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Consider a cookbook or nutrition book for gift

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Editor's note: In this weekly column, Atlanta registered dietitian and Georgia State University nutrition instructor Chris Rosenbloom offers advice on how to maintain a healthy diet and active lifestyle. And she's prepared to answer your questions as well — whether you're trying to shed pounds, lower your cholesterol, fuel yourself to excel at your favorite sport or simply eat better and live longer.

If you still need to finish your holiday shopping for family, friends or co-workers, consider a healthy gift. First, let me tell you what not to give: diet books, membership to a weight-loss center or a weight-loss device seen on an infomercial. It is unwise to suggest that your loved ones or co-workers need to lose weight (even if they do).

But a cookbook or general nutrition book may be a perfect gift. With so many options to choose from, I've narrowed my picks based on a few criteria. The author or publisher has to have impeccable credentials — anyone can write a nutrition book, but only a few have the expertise to do so. I also looked for scientifically sound (we call it "evidence-based") information that is easy to read and understand.

Last, I chose books that present the content in a fun way that will engage the reader. With those criteria, here are my suggestions for a healthy holiday gift:

- **"American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide (Second Edition)"** by Roberta Larson Duyff (John Wiley & Sons, \$24.95). This book will appeal to those who want to know a little bit about everything in nutrition but don't have a science background. It is loaded with practical advice, consumer-friendly quizzes and tables and charts on almost anything on nutrition you can think of.
- **"Nutrition Logic: Food First, Supplements Second"** by Marie Dunford (Pink Robin Press, \$17.95). This small gem provides sound, practical nutrition advice for anyone who wants to improve his or her diet. A case-study approach is used to illustrate real-world examples. The appendix provides lots of useful tips.
- **"The Moms' Guide to Meal Makeovers"** by Janice Newell Bissex and Liz Weiss (Broadway Books, \$15.95). Bissex is a former dietitian for the U.S. Senate and Weiss is a journalist who has covered nutrition for CNN and PBS for 10 years. Both are moms. The book is for all the moms (and dads) who want to provide healthy meals for their families but struggle with finding the time to do so. This book offers solutions to making over the simple foods that kids love by packing more nutritional punch into every meal.
- **"Quick Flip to Delicious Dinners"** by Eileen Faughey (Nutrition Connections, \$17.95). Faughey is a nutritionist who partnered with a chef to provide an alternative to a traditional cookbook. This colorful book is a fun flip chart that busy people with limited cooking skills can enjoy. Every recipe comes with five versions — how to prepare the dish with an Asian, French, Italian, Mexican or Spanish flair.
- **"American Dietetic Association: Cooking Healthy Across America,"** editor Kristine Napier (John Wiley & Sons, \$24.95). This book takes a regional approach — from New England to Floribbean and Southern cuisine to California's fusion cuisine — to modify traditional dishes to make them healthful. The book also is packed with fun food trivia and provides basic information on food purchasing, cooking and food safety.
- **"The Dish on Eating Healthy and Being Fabulous!"** by Carolyn O'Neil and Densie Webb (Atria Books, \$25.95). O'Neil was the senior correspondent for CNN's "On the Menu" program, and Webb is an author and editor of seven books. This book will appeal to your glamorous friends; it follows the format of a reality makeover show with over-the-top "dish" on everything from eating out to entertaining. The nutritional information is presented in a refreshing, fun way.

•Chris Rosenbloom, Ph.D., R.D., is a member of the nutrition faculty in the College of Health and Human Sciences at Georgia State University. She'll answer nutrition questions of general interest at dietitian@ajc.com. Or send your questions to her c/o The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Eighth Floor, 72 Marietta St. N.W., Atlanta, GA 30303.

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