

DEBORAH JEANNE SERGEANT

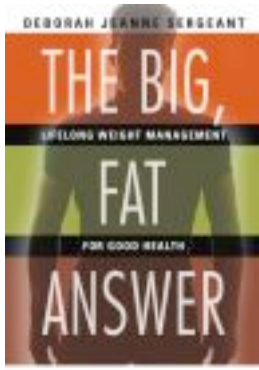
THE BIG,

LIFELONG WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

FAT

FOR GOOD HEALTH

ANSWER



*Are you asking, "Why can't I lose weight?" Here is *The Big, Fat Answer*: a multidisciplinary approach to healthful weight management. Tapping the wisdom of more than a decade of health writing and more than 700 interviews with health care professionals, Deborah Jeanne Sergeant provides weight loss strategies that work for anyone, and transcend over-hyped, fat-shedding gimmicks. If you want to become fit and healthy, you need *The Big, Fat Answer*.*

The Big, Fat Answer

by Deborah Jeanne Sergeant

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First Edition

Deborah Jeanne Sergeant

Dedication

To James, for all your love and encouragement.

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Deborah Jeanne Sergeant

About the Author

Deborah Jeanne Sergeant has been researching and penning articles about health, food and fitness more than a decade as a freelance writer. She has interviewed 700 people (give or take) from a diverse cross section of experts in wellness, nutrition, fitness and medical and mental health.

These experts include professional chefs, dieticians, certified diabetes educators, medical doctors, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, fitness instructors, martial arts instructors, physical therapists, personal trainers, doctors of osteopathic medicine, holistic health practitioners, nutritionists, herbalists, doctors of naturopathic medicine, chiropractors, massage therapists, acupuncturists, and licensed mental health doctors and counselors.

Deborah Jeanne Sergeant is a second degree black belt and occasionally instructs in martial arts.

THE BIG, FAT ANSWER

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Introduction

Sick of diets, weight loss plans, and exercise regimens that prove ineffective, too expensive, and outright fraudulent? Then I have an answer for you: The Big, Fat Answer for weight loss that lasts. Instead of trying new diets, new exercise plans, new pills or new shakes, you can just choose to be healthy and fit. And you can keep yourself that way for life.

This information isn't complicated (aren't the best things in life simple, after all?). Anyone can follow these practical tips. This is advice for real people. People who like, nay, even love good food. People who dislike exercise. People who lead crazy, busy lives. People who have yoyo dieted. People who have gained weight after traumatic events, pregnancy or injury. People who have always been heavy and are now getting seriously, scarily heavy. People who maybe have lost out on opportunities in life because their weight has held them back.

It's time to change all that by choosing to be a healthy and fit person. Instead of a single faceted approach that dooms you to failure, you can finally get The Big, Fat Answer that addresses every aspect of how to get weight under control and maintain healthy weight.

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Caveats on Eating Better

Don't think that eating better means eating more. It can be easy to stock up on all this great, new food and let the calorie count get away from you, especially since many of these "new" foods are ones you've forgotten about for years or perhaps never tried. Don't let overeating ruin your reunion or introduction to these great foods. Healthful foods contain calories, too, even if they're extremely nutritious.

Fixing healthful foods with unhealthy condiments or cooking methods (like choking a salad with creamy dressing or deep frying vegetables) negates the value of eating healthfully. It sounds ridiculous but some people get so wrapped up in the extra nutrients they're eating that they forget all about the extra calories associated with how they're preparing their healthful foods.

Many people think that eating better must mean eating only locally-grown, free-trade or organic food. The location of food's source only impacts its flavor and to a certain degree its nutrients, since the fresher produce is, the less time it has had to degenerate. Free-trade is a nice social idea, but does not affect its healthfulness.

Organic food has not been scientifically proven to be more nutritious as non-organic food (food safety is an entirely different matter). You can be an organic junk food junkie just the same as non-organic junk food junkie. How? By eating processed, packaged and low-nutrient food that I call "gut fill." Organic snack bars, cookies, packaged meals and crackers may be no more nutrient dense as their non-organic counterparts. Despite their organic origins, they can contain

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very few vitamins and minerals. I've known people on these gut fill diets who don't exercise. They look flabby and lethargic with no vibrancy about them at all.

While I'm not against free-trade, locally-grown, organic foods, you aren't eating right if you're mainly eating processed gut fill. Do not fool yourself into believing that it's lower in calories or that its organic sources automatically give it a halo of healthfulness. Read labels, understand what nutrients you're eating and stay within your calorie limits. If you want to go organic, stock up on the organic produce, lean organic meat, organic grains and organic nuts. Limit the processed stuff, whether it's organic or not.

Some people mistakenly believe that special "diet" food is the only way to eat well and lose weight. While pre-packaged meals that are low in calories may be a convenient way to eat better instead of swinging through the drive-through window after work, you're much better off buying ingredients and cooking your own wholesome foods. Prepackaged meals often contain many additives. They are also pretty expensive, even compared to fast food. Many of them achieve a low calorie count by serving up diminutive meals that by their size alone have few calories. After you consume the meal and wonder where the rest is, it's easy to overeat not-so-healthy foods. It's better to learn to cook for yourself and whip up high volume, low-calorie meals.

Many buy into healthy eating fads such as going with "gluten-free" foods. I think this trend started when more mainstream grocery stores began to carry specialty products marked "gluten-free" on their shelves. Gluten is a naturally-occurring protein found in wheat, rye and barley. Nearly all

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baked goods common to grocery stores and bakeries are made with wheat flour: bread, cake, rolls, cookies, pie, pastries, and doughnuts. Goods such as potato bread, cornbread and banana bread also contain wheat flour, even though their names seem to indicate otherwise.

People with celiac disease and gluten sensitivity cannot properly metabolize gluten and ingesting it makes them sick. This is more than just an upset stomach or indigestion. They may experience severe intestinal cramps, vomiting, adverse skin reactions and more symptoms. Many celiacs must keep separate food preparation areas and utensils for gluten-free and gluten-containing foods to avoid a bad reaction.

Celiacs need to read labels to make sure their salad dressing isn't thickened with flour. Some brands of marshmallows, gravy, soup, and ice cream contain wheat flour. Some celiacs cannot tolerate oats because many oatmeal processors also process other grains, including ones containing gluten and there's a good chance for cross-contamination.

You're not celiac if you occasionally have a stomachache after eating a dinner roll. That is far different from the systemic response celiacs endure. People with celiac disease cannot tolerate even trace amounts of gluten. They must substitute with flours made of rice, potatoes, and corn instead of wheat flour to make baked goods. Since these flours lack gluten, they do not hold together well and usually require blending and additional thickening and binding agents to make palatable baked goods.

Everyday shoppers who are not celiacs or gluten sensitive see "gluten-free" on a package and assume that if the product

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brags about containing no gluten, gluten must be bad, just as a food that is "fat free" or "cholesterol free" is more healthful than those containing fat or cholesterol. In other words, if a food item is free of something, that something must be bad.

Gluten is not bad. There is no reason a person who isn't celiac or gluten sensitive should avoid eating foods with gluten in them. But so many people think they must cut gluten from their diets that stores have increased the number of gluten-free specialty items and many manufacturers boast that their products are "gluten-free" even if that type of food would never contain gluten.

You may lose some weight cutting gluten from your diet; however, it's not because gluten is bad for you. It's the fact that many people overdo the high calorie foods that contain gluten such as sweetened baked goods. Swapping "evil" wheat flour for "virtuous" gluten-free rice flour, corn flour, and potato flour will not magically make fat disappear from your body.

Wise up on food fads before making changes in your diet. Skipping wholesome, filling grain products because of the assumption that gluten is bad can decrease your intake of fiber and B vitamins, for example.

Some people make up for a nutrient deficit by taking a super-duper, mega-multi vitamin of a brand whose purity and virtues supposedly excel beyond all others. A few brands contain 2,000-plus times the recommended daily allowance of some vitamins and minerals. Some studies associate overdoing supplementation with higher cancer risks and kidney and liver damage. Oftentimes, those who urge friends and family to get

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healthy with them by taking the same supplements sell the mega-dose supplements.

A supplement is not a balanced meal. Even if your terrific vitamin formula supplies 100 percent or more of what you need daily, your body was designed to digest food, not a supplement. Even a naturally derived supplement of the best quality should not substitute for a balanced diet.

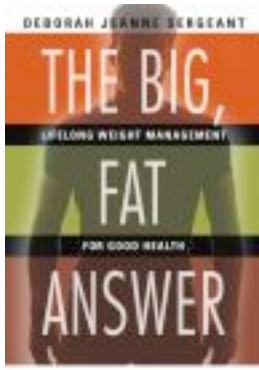
If you habitually replace food with processed junk while taking a vitamin supplement, you'll probably get enough nutrients to survive, but you're also taking in loads of artificial colors, sweeteners, flavors and other food additives from the junk food. Your diet will likely be high in sodium, artery-clogging fat and sugar and void of fiber, necessary for digestion.

Taking mega doses of supplements is not wise. Some vitamins are water-soluble, so if you get too much, your body gets rid of it through urinating. Why tax your kidneys unnecessarily? Fat soluble vitamins can build up in the body to dangerous or even toxic levels. Instead of consuming mega doses, take only what your health care provider recommends.

Each day, I take one multi-vitamin tablet, one calcium tablet and a glucosamine/chondroitin supplement based upon my dietary needs. Your needs may be different, depending upon your age, gender, health conditions and other factors you should discuss with your health care provider. But chugging mega doses of supplements can be useless at best and dangerous at worst.

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For safety, follow your doctor's suggestion on what supplements to take and make sure your doctor knows exactly what you're taking, whether it's over-the-counter or by prescription. If you take supplements because they affect your health, they can negatively interact with each other or your prescription medication.



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