

## The Art and Wisdom of Healthy Living

**George Kljajic**

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George Kljajic began practicing medicine as a blood-disease specialist more than thirty years ago in the former Yugoslavia. He is currently a family practitioner in Vancouver, British Columbia. His many years of experience have culminated in the two-volume *The Art and Wisdom of Healthy Living*, which focuses on the lifestyle characteristics of healthy individuals and families.

In the first volume, he explores the topics of nutrition, exercise, handling stress, and general disease prevention. Simple self-interventions abound as he urges readers toward obtaining and maintaining radiant health. Because of Kljajic's absolute belief in the cause-effect relationship of good habits on good health, those who reject the idea that lifestyle has caused their medical problems, as well as those who prefer to adopt complex, mainstream medicine health regimens, would not be interested in this book. Conversely, those who believe that individuals are in charge of their own health may enjoy the book.

Kljajic pulls no punches as he castigates the Western diet of processed foods, sugar, and fat. He practically sneers at stomach stapling as a medical treatment and sarcastically asks if obesity is "the new normal" in the West. A proponent of the Mediterranean diet, a primarily whole foods-based diet distinguished by the avoidance of red meat, Kljajic provides many reasons to give up salt, sugar, certain types of fat, and processed foods. Cigarette smoking appears again and again as one of the worst things one can do to the body. Essentially, the book aims to state the first-line steps to take before adopting any sort of medical treatments.

Many attractive, salient full-color pictures adorn the pages. However, readers may sense that a few of the pictures are filler. In the middle of an article about C-reactive proteins and inflammatory disease, a picture of a little boy blowing his nose comprises a third of the page. The caption reads: "If one has the flu—stay home." Similar non sequiturs abound: a picture of an aloe vera plant on a page devoted to fasting and a list of problems with the Western diet; a large picture of a tree leaf embedded in a discussion of why it is important to be proactive concerning health problems. Some pictures appear a bit pixelated, which undermines their quality. Overall, however, the amount and size of pictures create a pleasant layout for relaxed reading.

While the reader will be able to understand the spirit of the text, careful editing would have ferreted out its technically correct but sometimes awkward sentence structure, as well as typos. Organizationally, there is an inconsistent use of bullet points, bold typeface, and italics. Unrelated points may be listed together; for example, recommendations about salt intake and points organized under the heading "Regular physical activity has multifaceted positive effects on health."

Is the information important? Absolutely. The breadth of topics covered in the first volume of *The Art and Wisdom of Healthy Living* is wonderful. However, the book will find its greatest appeal among patients of the author, who may want to learn more about his approach to treating health problems.

CARRIE WALLACE (May 9, 2013)

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