

BOOK REVIEWS

Chemistry and Safety of Acrylamide in Food Eds Mendel Friedman and Don Mottram. Springer Science + Business Media, NY. Hardback, 2005, 476 pages. \$169.00. ISBN 0-287-23920-0

For those concerned with acrylamide in food, this book is both good news and bad news. The bad news first: acrylamide is bad stuff and is present in generous amounts in a lot of the foods we Americans eat regularly, especially potato chips. The good news is that foods, even potato chips, can be prepared in such a way as to substantially reduce the amount of acrylamide produced.

In the 3 years since acrylamide, known for years to be detrimental to health, was found in food and not just as an industrial contaminant, people have been hurrying to find out how much is present in which foods and under what conditions its production can be curbed. The information in this book stems from a 2004 symposium that attempted to explore every aspect of acrylamide. An enormous amount of information is presented in the book, although there is also a considerable amount of repetition of the fundamental points. This repetition may even be helpful since a lot of the articles are rather dry reading and there might be a propensity for your attention to drift at times. What you miss in one chapter will likely show up in another.

Most of the information that is vital to a clinical nutritionist will be found in just a few of the chapters, so unless you plan to do a dissertation on the subject you will likely be able to skim through much of the book. It is still nice that the information is there, and the index will allow you to find something if you really are really interested in it. The acrylamide story is not over and new information will likely increase the

prospects that the acrylamide problem can be overcome.

James Heffley, Ph.D., CCN, DANLA
Austin, TX

Your Body's Sign Language: Clues to Nutritional Well-being James W. McAfee, CCN. Image Awareness Corp, Auburn, CA 95603. Paperback, 2005, 294 pages, \$ ISBN 0-9604592-1-9.

There are few books on nutrition that I would give to a friend or family member without some word of advice, some warning that the ideas presented in the book might not all be entirely correct. James McAfee's book entitled *Your Body's Sign Language: Clues to Nutritional Well-Being* requires no such warnings. In language understandable to a nonprofessional, he gives clear information on the nutritional significance of what you can see and experience with regard to your own body or that of someone you love, or if you are a nutrition-oriented health professional, that of a client. Each of our bodies has a unique story to tell about our individual life experiences. Each story is vitally important to understanding that person's place in the universe, and understanding our own and our loved one's stories will help us understand them.

As an example, suppose you meet an old friend from a job you had several years back and immediately notice a "butterfly" rash across the bridge of her nose, a classic sign of systemic lupus erythematosus, SLE. The two of you had planned dinner and a movie, but when you get together she says that she is simply too tired to keep her promise and would rather go home early. If you are the insecure type you might assume that she no longer enjoys your company. If you are aware of her body's sign language,

you would know that a common feature of SLE is inordinate fatigue, and not only forgive her for breaking your date but perhaps assist her in getting treatment.

In the spirit of Dr. John Ellis's book, "The Doctor Who Looked at Hands," but going much deeper, this book lists dozens of signs that provide an early warning of health problems and that can then be investigated to either confirm

or rule out the suspected condition. The health professionals among us will appreciate the added dimension that simple observation adds to our understanding of a patient's situation. All of us benefit from a better understanding of the workings of our own body.

James Heffley, Ph.D., CCN, DANLA
Austin, TX