appealing.

I would recommend this book to someone living with cancer who is interested in diet, or someone caring for a cancer patient.

Living with breast cancer (56-65) (June 2013)

This is a good book to look at, well laid out with good photographs, and the recipes are easy and straightforward, ideal for cancer patient. However, some items are hard to find – it would seem to be written for the American market – and the style of writing seems patronising in parts, but that may just be me!

Living with lymphoma (56-65) (June 2013)

This book could be helpful during and after treatment as well as for someone who is living with cancer that has returned. It has a great deal of information about nutrition and managing treatment, especially foods that are helpful in dealing with various side effects. This aspect is detailed and well covered without being overwhelming.

It has a variety of useful recipes that are clear and well described and, on the whole, it is easy to comprehend. There is a small section about natural condiments which does describe some of the unusual ingredients, but not all. It would make more sense if this was dealt with in the relevant recipe. Sometimes this is the case but it is not consistent. A glossary would be a useful bonus.

The first impression is very favourable, especially as the cover is eye catching and tempting. The general layout is clear and the recipes well detailed. Unfortunately, the paper is very thick and unappealing and the recipe photographs lack the gloss and attractive vividness of the cover. It is unfortunate that the publishers didn't spend a little more to make the paper and photos more user friendly, and visually attractive.

Penny Brohn Cancer Care, better known as The Bristol Approach, takes a holistic approach to the treatment of cancer. Eating well is an integral part of their philosophy and the book concentrates on recipes and nutritional advice that increase one's chances of staying well. As someone living with cancer and interested in good, wholesome food, I am immediately attracted by food presentation. For someone who is ill, lacking appetite or recuperating, the visual is of vital importance. The book has its heart in the right place but insufficient attention was paid to this crucial aspect.

Living with prostate cancer (66-75) (June 2013)

This is a good source of information that anyone affected by/working with cancer can relate to and find useful. It will be most effective following diagnosis, particularly as one of the main responses to diagnosis is to want to know 'what can I do differently?'; nutrition seems to be within most people's capability and reach.

The recipes are straightforward for those used to following recipes; new cooks may question the meaning of 'handful of' or 'pinch of'. Although most ingredients should be available at good health food shops, this can depend on where you live. I have concerns about the cost of some ingredients, which may not be within everyone's budget. Alternatives could be used, if individuals are prepared to look for them.

It is full of colourful pictures that make it very appealing and appetising. I do like the layout; it is well spaced and separates the recipes and stops it looking too heavy and wordy. The very good quality paper gives it a high-quality finish. I like the summary of information on different coloured (green) paper.

There are many good things about the book: the initial whole-person approach that explains the importance of a healthy, well balanced diet and its impact on the body; the nutritional information underneath each recipe; the relevant picture opposite the recipe as a guide to what the final product should look like. It restores a degree of control back to the patient/carer who may need to focus on something practical at a difficult time; it encourages us to adopt a healthy diet together with the benefits.

Some terminology is used; this may be OK for an experienced cook but for someone new what does “don’t heat oils to a high temperature during cooking” mean? Not everyone is able to research nor has the energy levels to do so! I also have an issue with the cost of some of the ingredients! It can be deflating if it is not within your budget or cooking experience. Those able to withstand the cost and familiar with cooking from scratch will find it very useful.

I might recommend it; it will depend on the individual; the idea is to empower and restore control not add further stress! Bits of information would be very useful and helpful in understanding the healthy approach and how it fits into the whole person approach, but in terms of ingredients there are cost implications to be considered.

Living with the consequences of breast cancer (46-55) (June 2013)

This book would be particularly useful for anyone planning meals for a cancer patient. It has ideas for healthy eating and general nutritional advice and the “Eat well, live well” section is well set out and informative.

It is well laid out with tempting photos accompanying many of the recipes. I found it easy to understand, but I had not heard of some ingredients or seen them in the supermarket, e.g. Xylitol, Lucuma and Stevia, although they can be found on the internet. Generally, the ingredients are not for those with a conservative palate nor for those not used to doing a lot of cooking – the list of ingredients in some recipes could be off putting. However, the recipes are straightforward and easy to follow.

For the most part, it has sound sensible advice with some interesting, healthy recipes that focus on good nutrition (low in fat and sugar). I don’t like the section on the power of food and it is not at all clear about the quantities that would have to be eaten to ‘restrict the growth of cancer cells’. The authors do not cite the evidence for the benefits of some foods and I am not sure that it is correct to say, for example, that peppermint inhibits the growth of tumours or cloves may prevent digestive tract cancers. Also, it is not made clear that some of the sugar alternatives can have side effects, for example xylitol can cause diarrhoea.

It could be a useful book for exploring meal planning with a cancer patient and thinking about a healthy diet.

Carer (thyroid cancer, brain tumour) (46-55) (May 2013)



This is a very well presented book with plenty of pictures of what your dishes should turn out like! It is filled with mouth-watering, interesting and varied recipes, however some of the ingredients exotic, expensive or not readily available to those who are financially constrained.

Oesophageal cancer patient (56-65) (November 2013)

This book has useful information for everybody – patients, carers, professionals and those trying to reduce their risk of cancer. There are a lot of nutritional tips for those going through chemotherapy for patients or carers. It will also be useful for those trying to eat as healthily as possible in order to prolong life.

It is quite easy to understand; the nutritional information is followed by the recipes, which are fairly easy to follow and well illustrated. I love the size of the book and its quality; it could withstand a lot of thumbing through before it starts to get tatty. My main problem is that not all the ingredients are readily available and some are probably quite expensive. I don't think the recipes are suitable for a family. The natural condiments from the store cupboard include tahini, lucuma, Stevia (!).

This useful book is full of advice on nutrition. Unfortunately, the recipes let it down.

Triple-negative breast cancer survivor (46-55) (September 2013)

The introduction describes food types that help with certain problems, e.g. your immune system. This section is well written and interesting and did make me think that I would make more effort to incorporate the ingredients into my diet. The author is very knowledgeable and I took note of what she was saying. She addresses issues such as weight gain/loss sensitively; these can be real concerns for cancer patients.

The recipe photos are appealing and the book looks good, but the cover image may not appeal to everyone. The green typeface makes me think of goodness and earthy food that is healthy for me. The quality of the book is excellent and the different coloured pages make it more interesting. The symbols on each recipe are a lovely idea but I had to keep referring to the contents page as I kept forgetting what they meant; not good for someone with severe fatigue.

The images really made me want to cook the recipes but you can't just rustle them up; they use foods that are hard and/or expensive to buy and that will probably go off unless there are other recipes that use them. I shop online for my food and they never deliver 100% of basic ingredients, let alone more exotic ones. For someone with cancer who struggles to cook and has a partner working full time, the recipes are too complicated. Living with cancer makes it hard to focus and plan the finer detail – fatigue makes it extremely hard to concentrate – so some lists would be useful, e.g. a list of store cupboard ingredients used in a lot of the recipes, a list of things that don't go off quickly, and a list of fresh ingredients. It would also be helpful if the ingredients categorised, e.g.: those you can buy from supermarkets; those you can buy in a health food shop; and those you need to buy from a Chinese supermarket or specialist shop. These would make it less overwhelming than being faced with list of recipes and ingredients and not knowing where to start.

It is a nice idea but unless I had shopping lists made for me I would not try and cook the dishes, which is a shame as they do look lovely. I would eat the meals if they were cooked for me but I wouldn't pay £12.99 for this book as it stands.

Living with advanced breast cancer (36-45) (August 2013)

This book would be most useful for somebody post treatment wanting to maintain a healthy diet. It reads well, starting with lots of information about cancer and diet, fatigue and nutrients, and is relatively easy to understand. It has a nice cover, good quality paper and layout and the recipe photos are attractive.

However, most cancer patients would not have the energy or inclination to source many of the ingredients: umeboshi paste, daikon, kohlrabi, tamari, xylitol or stevia, to name but a few. Even if you live in a large city with specialist shops it will be difficult to find many of the ingredients. Most recipes are 'fussy' and impractical. For example, even the recipe for something that should be relatively simple - the Granola - has 16 ingredients including goji berries, coconut oil and chia seeds.

I cannot imagine that most patients would bother finding the ingredients and cooking these recipes on a daily basis – perhaps for a special meal. The ingredients are generally difficult to find and I am not familiar with a lot of them. I do not like the fact that the author seems to give the impression that by following these recipes we will all live cancer free! I cannot imagine that many people want to (or can afford to) eat venison, duck or roasted tempeh on a daily basis.

Head and neck cancer patient (CXPA of parotid gland) (46-55) (July 2013)

This is a useful general read for people without cancer, but of little use to cancer patients. It's been pitched wrong – patients are often limited by what they can eat. It will depend how 'well' that person feels, what stage their cancer is at, and what kind of cancer they have.

It is laid out beautifully and every recipe is illustrated. Everything is well explained and there are very useful tables and charts that make it easy, and enjoyable, to look up the nutritional benefits of foods. However, some of the ingredients are baffling (and I am into healthy eating). For example, I had no idea what 'Matcha Tea' was. I discovered it is £29 a tin – not very accessible for most people!

I really enjoyed the science stuff – in particular, the inflammatory effects of certain foods. I also like how the authors say it's fine to have a treat now and then. There are only so many vegetables you can eat! However, it assumes that the patient can eat. In an ideal world, they would be able to eat 'Hoisin Temple Skewers' and 'Salmon with Sauce Vierge', but realistically, if someone is having chemotherapy this will be the last thing they fancy. When my mum was having chemotherapy, most food made her gag, and she could only manage half a slice of bread with a smear of ketchup. My neighbour, who has breast cancer and is having radiotherapy, can barely bring herself to eat anything. The book also assumes that someone is well enough to stand in the kitchen and cook for themselves, or that they will have someone to do it for them. Also, many of the ingredients are expensive and obscure and not the sort of thing you'd find in the grocery store. Lastly, I am a vegetarian and there's not much in here I could make for myself. People undergoing cancer treatment, even if they aren't vegetarians, will not always be able to cope with meat or fish.

Carer (lung cancer) (36-45) (July 2013)

This will probably be most useful before treatment or after recovery. I was keen to find food that I could eat during treatment, but in no fit state to shop and seldom capable of cooking much because food smells made me nauseous and standing made me tired. It assumes that you know you are going to be ill and that one of your priorities will be stocking up on unusual foodstuffs from shops you don't normally use. If you have a lot of time and energy between diagnosis and treatment, and want to ensure that your diet is as healthy as possible, it might be useful. However, even though I'm now recovered, I don't feel motivated to try most of the recipes.

The recipes are well laid out, easy to follow, and the photos are tempting. However, many use unusual ingredients, e.g. mixed dried seaweed, matcha green tea, white miso paste, green superfood powder; whey vanilla protein powder; acai berries; slippery elm, I could go on. You might find them in a health food shop, but there isn't one near us so I haven't been able to check. There is no glossary to explain exactly what they are. Eventually, I found a section (pp 39-41) that tells you about some, but it is not called a glossary, doesn't appear in the contents, and the ingredients aren't in the index. Some recipes require an electric juicer, which we don't have.

It is packed with nutritional information for each recipe and I didn't notice any mistakes, which is commendable. However, it is frustratingly difficult to read and use. The author acknowledges that changes in diet are not easy and it takes time, a valid point, well made; it would therefore help to suggest common substitutes that can be used during this period of change and adaptation. For instance, it suggests using xylitol or stevia instead of sugar (I think because digestion releases these sugars more slowly than those of refined cane or beet sugars, so minimising the production of excessive insulin). As xylitol and stevia are not store-cupboard ingredients, it would be helpful to have the equivalent measures for ordinary sugar; unless you are familiar with xylitol and stevia you have no idea if they are sweeter than sugar – without this information the recipes are unusable. The same applies for very many of the other ingredients used, which are only rarely flagged as 'optional' additions.

I like the acknowledgement (p. 36) that there will be days when preparing ANY food is beyond you. If I am struggling to eat, I want recipes tailored to my problems. The contents page lists some problems, e.g. nausea, loss of appetite, weight loss, but sadly, not sore mouth or painful swallowing. More importantly, the index is difficult to use; it lists only recipe titles, not the main ingredients. For example, I saw a recipe using aubergine and chickpeas, but couldn't find it again; it is not under 'aubergine' or 'chickpeas', but 'Warm aubergine, roots and chickpea salad' – infuriating! All in all, I struggled to identify recipes that I might try. In the end, I decided that, as I cook a lot of soups, the cauliflower and coconut milk soup sounded worth trying. I also think I should experiment with cashew nuts (which are in my cupboard) as an alternative to real cream, which I use a lot these days because soothes my mouth and throat. I suspect that the ground nuts will be gritty and irritate my mouth but, in the spirit of finding healthier alternatives, I will give it a go. If I can find it again. It's not under 'cashew' or 'nut', but at least the cauliflower soup recipe is there, under 'cream'...

It is very appealing, easy to handle and read, with a glossy cover and colour photos throughout. I kept picking it up, before putting it down, dissatisfied, many times!

Head and neck (tonsil) cancer survivor (56-65) (July 2013)

This will be most useful in the early stages of diagnosis, when many patients feel confused and uncertain about the best way to cope with cancer, including diet. It achieves a good balance between a variety of recipes and valuable information on the importance of maintaining a healthy diet during and after treatment. It starts appropriately with the background to diet and cancer. There are clear explanations of the reasons for and benefits of healthy eating, with helpful lists and tables summarising recommended foods. This is followed logically by the recipes.

The introduction and the recipes are all easy to understand. The background on cancer itself is not too technical, and the sections on healthy eating do not require previous knowledge of nutrition. Similarly, the recipes use straightforward language and would not create any difficulties for people with reasonable cooking skills.

Generally, the book has a pleasing design that helps readers to find what they are looking for. There are excellent photographs of most recipes. The typeface is easy to read, with clear headings and sub-headings where appropriate. Separate sections are visually well defined. The text flows very well. The use of symbols in the recipes is not successful; they are too small and some are quite hard to read. It is unlikely that readers will keep turning back to the Key to puzzle out what they mean.

The main drawback is the obscure ingredients, e.g. stevia, lucuma, chlorella, umeboshi. Some are included in the store cupboard list (pp. 39-41) but it is unlikely that they are in the average kitchen cupboard. The authors do not suggest where to find them and seem unaware that readers won't find them in most supermarkets (which is where most people do their food shopping). They could overcome this by clarifying if the meal can be made without them, or suggesting an alternative.

Other minor reservations: the list of salty additives clashes with advice elsewhere in the book to reduce the amount of salt in the diet (p.40); the assumption that organic food is best (p. 42) is no longer held by some experts; conflicting opinions should at least be acknowledged; the inclusion of coconut oil and coconut milk would not be supported by some nutritionists who regard them as unhealthy; readers are advised to reduce coffee intake (p. 43), but it would be helpful to comment on the merits of decaffeinated coffee and tea. There are several useful references to vitamins and minerals; a table in the introduction summarising their main uses and sources would be beneficial. The inclusion of nutritional information for each recipe is welcome, but surprisingly it does not state the amount of fibre and salt, both of which are important.

Bladder cancer patient (56-65) (July 2013)

This book is not specific to one type of cancer; instead it focuses on the principles that will help any patient, or that could reduce the risk of cancer developing. It would be useful at any stage. It conveys information clearly and simply, giving logical reasons why some foods are better than others, and is backed up with solid facts.

It's sensibly laid out, with clear facts and simple to understand information about how the right foods can help in the fight against cancer. The author conveys the key information simply and clearly; it feels like essential reading material for patients and

their carers, to enable them to control what they eat and recognise how it might help them. It conveys real knowledge on food groups and their impact on cancer.

The recipes are easy to follow; however, most feature ingredients that are not readily available, and some I've never heard of – and I like to cook! I also wasn't sure that many of the recipes sound particularly appetising. I will be following the advice and principles, but there are only a couple of dishes that I know my mum will enjoy, so I can't see us making too many of them. I would suggest that perhaps the recipes could have been balanced with some simple ideas too, e.g. baked bananas with nuts and dark chocolate, which, in my opinion, more people are likely to try.

It's given me clear reasons why certain foods should be removed from a cancer patient's diet and why others should be added. It gives positive focus for doing something – in addition to standard treatments – to prevent/slow down cancer growth and it's encouraging that the drive is ultimately on healthy foods, despite some of the advice the NHS seems to give.

Caring for someone with pancreatic cancer (36-45) (July 2013)

This book may be of use during early diagnosis, but it really spells out the benefits of healthy eating full-stop. The scientific and specific benefits of eating correctly are interesting and extremely useful.

There is nothing terribly lavish about the layout and the photographs are quite ordinary looking. It reads well, is easy to understand, and things are well explained. However, there are some quite unusual and expensive ingredients. It also mentions the importance of several foods, such as broccoli and cabbages, but without including them in recipes. In general, the recipes are very dry, and people with eating problems will not find much comfort here.

I love the information about the benefits of a well-balanced and nourishing diet but, although I have much respect for Penny Brohn Cancer Care, I do not see how this book will benefit cancer patients. However, it will do no harm to follow the guidance in to eat as well and as healthily as possible, whether one has cancer or not.

Head and neck cancer patient (56-65) (June 2013)



The recipes are easy to follow and give nutritional information per serving and the health benefits of the ingredients. There is also a section of recipes to support problems with fatigue, nausea, loss of appetite and weight loss, digestive problems and the immune system. It is easy to understand, although there isn't a glossary explaining any technical words and the index is limited.

I love pages 6-47, which give an overview of eating well, living well, cancer and food, i.e. foods to eat regularly, avoid and cut down on (p. 23) and the reasons why. There

is a great table (pp.24-29) of nutrient-rich foods and their possible benefits and there are 7-day meal plans for vegetarians and non-vegetarians (pp. 46-47). In addition, I like the symbols denoting the suitability of recipes for people who want a vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, dairy-free, soya-free, or nut-free, diet, the nutritional information per serving and the health benefits of each recipe. It has great fold-over covers, which can be used as bookmarks. However, the paper is not nice to touch and the photographs don't make the dishes look appetising and are of a poor standard.

My main concern is that the recipes don't use ingredients readily available in a healthy household store cupboard. For example, Almond Citrus Cake (p. 125) uses Xylitol, which I found in a health food shop. Tamari, used in several recipes, isn't available in Tesco, Sainsbury's or Holland and Barrett. According to page 40, Tamari is a naturally fermented gluten-free soy sauce; is an Amoy or Lee Kum product a suitable alternative? And where can we buy Sweet White Miso Paste (p. 147)? These unusual ingredients are not in the index and there are no recommendations as to where to buy them. Other ingredients, e.g. whey vanilla protein, are available in high-street supermarkets, but are very expensive.

I didn't know this was a Penny Brohn book and when I received it I was thrilled as they are renowned for their nutritional support in cancer care. However, I was disappointed by the recipes; I could make very few from the ingredients in my healthy kitchen store cupboard and needed to search the internet to find ingredients at affordable prices. In addition, the index is very limited. For example, once the reader has purchased their huge pack of whey protein because they want a good price, they can't use the index to find out all the recipes that use it. It isn't a book for your average, non-foodie cancer patient and I wouldn't recommend it to others affected by cancer – there are better books to spend your time reading.

Living with breast cancer (DCIS) (46-55) (June 2013)

This book is intended to support cancer patients with advice on a healthy diet and coping with side effects of treatment – at any stage. However, it does not achieve this and it is not particularly useful for cancer patients; some of the advice is misleading and may create unnecessary extra stress and pressure. However, the recipes, which are easy to follow, could be of interest to anyone.

It looks quite appealing. Most of the recipes have a photograph and most of the food looks nice. It is quite easy to follow and technical words are explained (although I do not feel the author is expert). Many of the recipes use ingredients that are not available in a supermarket, e.g. lecithin, aloe vera juice, lucuma powder and xylitol.

The benefits of certain foods are hugely overstated. There are some very bold and unsubstantiated claims, for example: certain foods can help alleviate common symptoms before, during, and after treatment; there are "healing foods" and "therapeutic foods"; and some foods can improve immune function or reduce fatigue. The author also suggests that the cancers of people who pay close attention to diet, exercise and stress may become less active or even shrink. I think this is misleading.

Friend of breast cancer patient (36-45) (June 2013)



This book will be of interest only to someone who enjoys cooking and trying new recipes; it doesn't really have anything to do with cancer. It is padded out with recipes and the advice, which is questionable, could be covered in a leaflet or pamphlet.

There is some quite impractical advice; e.g. it suggests taking a sip of water between every mouthful of food (p. 32) and it also thinks putting your knife and fork down between mouthfuls is a sensible idea (p. 38). On page 37, it refers you to page 13 for information on low GI foods. However, page 13 just mentions high GI foods, the complete opposite. On page 46, it says that peeling fruit and vegetables will remove any surface chemicals. While this is undoubtedly true, much of the vitamin and mineral content of fruits and vegetables comes from the skin and it would be far better to wash thoroughly rather than peel.

This is just a recipe book and has little or nothing to do with cancer. The recipe section begins on page 46 and lasts for the remainder of the book. Even the non-recipe section is mainly just a list of bullet points. There are many much better nutritional guides on the market for people with or without cancer.

Testicular cancer patient (46-55) (June 2013)

I have lived well and believe I have a healthy diet but this book made me wonder! Matcha tea, stevia, lecithin, red bush tea, chai seeds are some of the many extravagant ingredients that required research. The ingredients would not be found in any normal kitchen or in many shops. I have sourced some to Amazon and through the internet, but many are expensive. Once the initial outlay is made, this way of life may be beneficial but some areas are still controversial.

If this is a lifestyle choice then it may be feasible to follow it, but otherwise the change will be expensive and hard work. It may just keep some people busy finding the ingredients and take their mind off their cancer!! It is a book for those who would appreciate an extreme lifestyle.

Living with prostate cancer (Over 75) (June 2013)

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

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