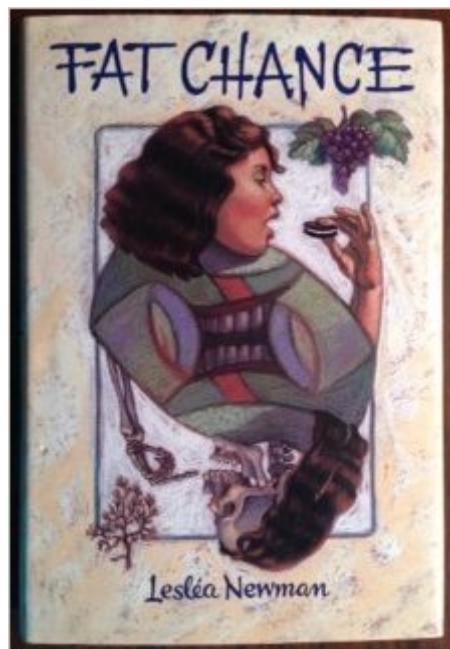


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# Fat Chance: The Novel



## **Synopsis**

A diary records a year in the life of Judi Liebowitz as she dreams of becoming the thinnest girl in the eighth grade and struggles to control her unending battle with calories, food, pounds, and anorexia.

## **Book Information**

Age Range: 11 and up

Hardcover: 214 pages

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Product Dimensions: 8.7 x 0.9 x 5.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 978 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #3,141,320 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #81 in Books > Children's

Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Health > Weight

## **Customer Reviews**

Through the journal of an eighth-grader obsessed with eating, Newman (Eating Our Hearts Out; Heather Has Two Mommies) explores the horrific ramifications of the "thinner is better" female aesthetic. At 5'4" and 127 pounds, Judi is convinced that she is fat and therefore unlovable. Hiding herself in dark, baggy clothes, she scorns her overweight English teacher for defying the wisdom of Seventeen magazine and wearing wide belts and horizontal stripes. When Judi discovers that her idolized classmate, would-be model Nancy, stays skinny by making herself vomit after eating, Judi cultivates the practice too, developing a routine of binging and purging. Nancy almost dies of starvation, and Judi, meanwhile, begins to realize that she's no happier at 120 pounds than she was at 127. Eventually she recognizes that she needs help. Going further than the average YA "problem" novel, Fat Chance suggests the extent of eating and body-image disorders among seemingly healthy girls; it also demonstrates, rather than insists on, the importance of professional help. Judi's convincing voice and true-to-life experiences add up to a compelling, thought-provoking narrative. With the pre-eminence of the "waif look" in today's fashions, this book should be required reading for adolescent girls-older readers could profit by it as well. Ages 10-14. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 6-9?Judi Beth Liebowitz appears to be a typical 13-year-old girl. She wonders what she will be when she grows up, what having a boyfriend would be like, and wishes she could lose weight. This desire to be thin, however, begins to dominate her thoughts and actions. Newman chooses a diary format to allow readers a personal look at Judi's emotions. As diary entries progress, her determination to be thin consumes her. She becomes friendly with Nancy Pratt, the most popular and skinniest girl in school, and learns that Nancy binges and purges. As Judi begins to experiment with this new way of ridding herself of food, Nancy is rushed to the emergency room and placed in intensive care. The story finishes a bit too neatly with Judi making up with her best friend, confiding in her English teacher, and confessing her problems with eating to her mother. Everyone is understanding, and she eventually meets with a counselor. Judi is a likable character with whom young teens can empathize, but Nancy is portrayed as a selfish, manipulative girl, and readers never learn her motivations. Fat Chance had the potential to be a strong story on an important topic, but it is too flawed to have its intended impact.?Melissa Yurechko, Ferguson Library, Stamford, CT

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I had hit a wall in terms of eating right and dieting. Then my sister shared with me how much she was able to lower her LDL in her cholesterol by reducing her sugar intake. I started to Google articles on sugar and came across Dr Lustig's You Tube video. It was 90 minutes but it was, in a word, captivating. I was then fortunate to find out that he was coming out with a book at the end of December. I had it delivered to my Kindle while on a beach vacation during the Christmas/ New Year's holidays. Well, as much as that does not sound like a good vacation book (I did read 2 other novels), it was fantastic on multiple levels. Dr Lustig has a gift because not only is he obviously educated in his field but he is articulate and extremely thorough. Specifically, his book details how sugar is bad for you but he takes it to a level where you totally get it. He explains it from angles that you have never even realized existed...politically, economically, socially and of course, scientifically. And it is not just sugar. He gets into every corner of nutrition....fiber, insulin, leptin, stress, exercise. The book covers everything. It is obvious he put a tremendous amount of effort into this book. He also states very clearly that he has scientific back-up to all of his statements. As I mentioned above, I was looking for a "new diet book" but this book is much more than that. Realizing what is going on in my body because I absolutely love and eat so many carbs was mind boggling. He teaches you all about food labels and let me tell you, it is an education. I am married over 25 years and my wife always does the food shopping. This book had such an effect on me, that I went food shopping by myself so that I could take the time and read the food labels. You cannot believe how much sugar is

in your food. I am not even viewing my change in eating as a diet. This is about understanding what is going on with all of the garbage that we consume. For me, it is a change of life. The book just clicked with me. If you want to live longer (in addition to many other benefits such as losing weight), read this book cover to cover. I also love the fact that he endorses the glass of red wine I am drinking right now.

I devoured this book. Lustig, a pediatric endocrinologist at UCSF whose "Sugar: The Bitter Truth" lecture video got lots of hits on YouTube, has been watching the rise of obesity and its attendant ills in his practice over the last umpteen years. While not every obese person is unhealthy (and many people with acceptable BMIs still suffer from metabolic syndrome), obesity frequently brings in train "the cluster of chronic metabolic diseases...which includes...type 2 diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), lipid (blood fat) disorders, and cardiovascular disease," along with "co-morbidities associated with obesity, such as orthopedic problems, sleep apnea, gallstones, and depression." Lustig even mentioned the increase of dementia as tied to this whole mess, as insulin resistance leads to dementia! Consider some of his alarming statistics:- 1/4 of U.S. children are now obese;- Greater than 40% of death certificates now list diabetes as the cause of death, up from 13% 20 years ago;- The percentage of obese humans GLOBALLY has doubled in the last 28 years; there are now 30% more overnourished (obese) people than undernourished, worldwide;- Fructose (all the sugars you can think of, apart from the sugar in milk) is "inevitably metabolized to fat";- Fructose consumption has doubled in the past 30 years and increased six-fold in the last century;- The majority of humans, regardless of weight, release double the insulin today as we did 30 years ago for the same amount of glucose; this hyperinsulinemia leads to insulin resistance, the body thinking it's starving, and increased eating, especially for foods high in fat and sugar because our dopamine receptors aren't getting cleared--a vicious cycle;- The processed food industry has turned to increased sugars of all kinds to improve flavor and shelf life; we eat lots of processed foods; therefore, 20-25% of all calories we consume on average come from sugars; in adolescents this number can approach 40% of daily calories. Because I was blitzing through this, I didn't absorb the science as well as I might have, but Lustig helped me understand that how often, how much, and how unhealthily we eat can be a function not of choice but of our biochemistry. The feedback systems and processing systems which served humans so well for eons were not built to handle as much food as we eat nowadays, particularly the avalanche of empty sugar calories. Sweets and fats used to be hard for us to come by--if we hit a surplus, of course our bodies stored it up (as fat) for a rainy day! Unfortunately, there are no more rainy days, so we keep storing and storing and

overloading the system. Lustig's book is not about dieting or losing weight--in fact he says we have natural weights we gravitate toward, and there isn't a heckuva lot we can do about it, exercise or no exercise. But obesity is a new thing that is environmentally-aided, and that can be fought against. His conclusion? You can probably guess. Lots of fruits and vegetables and fiber. The fiber in fruits requires enough work to digest that it effectively negates the fructose. Milk or water to drink (lactose is not processed like fructose). Meats (not corn-fed) and dairy (ditto) are fine, but don't skip the produce. Whole grains (all the brown in them--exactly how my son doesn't like them), but even then there's no need for tons of grain. And, if it has a nutrition label, it's a processed food. Use sparingly. The low-hanging fruit Lustig tackles first is ridding your life of soda, smoothies, frappuccinos, and fruit juice. (8 ozs of orange juice has more sugar than 8 ozs of Coke.) If you do alcohol, do just enough wine to get the resveratrol benefits and then lay off. As Lustig points out, changing one's food environment is all but impossible for the poor. After all, corn and soy receive massive government subsidies, making the processed foods based on them cheap, cheap, cheap. Even if you had access to fresh produce, your money goes farther on the stuff in boxes, and food stamps cover soda. One of the more disheartening bits of the book was when he talked about meeting with Michelle Obama's personal chef Sam Kass, the point person for the White House Obesity Task Force. Kass admitted everyone in the White House (incl the Pres) had read Lustig's NYTimes article "Is sugar toxic?" but they would do nothing to help. "Because they don't want the fight, this Administration has enough enemies." Sigh. Not that the Republicans mentioned fared any better. Basically, changing our food landscape is up to us. For those of us with the dollars, vote with our dollars! If we don't buy it, not all the food stamps in the world will make it profitable. Kind of a bummer to read this going into Christmas-cookie season, but one of my New Year's Resolutions will be to improve the food environment for my kids. (How I wish I had a time machine! I would never have introduced our biggest consumption area for processed foods--breakfast cereal. I can only comfort myself that we don't eat any off of his "Ten Worst Children's Breakfast Cereals" list!) Highly recommend. (Thank you to NetGalley and Hudson Street Press for the ARC.)

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