

Introduction

I am 47 years old, have six children, am a sports medicine doctor with an extremely busy practice and travel extensively for my job. I'm passionate about sports, cycling, skiing, snowboarding, and I want to be able to participate in these activities for many years to come. I enjoy the full, active and balanced life that I have. I want to stay healthy and active well into my senior years, and I want to motivate you to improve your quality of life so you can stay healthy and active well into your senior years too. This is why I wrote this book.

Over the past few years, there has been an alarming increase in obesity and in diseases strongly influenced by diet, such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease. I believe that part of the reason for this increase is that many people are simply unaware of how important it is to keep hormones in balance and the critical role that food plays in hormone control and health.

It is always better to prevent a disease than it is to cure it. Diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease can be prevented in many cases just by improving our diet and being more active. To understand this connection, you must first understand how hormones function.

In Part I of this book, I have discussed a number of the major hormones, such as insulin, glucagon and cortisol, and the effects that they have on health and aging. I've discussed the benefits and cautions of hormone replacement. If you are considering hormone replacement, you should be aware of bioidentical hormones and significant hormones such as growth hormone, progesterone, estrogen, testosterone, melatonin and DHEA. It is important to understand how these hormones affect your wellness.

In Part II, I have discussed metabolic syndrome and inflammation, which both negatively affect health and which may be controlled with the foods we eat. I have discussed some of the more popular weight loss diets, healthy foods and my Perfect Eating Plan. This plan will give you the nutrients you need to keep your hormones in balance and keep you healthy, slim, vibrant and youthful.

Many people, who are struggling with weight control, often cringe at the thought of the excessive amount of exercise required to stay slim and healthy. In Part III, I have detailed an exercise plan that does not have to take more

than 30 minutes a day, four or five times a week. You don't have to follow the exercise schedule of an athlete to attain health benefits. Many times, fitness instructors will give people schedules that are so grueling they just can't keep up. They quickly become discouraged and stop exercising. I have concisely described exercises that are not overwhelming, but that will keep your core, cardiovascular system and muscles conditioned.

In Part IV, I have described some of the more common injuries, how to prevent them and how to treat them. I have reviewed some of the procedures and medical instrumentation that I have developed to diagnose and treat injuries. The information is easy to read and to follow.

I believe a book on optimal health would not be complete unless our spiritual well-being is addressed. We cannot be totally healthy and happy unless we acknowledge our spirit and encourage it to grow. Hormones, nutrition and exercise address our mind and body, but humans are a three part entity. We consist of mind, body and spirit. We cannot ignore this third part of our makeup – our spirit. Our spirit is the essence of who we are. I have shared with you my own spiritual journey and how it has positively affected my life.

In over 20 years as a sports medicine doctor for numerous professional and Olympic athletes, I have had the

privilege to work with many renowned medical specialists, coaches, athletic nutritionists and exercise scientists from around the world. To provide my athletes and patients with the best and most current care, it is essential for me to keep expanding my knowledge of medicine and embracing new techniques. I would like to share this expertise and knowledge with you. I hope you will find *Dr. Galea's Secrets to Optimal Health – Body and Spirit* informative, easy to read and easy to follow on your way to optimal health.