

Immediate Suggestions to Good Health

Betty Yulin Ho

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Described as “a collection of advice derived from experimental reasoning upon established scientific facts,” Betty Yulin Ho’s *Immediate Suggestions to Good Health* will either excite, mystify, or anger readers with its unusual and potentially harmful medical advice.

Immediate Suggestions to Good Health, the author’s twenty-second book, is written in a very easy to read, almost manual-like form. Each chapter is about a topic related to the body. Ho notes the topic and then proceeds to write a litany of things that can be done to increase or preserve one’s health.

Much of Ho’s advice seems to be common sense for anyone wanting to live a healthy life. In the chapter titled “Upon Awakening,” Ho states, “Do not speak for an hour. Brush teeth and wash the face with ears and soap. Dress up. Set hair up if you must. Never tie the hair up in tight braids or pigtales. Make the bed. Eat a light breakfast.” In the “Live in a Healthy Apartment” chapter, Ho insists that readers should “Dust the floors and furniture every so often. Clean kitchen floors and bathroom whenever necessary. Wet-mop all rooms twice a month.”

As the book progresses, however, the advice tends toward the outlandish. In the chapter called “Prevent Aging,” for example, Ho advises readers to “Get rid of wrinkles by eating only breakfast and fast the remaining hours of the day,” and to “Eat and drink slowly to prevent baldness.” In another chapter, Ho states that, “Removing earwax will prevent a brain tumor.”

Ho’s advice becomes downright dangerous when she insists that readers should avoid the dentist by doing their own dental work at home, and she proceeds to instruct readers on how to scrape their teeth with sharp tools and let the blood run into the sink. In the “Prevent Conception” chapter, Ho’s advice becomes unconscionable when she tells young women to “Jump down from a chair 20 times and one will surely not become pregnant. One will abort naturally.” She also suggests that, if her readers “exercise to exhaustion, work incessantly, have sex frequently,” they “will definitely not become pregnant.”

Immediate Suggestions to Good Health is not supported by any references to medical or scientific materials. Most of the writing appears to be the opinion of a woman who studied the human body while earning a BS in biology from Columbia University, but it seems that the statements in the book are not based on scientific fact. Although it is an entertaining book to read because of the bizarre advice it contains, it could do more harm than good if put in particularly naive hands.

COLBY CEDAR SMITH (August 30, 2012)

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