

Dr Frank Ryan

A consultant physician with more than thirty years experience in medicine, Frank Ryan is a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal Society of Medicine and the Linnean Society of London. He is also a distinguished author whose books have been acclaimed worldwide and translated into many languages. *Tuberculosis: The Greatest Story Never Told* was “Book of the Year” for the *New York Times* and *Darwin’s Blind Spot* was the “Chosen Book” for the celebrated financial expert Charlie Munger.

The Eskimo Diet, which he co-authored with Dr Reg Saynor, began the omega-3 revolution and was a best-seller in the UK.

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The Brain Food Diet

Other books by Frank Ryan

NON-FICTION

The Eskimo Diet (co-author Reg Saynor)

Tuberculosis: The Greatest Story Never Told

(In the US, *The Forgotten Plague*)

Virus X

Darwin's Blind Spot

FICTION

Between Clouds and the Sea

The

Brain Food Diet

How to Stay Young in Mind With The Omega-3s

Dr Frank Ryan

Declare the past, diagnose the present, foretell the future.

Hippocrates of Cos: Book 1, section 11, *Epidemics*

I wish this book, as the child of my brain, to be the most beautiful, the liveliest and cleverest possible. But I have been unable to transgress the order of nature by which

like gives birth to like.

Cervantes: *Don Quixote*

For Pat

Author's Note

This book does not promise miracle cures – or a replacement for some treatment that you might be taking already. All I ask is that you consider the facts, which I will present in plain and simple English, and then decide for yourself if your diet is deficient in the marine omega-3 fatty acids. If, like most people in the UK, your diet is deficient of these essential ingredients, I shall show you how, in the simplest possible fashion, you can rebalance your diet and thus reduce the risk of the mental decline that is mistakenly assumed to be a normal part of ageing.

I shall also show you how to plan your day-to-day diet so that you get the right balance between the omega-3s and omega-6s, a balance that is now regarded as highly important. This is the first time, to my knowledge, that this balance has been explained to the public.

If you have any special queries about eating fish or taking fish oil, or an omega-3 concentrate, you should take the advice of your doctor.

Those looking for more detailed medical advice or scientific information will find a guide to further reading at the end of the book together with a free comprehensive source of advice, information and references at www.swiftpublishers.com.

Introduction

Gimme That Zing

Do you have days when you wake up feeling good about yourself? Days when that inner sun is shining through. There is a ready smile on your face when you greet people, a youthful zing about you – so much so that everybody wants to know what’s making you feel so good about yourself. Well today I want to help you recapture a little of that zing. And the reason I can say this with some confidence is because I have a scientifically proven message to give to you, an important message that will enable you to help yourself.

‘What will it cost me?’ I hear you ask.

I can assure you the cost, in terms of money, is very little. And if you anticipate cost in terms of punishment, frugality, starvation or fad diets, or doing without the things you love – those little things that make your life worthwhile – nothing at all. You see my message really is a happy one. It will not interfere with your day-to-day quality of life, except perhaps to make it even better.

Remember that one universal truth we all grasped a long time ago? The one thing we

can count on is the fact we grow older every day. That worries some of us, I know. There are aspects of it that worry me too. Some people get themselves into a tizzy and go to extreme lengths to try to stave off the effects of ageing. Nobody wants to slow down, to get wrinkly and worn around the edges, to creak in the joints and, worst of all, to become forgetful and slowed down mentally. In fact, when it comes down to it, that's what we fear more than anything – the fact that we might lose that zing. There's a medical term for it, "age-related cognitive decline", or "ARCD", which in essence means the progressive loss of the ability to think, with its implicit erosion of memory and all of the important social graces and dignities that go with it.

Well, here's the good news! Thanks to some very recent advances in medical knowledge, there really is something we can do to help ourselves.

Some of you might even remember how this story began, back in 1990, when Reg Saynor and I co-authored *The Eskimo Diet*. This brought about a nutritional and medical revolution in the UK and Ireland. At the time it was also highly controversial. I was working as a consultant physician in a major teaching hospital, which was also the regional cardiac referral centre. I had twenty years of experience treating heart attacks, and indeed all of the common and serious medical conditions I shall be talking about in this book. Up to then patients who had suffered heart attacks, or who were thought to be at high risk of a heart attack because they had angina or high cholesterol levels in their blood, were told to *avoid* oily fish. Reg Saynor had been running a blood fat clinic at the hospital for years and had pioneered the study of fish oil in treating abnormal blood fat levels. He believed he had more than enough evidence to prove the very opposite – that fish oil had properties that reduced blood fats and reduced the risk of heart attacks. We combined experiences

to write *The Eskimo Diet*, which caught the attention of the media and helped to change dietary habits for the better.

This was the beginning of the Omega-3 Story. Little did we realize that what we knew then, revolutionary as it seemed, was merely the tip of the iceberg in a remarkable chapter of discovery with major biological and medical implications, including human evolution, and diseases as varied as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, schizophrenia and depression. We shall examine this expanding story while focusing down onto one area of discovery in particular: how fish oil, and the omega-3s that come with it, helps to slow down, in some ways even to prevent, the loss of memory, and the other mental afflictions that we regard as the consequence of ageing. Indeed, fish oil, and those remarkable omega-3s, may also considerably reduce the risk of getting Alzheimer's disease – and may help to treat some people who have already developed milder forms of the disease. Moreover, there is growing evidence it may even help to lighten your mood.

So you see it really is a zing thing.

These are major claims. How could a natural dietary ingredient do all of these things? This is such an important question it needs to be looked at closely, without hype or the rose-tinted spectacles of wishful thinking. Yet the exciting thing is that over the last few years this message has become increasingly credible through good quality scientific and medical research.

But I don't expect you to just take my word for it. In this book I invite you to join me on a wonderful odyssey of discovery in which I shall give you the evidence in plain and simple English so you can make up your own mind. Then, assuming you are convinced, I shall show you how to modify your day-to-day diet and lifestyle to put that zing back into your

life.