

Endometriosis Association Book Review

Fresh Choices: More Than 100 Easy Recipes for Pure Food When You Can't Buy 100% Organic, by David Joachim and Rochelle Davis. 2004

Reviewed by, Julie Tarr, Environmental Health Advocate

Although the jury's still out on what causes endometriosis, some theories seem to indicate that estrogen is involved, as well as disruptions to the endocrine and immune systems. Today's conventionally grown and produced foods may contain things such as pesticides, hormones, antibiotics, and mercury, which can add to the estrogen burden and disrupt the endocrine and immune systems. Therefore, many women are looking at dietary changes to limit their intake of pesticides, hormones, antibiotics, and mercury to help curb their endometriosis symptoms.

Fresh Choices is not your typical cookbook. It may contain over 100 recipes, but it has so much more to offer. The book is divided into nine chapters, broken down by food category (fruits, beef and pork, vegetables, etc.). Each chapter begins with a look into things such as how the foods are grown or produced conventionally, which foods to consider buying organic, and which foods could serve as conventional alternatives*.

This cookbook is also sprinkled with several sidebars that discuss topics of interest. Some of the best sidebars are: Best Food for Baby, What to Pick When, What is a Genetically Modified Food?, National Farm-to-School Movement is on a Roll, and The Skinny on Organic Milk.

In addition to the sidebars, there are several profiles of people who are involved in environmental movements. Some of the more interesting profiles include: Peggy Shepard, cofounder of West Harlem Environmental Action, Inc.; Greg Higgins, chef at Higgins Restaurant and Bar in Portland, OR; John Peterson, organic farmer; and Nancy and Jim Chuda, founders of Children's Health Environment Coalition.

Now, on to the recipes! There are over 100 recipes that incorporate organic foods or conventional alternatives. Each recipe begins with a brief description, lists all ingredients, outlines the directions, and indicates the number of servings. The list of ingredients indicates if the product should be organic, farm-raised, pastured-raised, etc., and the directions are easy to follow.

Although I prefer recipes to indicate the preparation and total cooking times, I found that the added tidbits of information in most recipes made up for that missing link. These tidbits contained things such as how to make the recipe Kosher, where and how to find organic products, and product alternatives.

While I certainly couldn't try each recipe, I found these to be among my favorites: Chili Beef Nachos, Creamy Tomato Rice Soup, Slow-Cooked Beef Stew, Chicken and Cheese Enchiladas, Frozen Chocolate Pudding Pops, and Whole Grain Banana Walnut Muffins.

I would highly recommend *Fresh Choices* to anyone who is looking at changing their diet to reduce the amount of pesticide, hormone, antibiotic, and mercury intake. *Fresh Choices* would also be beneficial for anyone who wants to learn more about organically versus conventionally grown or produced foods.

*An example of conventional alternatives would be using blueberries, which are low in pesticide residues over strawberries, which are high in pesticide residues.