

# TO A HEALTHY NEXT GEN

New Year Reads for Youngsters and Those Who Care About Kids

## LEAD READS

BY LEE LITTLEWOOD

The start of a new year brings high hopes for more exercise and better health — hopefully for children as well as adults. These new books (and a CD and a DVD) should help steer youngsters in the right path toward good health.

**“You Are What You Eat: and Other Mealtime Hazards”** by Serge Bloch; Sterling Publishing; 38 pages; \$12.95.

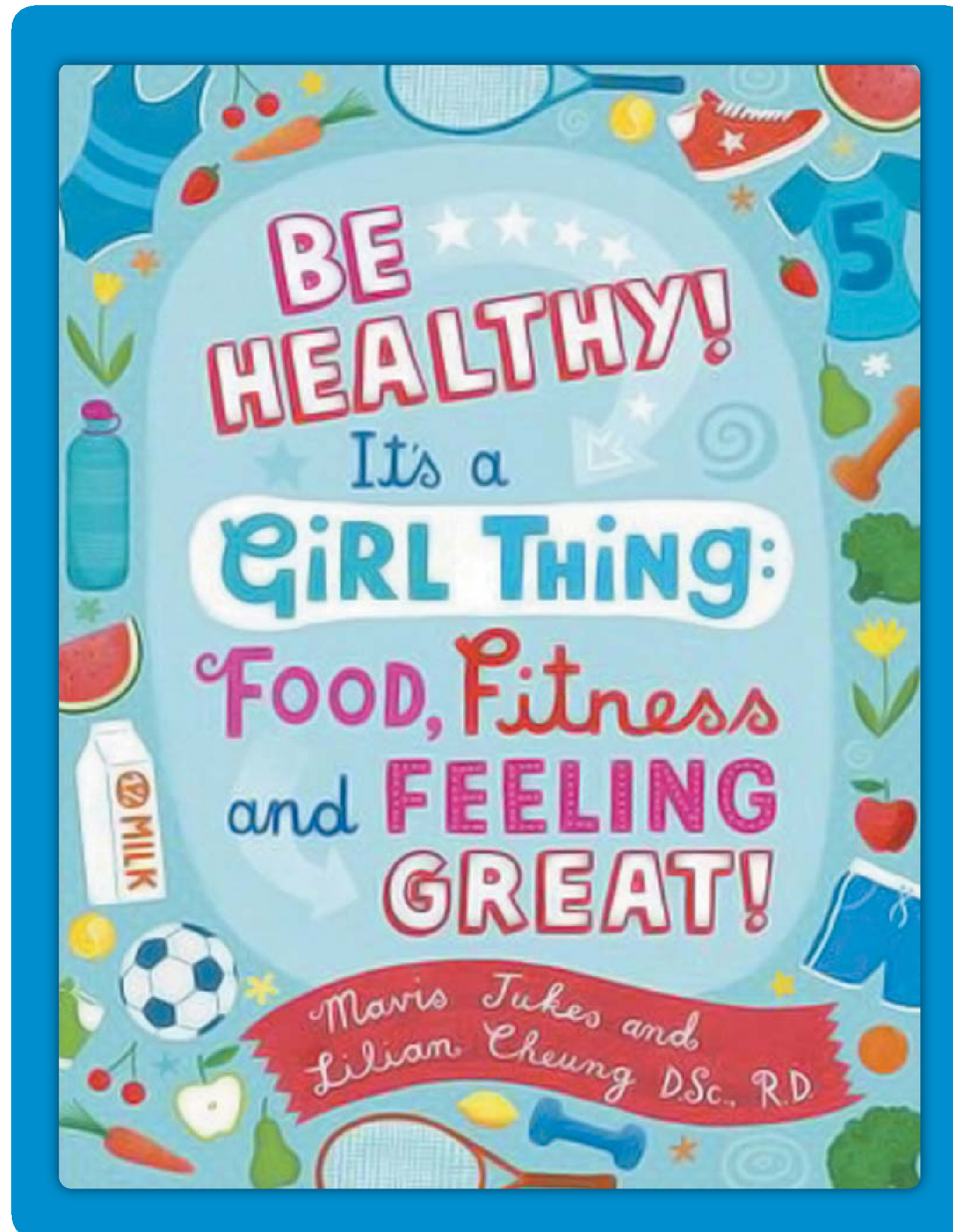
Personalized photos of fruits, vegetables and other healthful snacks — mixed in with black-and-white sketches — make this unique play-on-words book a fun but subtle lesson in eating nutritiously. Starring a young boy who’s a picky eater — “My mother says it drives her bananas to see me eat like a bird,” (with a depiction of her driving a banana and him pecking at bird food) — the clever book should have kids laughing at all the double entendres. When the boy eats dinner at his friend’s house, the friend reminds him that he was as “nutty as a fruitcake” to dislike Mom’s cooking, which gets him thinking about turning into a “good egg.”

Apparently, author/illustrator Bloch uses his noodle inventively in this witty ode to eating healthfully, which is certain to encourage kids to go bananas and eat like health nuts.

**“Be Healthy! It’s a Girl Thing: Food, Fitness, and Feeling Great”** by Mavis Jukes and Lilian Cheung, DSc, RD; Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers; 118 pages; \$12.99.

A fun, fantastic “girl” guide for ages 10 and up, this newly updated re-issue — from a Newbery Honor-winning author and nutritionist team — is packed with pertinent information. Topics range from how to read nutrition labels to how to maintain a balanced lifestyle to the importance of sleeping enough.

The book covers everything young girls and teens need to gain a start on the road to being healthy: why it’s not necessary to buy expensive workout clothing to basic safety tips for walking to school, to how a “great vibe” is more important than physical beauty.



Clearly penned, with modern phrases and sidebars and easy-to-read sections, “Be Healthy!” makes a valuable gift at any time of year.

**“Happy Dog, Sad Dog”** by Kathleen Porter; Mekevan Press; 106 pages; \$24.95.

According to movement educator and researcher Porter, kids are on a worsening skeletal collapse with each successive “techno” generation.

The posture of young people is worsening. It starts with how babies are placed in floppy strollers and car seats and continues in the

proliferation of hours that kids spend in front of computers and TV screens. Why sound the alarm? Chronic slouching can compress vital organs and impair digestion, circulation, respiration and nervous system functions, which can have long-term consequences on one’s health.

Found in the “Health & Medicine” or “Parenting” areas of bookstores, Porter’s helpful book offers tons of photos, depictions and examples of how children (and adults) become accustomed to slouching and sitting like “sad dogs” with “tails” tucked underneath. On the other hand, the happy dog pose promotes

sitting in a natural, comfortable “tail wagging” position. (Trust me — the photos showcase the comparisons and examples knowingly.)

Teachers, coaches and parents will benefit from the information and helpful tips in this all-encompassing book that Christine Northrup, M.D., calls “an eye-opening godsend for everyone who cares about children.”

**“Healthy Food for Thought: Good Enough to Eat”** from East Coast Recording Co.; \$14.99.

Brought about by the New York Coalition for Healthy School Food (NYCHSF), this CD, with music and spoken readings, promotes healthful and organic eating, school gardens, farm to school programs, and education to create food and health-literate students. But it’s more than just educational — readers include Julian Lennon, Michael O’Keefe, Russell Simmons and kids’ recording stars: Justin Roberts, Jessica Harper, Sara Hickman and Barney Saltzberg.

The songs and readings are zesty and full of flavor. Entries include “Super Snappy Paps,” “Hannah Was Such a Banana,” “Feed Your Parents Well,” “Beans are Better,” “Fruit Friendly and Veggie Vibes,” and so much more on the two discs.

**“Monkey Monkey Music the Videos”** with Meredith LeVande; \$14.99

With 15 catchy songs from “Monkey Monkey Music” and their critically acclaimed CD, this musical DVD guarantees plenty of off-the-sofa, energetic movement for preschoolers. The rollicking tunes encourage “monkey-hear, monkey-do” interactivity that promotes jumping high and dancing. The songs are also educational by exploring Chinatown and flying around the country.

LeVande’s upbeat lyrics and music come to life on the DVD, which also includes live action and colorful animation. As an added bonus, there are lyric captions to help early learners to read.

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