BOOK REVIEW

**Turbo Metabolism: 8 Weeks to a New You**
by Pankaj Vij, MD, FACP, and Joel Fuhrman, MD

Review by Charles R Elder, MD, MPH, FACP

E-pub: 07/20/2018

The market is already saturated with self-help books promoting various dietary and lifestyle regimens for combating obesity and diabetes. Nevertheless, Pankaj Vij, MD, has bravely attempted entry into this highly competitive sector. His new book turns out to be a fine addition, providing both enjoyable reading and useful clinical insights.

Turbo Metabolism lays out an overview of Dr Vij’s multimodality program for reversing obesity, diabetes, and metabolic syndrome. The author opens with an excellent review of the etiology and physiology of metabolic syndrome. Here, as in other sections of the book, Dr Vij does an admirable job of explaining the material in a way that is not only scientifically accurate but also both readable and comprehensible for the general public. He next examines various holistic paradigms for understanding how to approach the reversal of obesity and diabetes in a systematic yet natural way. He directs special attention to reviewing basic concepts of ayurveda, which is the traditional health care system of India, and likely the oldest system of natural health care in the world that has been in continuous practice along with traditional Chinese medicine. By couching his approach to weight management within ayurveda, Dr Vij effectively emphasizes the importance of deploying a deeper, whole-person strategy for managing weight, encompassing mind, body, and spirit.

The author next turns to the practical steps necessary for losing weight and improving health. After detailing various tests needed for monitoring, he describes a “trash list” of foods that must not be eaten, and then he provides a shopping list of the various types of foods that should be eaten. These include whole grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables. Subsequent chapters detail classic dietary and behavioral strategies that can form the basis of successful weight management. The importance of drinking plenty of fluids, the critical role of physical exercise, the necessity of controlling stress, and the central role of proper sleep hygiene are all laid out in a clear, accurate, and straightforward way. Dr Vij provides additional material about avoiding environmental toxins while favoring organic foods, as well as discussing the role of probiotics, prebiotics, and spices. The book also includes a substantial number of recipes, plus insights into strategies for adopting and maintaining behavior changes.

Although I like the book overall, I found myself rolling my eyes over inconsistencies. The author plainly understands, and effectively communicates, that weight loss and maintenance require lifestyle change over the long term, yet in some measure undercuts this premise from the very start. The subtitle, “8 Weeks To A New You” may catch people’s attention and help sell books; however, the promise of instant gratification detracts from the message of sustainable, long-term behavior change. Likewise, the title Turbo Metabolism delivers more gimmick than substance. In addition, many of the recommendations found in the book seem faddish. For example, the author, on the one hand, devotes considerable discussion to ayurveda as providing a holistic, time-tested source of insight and direction for understanding how to enhance health. On the other hand, although ayurveda promotes a lactovegetarian diet, the author cannot resist the contemporary fad of demonizing all dairy products. In Chapter 3, his “garbage list” of reprehensible foods strongly implies that dairy products are every bit as bad for you as artificial sweeteners and alcoholic beverages.

I think that Turbo Metabolism offers a number of useful contributions. Clearly the author has provided readers with an excellent and comprehensive manual for healthy living and weight management. In addition, Dr Vij obviously understands that weight change requires a holistic approach, representing an ongoing and long-term lifestyle change. There are no quick fixes here, but rather a roadmap for implementing constructive behavior change for the long haul. What’s more, the author provides a variety of well-informed tools that will help guide and inspire patients in accomplishing this. He details a range of modalities that contribute to weight management in an informative way that is entertaining and even humorous. The book also includes inspirational case studies, accurate scientific explanations, and multiple pointers and tips. I thus recommend Turbo Metabolism; both patients and their physicians can learn from it and enjoy it. The book will serve as an excellent comprehensive weight-loss manual.

On balance, Turbo Metabolism provides for an entertaining and informative book that can serve as a useful weight management and health promotion manual for patients. This publication enters a crowded field, where it may not necessarily stand out, yet surely represents a solid choice. Don’t be fooled by gimmicks or fads; reversing obesity and metabolic syndrome is a long-term journey, and this book provides a decent compass.

**Disclosure Statement**

The author(s) have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

**How to Cite This Article**