

Consumers' and Homemaking Magazines Provided Best Nutrition Coverage in 1997-99

By ACSH Staff — June 13, 2001

The American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) has found that, as a group, consumer-oriented and homemaking magazines outrank other types in the quality of their nutrition reporting. The eighth ACSH survey of [nutrition reporting by popular magazines](#) ^[1] ranked 14 of 20 surveyed magazines as "excellent" or "good" sources of nutrition information.

Four ACSH judges, each an expert in nutrition and/or food science, rated 10 randomly selected articles from each of 20 popular magazines on the basis of (1) provision of factual information, (2) objective presentation of information, and (3) presentation of sound nutritional recommendations.

- Three magazines *Parents*, *Cooking Light*, and *Good Housekeeping* topped the list with ratings of 90 percent or more, which earned them a rating of "excellent."
- Eleven publications (*Consumer Reports*, *Self*, *Shape*, *Glamour*, *Health*, *Woman's Day*, *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Reader's Digest*, *Runner's World*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *Men's Health*, ranked between 80 and 89 percent enough to place them in the "good" category.
- *Cosmopolitan*, *Fitness*, *Redbook*, *Mademoiselle*, *Muscle & Fitness*, and *Prevention* were ranked from 70 to 79 percent which earned them a "fair" designation. All had plenty of room for improvement.
- For the first time in the 18 years that ACSH has been evaluating popular magazines' nutrition coverage, no magazine was ranked in the lowest or "poor" category.

Consumer-focused publications and homemaking publications tied for top group scores of 88 percent. Surprisingly, as a group the health/fitness-focused and women's magazines did not fare as well, receiving group scores of 81 and 79 percent respectively.

Overall, the judges were pleased by the quality of the nutrition articles. Dr. F.J. Francis, who has judged previous ACSH surveys, said that it was an "agreeable surprise" to see how good the articles were. Similarly, Dr. Manfred Kroger, also a seasoned judge, noted that "writers seemed to be more tuned in to credible information" than they used to be.

Of the 19 magazines that had been included in the previous ACSH survey, nine either maintained or improved their earlier ranking, while 10 decreased their scores. "Consumers should be aware that although magazine nutrition coverage has improved overall, there are still some pockets of poor reporting out there." stated Dr. Ruth Kava, ACSH's Director of Nutrition. "Even some magazines that ranked in the 'good' category overall had some articles of questionable quality," she continued.

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