



Eating Dangerously: Why the Government Can't Keep Your Food Safe ... and How You Can

By Michael Booth, Jennifer Brown

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Americans are afraid of their food. And for good reason. In 2011, the deadliest food-borne illness outbreak in a century delivered killer listeria bacteria on innocuous cantaloupe never before suspected of carrying that pathogen. Nearly 50 million Americans will get food poisoning this year. Spoiled, doctored or infected food will send more than 100,000 people to the hospital. Three thousand will die. We expect, even assume, our government will protect our food, but how often do you think a major U.S. food farm get inspected by federal or state officials? Once a year? Every harvest? Twice a decade? Try never. *Eating Dangerously* sheds light on the growing problem and introduces readers to the very real, very immediate dangers inherent in our food system.

This two-part guide to our food system's problems and how consumers can help protect themselves is written by two seasoned journalists, who helped break the story of the 2011 listeria outbreak that killed 33 people. Michael Booth and Jennifer Brown, award-winning health and investigative journalists and parents themselves, answer pressing consumer questions about what's in the food supply, what "authorities" are and are not doing to clean it up, and how they can best feed their families without making food their full-time jobs. Both deeply informed and highly readable, *Eating Dangerously* explains to the American consumer how their food system works—and more importantly how it doesn't work. It also dishes up course after course of useful, friendly advice gleaned from the cutting-edge laboratories, kitchens and courtrooms where the national food system is taking new shape. Anyone interested in knowing more about how their food makes it from field and farm to store and table will want the inside scoop on just how safe or unsafe that food may be. They will find answers and insight in these pages.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review More than a little Michael Moore–type scary is this eye-opening exposé of foods, grocery shopping, and government oversight in America. Two Denver Post journalists, who investigated the 2011 deadly listeria outbreak (32 killed by eating cantaloupes), use those same skills of inquiry in preparing an account that every U.S. consumer should read. At the beginning, the authors graphically describe many contemporary food crises, from the 1993 Jack in the Box hamburger issues to horse meat found in IKEA meatballs. Nail-biting aside, they take readers through the constraints faced by the FDA and USDA (in numbers alone, 2,800 FDA employees supervise 350,000 food makers); the methodology that the Centers for Disease control and Prevention and epidemiologists use to figure out illness causes; a perspective on food imports (more than 10 million shipments each year arrive at 320 U.S. ports); and penalties levied on the perpetrators. Most important, though, is the diagnostic and prevention section, keeping families safe (and, yes, sane). Through the authors' eyes, readers will learn how to handle different foods, especially those most prone to bacteria; new, upcoming on-stream technologies that might help stem these outbreaks, from genetically engineered foods to nanotechnology; the five most common gastroenteritis symptoms; and what other manufacturers and agencies are doing to keep us safe. After all, concludes Mile High Organics CEO Michael Joseph, "It's really scary to worry your food is going to kill you." --Barbara Jacobs

Review

In 2011, award-winning journalists Booth and Brown reported on the major food poisoning outbreak (listeriosis) of the year in the US for the newspaper. Here they rework and expand the story and supplement it with more exciting data disseminated weekly by the government's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The first sentence in the publisher's blurb for the book, 'Americans are afraid of their food,' sets the tone. From there, the authors proceed to reveal the hidden terror of germ warfare that underlies the process of bringing food from dirt to table. . . .Summing Up: Recommended. . . .General readers. (CHOICE)

Beginning with a chilling reminder about how contaminated cantaloupe killed consumers in 2011, journalists Booth and Brown of *The Denver Post* present an eye-opening, authoritative account of the everyday dangers in the U.S. food industry and provide short term consumers solutions safer eating. The authors list spinach, peanuts, and eggs as culprits in recent outbreaks of E Coli, Salmonella and Listeria and explore the causes and consequences affecting Americans. Fred Pritzker, a Minneapolis attorney who specializes in food illness cases, deplores the FDA's "willful negligence" of food safety procedures and of criminal prosecution towards the people responsible. But the government can't anticipate the food fads that create challenges for the 2,800 food-related FDA employees reviewing 350,000 food makers and facilities or the 1,800 FDA inspectors checking U.S. imports. With a lax penalty system and the startling statistic that "[n]early 50 million Americans will get food poisoning this year," it pays to be an educated shopper. The authors' thorough examination leads way to complimentary resources and tips for safer eating. (*Publishers Weekly*)

More than a little Michael Moore–type scary is this eye-opening exposé of foods, grocery shopping, and government oversight in America. Two *Denver Post* journalists, who investigated the 2011 deadly listeria outbreak (32 killed by eating cantaloupes), use those same skills of inquiry in preparing an account that every U.S. consumer should read. At the beginning, the authors graphically describe many contemporary food crises, from the 1993 Jack in the Box hamburger issues to horse meat found in IKEA meatballs. Nailbiting aside, they take readers through the constraints faced by the FDA and USDA (in numbers alone,

2,800 FDA employees supervise 350,000 food makers); the methodology that the Centers for Disease control and Prevention and epidemiologists use to figure out illness causes; a perspective on food imports (more than 10 million shipments each year arrive at 320 U.S. ports); and penalties levied on the perpetrators. Most important, though, is the diagnostic and prevention section, keeping families safe (and, yes, sane). Through the authors' eyes, readers will learn how to handle different foods, especially those most prone to bacteria; new, upcoming on-stream technologies that might help stem these outbreaks, from genetically engineered foods to nanotechnology; the five most common gastroenteritis symptoms; and what other manufacturers and agencies are doing to keep us safe. After all, concludes Mile High Organics CEO Michael Joseph, 'It's really scary to worry your food is going to kill you.' (*Booklist, Starred Review*)

More than a little Michael Moore-type scary is this eye-opening exposé of foods, grocery shopping, and government oversight in America, the most important part being the diagnostic and prevention section. (*Booklist*)

This book gets to a 'sweet spot' about food safety that we often dance around. . . *Eating Dangerously* is a well-sourced book. . . because of all the knowledgeable sources used in putting together this excellent book. (*Food Safety News*)

Two *Denver Post* investigative reporters scare the heck out of you by citing CDC statistics on food-borne illnesses and deaths in the United States, then carefully and expertly steer you back to (relative) safety with commonsense suggestions on how to reduce your risk of falling ill--or worse. There's even a section discussing GMO and organic foods and the 'intersection between food technology and food safety.' Reviewer Janet Crum called this one 'both alarming and empowering' and 'highly recommended'. (*Library Journal*)

A hard-nosed look at the danger of dining. (William D. Marler, Esq., Marler Clark LLP PS, The Food Safety Law Firm)

The process should be easy: Food is produced, inspected, distributed, sold, eaten. When things go wrong, the culprit should be clear. Right? Not so fast. Booth and Brown shed light on a byzantine food-safety system fraught with imperfect oversight and buck-passing profiteers. But hope rises. Dedicated reformists, life-saving epidemiologists, and careful consumers (you) are working to make it better. *Eating Dangerously* offers tools for understanding, and avoiding, the perils of modern eating. (Tucker Shaw, author of *Everything I Ate* and *Gentlemen Start Your Ovens*; *Denver Post* features editor and former *Denver Post* food critic)

Just when you thought it was safe to eat food again, *Eating Dangerously* comes along and returns you to reality: Our food system from farm to kitchen is filled with potential safety issues that sicken 48 million and kill 3,000 Americans annually. Health reporter Michael Booth and investigative reporter Jennifer Brown have pulled together the human tragedies and criminal behaviors behind these gross statistics and written a readable exposé on recent foodborne illness outbreaks in America. Just as valuable are the practical tips for buying, storing, and preparing food that, if followed, will reduce your chances of ending up a statistic in the next outbreak. (Andrew F. Smith, editor, *Savoring Gotham: A Food Lover's Companion to New York City*)

Food is a vital element of life that should be taken seriously. This book will serve as an exemplary wake-up call since it enlightens us about the industry where food comes from, and it explains what food really goes through to reach our dinner plates. In essence, the authors skillfully remind the reader that good nutrition should begin with self rather than with government. (Naheed Ali, MD, PhD, author of *The Obesity Reality: A Comprehensive Approach to a Growing Problem*)

As a cardiologist and a chef I work with people around the world about what healthful eating is and how to

accomplish it. But far too many people assume healthful ingredients are safe ingredients. *Eating Dangerously* quite literally brings this difference home. Authors Booth and Brown have compiled an impeccably researched collection of horror stories more troubling than any work of fiction. But they have also given us a guidebook of tips and techniques that allows us to retrieve the sanitary along with our sanity. This is an indispensable companion for anyone who appreciates that the quality of our food must not only be better; it must first be safe. (Michael S. Fenster, M.D., author of *The Grassroots Gourmet*; co host of *Cooking From the Heart* with Forbes Riley and Dr. Mike)

This is a must read for anyone who cares about their health and their wellness. Not just for themselves but for everyone. This powerful guide will serve to educate and inspire you to be both a catalyst and an activist for food, food safety, and for living your best and most healthy life. (James Rouse, N.M.D., founder, Optimum Wellness Media)

Americans once assumed that the food on their grocery shelves was wholesome to eat. Sadly, that's no longer a safe assumption. Booth and Brown explain clearly the hidden dangers lurking in the foods we eat, and they offer sound advice about what you can do to protect yourself and your family. (Karl Weber, author and editor, *Food Inc.*)

About the Author

Michael Booth is the lead health care writer for *The Denver Post* and has covered health, medicine, health policy and politics throughout his twenty five-year journalism career. He was part of the team that won the 2013 and 2000 Pulitzer Prizes for Breaking News. He has made frequent appearances on commercial and public television and radio, and has won the National Education Writers' Award, Best of the West, American Health Care Journalists honors, and other awards. He also co-led the coverage of the most deadly food-borne illness outbreak of the past century, the cantaloupe listeria illnesses of 2011, with Jennifer Brown. Their coverage of the listeria outbreak became the outline for a Congressional committee's scathing report about what went wrong at the source farm and in the supply chain that sold the tainted melons.

Jennifer Brown is an investigative reporter with *The Denver Post* and has covered health, medicine and health policy for the past decade. She was part of the team that won the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News. Brown led the team covering the two-year debate over national health care reform in 2009 and 2010. She has worked at *The Associated Press*, *The Tyler Morning Telegraph in Texas*, and *The Hungry Horse News* in Montana, and has won a National Headliner Award, three Katie awards and the 2013 Best of the West award for investigative journalism. Brown also has covered the Colorado Legislature, the 2008 Democratic National Convention, and child welfare reform. She co-led the coverage of the most deadly food-borne illness outbreak of the past century, the cantaloupe listeria illnesses of 2011, with Michael Booth.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Bonnie Vassallo:

Do you have favorite book? For those who have, what is your favorite's book? Publication is very important thing for us to learn everything in the world. Each publication has different aim as well as goal; it means that reserve has different type. Some people truly feel enjoy to spend their time to read a book. They can be reading whatever they take because their hobby is definitely reading a book. What about the person who don't like reading a book? Sometime, individual feel need book once they found difficult problem or exercise. Well, probably you should have this *Eating Dangerously: Why the Government Can't Keep Your Food Safe ... and How You Can*.

Richard Lamm:

Reading a guide tends to be new life style within this era globalization. With looking at you can get a lot of information that will give you benefit in your life. Having book everyone in this world can easily share their idea. Textbooks can also inspire a lot of people. A great deal of author can inspire their own reader with their story or even their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the ebooks. But also they write about the ability about something that you need case in point. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach children, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors on this planet always try to improve their skill in writing, they also doing some investigation before they write with their book. One of them is this Eating Dangerously: Why the Government Can't Keep Your Food Safe ... and How You Can.

Samantha Smith:

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Marylou Beauregard:

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