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## Book Reviews

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**Dietary Reference Intakes: the Essential Guide to Nutrient Requirements**, edited by JJ Otten, JP Hellwig, and LD Meyers, 2006, 560 pages, hardcover, \$44.96. The National Academies Press, Washington, DC.

I felt a sense of déjà vu when I started to examine and read this latest publication from the National Academies Press on the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs). Those of us who remember previous versions have long yearned for the good old days when the dietary standards were in one volume and easily obtained by walking to our book shelf. A protracted revision of the dietary standards has now given rise to the DRIs, which has been published over several years in several volumes. This book summarizes the basis of the new paradigm, presents the statistical foundations of such, and reviews, for each nutrient, how the Estimated Average Intake, the Recommended Dietary Intake, the Adequate Intake, and the Upper Level of intake were derived. Each nutrient is addressed in its own chapter, and all of the chapters have similar outlines and formats, which make them easy to read. There are 3 parts to the book: part 1 concerns the development and application of the DRIs; part 2 focuses on energy, macronutrients, water, and physical activity; and part 3 addresses vitamins and minerals.

Most of the chapters begin by explaining the function of the nutrient in the body (function, absorption, metabolism, storage, and transport) and are followed by a section on how the DRIs were determined, what special considerations were taken in their determination, food sources (including supplements) and bioavailability, and inadequate and excess intakes. Each chapter concludes with a checklist of "Key Points."

A shortcoming of the book is that it does not contain references; however, the reader is referred to the volumes of earlier works in which citations are available and Web addresses are given. Given the new age of computers and technology, it appears that the days of flipping to the end of a chapter to locate references to the cited works are over. Another shortcoming of the book is that it contains errors. For example, the value provided for converting vitamin A retinol activity equivalents from  $\beta$ -carotene is given as 24 in one chapter and as 12 in another.

I highly recommend this reasonably priced book for those who desire a convenient reference on the DRIs. Professors, health workers, and students alike should consider adding this book to their library.

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**Nutrition and Cancer Prevention**, by Atif B Awad and Peter G Bradford, 2005, 640 pages, hardcover, \$139.95. CRC Press, Boca Raton, FL.

This modest volume is entitled *Nutrition and Cancer Prevention*; however, it has virtually no clinical information useful for uninitiated health care practitioners or researchers outside the field of nutrition and cancer. The book is a compilation of fairly brief chapters on various substances that are classified as dietary components, including vitamins, carotenoids, synthetic vitamin analogs, minerals (calcium and selenium), phytosterols, polyphenols, isothiocyanates, and lipids (n-3 fatty acids, conjugated linoleic acid, and sphingolipids), with brief chapters on obesity and alcohol as risk factors for cancer. The list is neither adequately complete nor adequately detailed in its parts. Although some of the chapters, such as the n-3 fatty acids and colon cancer chapters by BS Reddy and the flavonoid chapter by J-R Zhou, are adequate, many others are overly brief and difficult to read. They are dense with references and often do not adequately explain the findings being discussed in a manner comprehensible to the reader. An additional weakness is the overemphasis of scientific results from the authors' own laboratories to the exclusion of other important work in the field. There is also a lack of information that is useful in bringing together the disparate topics covered in the book. How the various dietary components interact is not discussed adequately, except in a brief chapter on how dietary components protect against cancer. This chapter does not fully explain any of the mechanisms that are targeted, such as apoptosis, proliferation, or checkpoint regulation. Instead, where full chapters are needed, only brief paragraphs over a few pages are provided. This overview is wholly inadequate for researchers and too brief and full of jargon for the uninitiated reader. Therefore, researchers, including fellows and faculty interested in the field of nutrition and cancer, would be better served through careful reading of available review articles on these topics. Those new to the field would be better off finding a more definitive and clearly written text on this subject.

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