



The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Junk Food

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Mama Bear lays down the law when she notices that Papa and the cubs are getting too chubby. With the help of Dr. Grizzly's slide show on how the body works, the Bear family makes a healthful adjustment in their diet and fitness habits. "A most enjoyable introduction to good nutrition and exercise."--(starred) *Science Books & Films*.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Junk Food Details

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From Reader Review The Berenstain Bears and Too Much Junk Food for online ebook

Audrey says

"let's celebrate by opening up the freezer!"

Jaidab says

Well, let me just start out by saying that I wish I could give this book 0 stars, and then burn it. I do not even know where to begin... I am just so very, VERY disappointed.

The Berenstain Bears books have been more or less popular for a few decades. This fact is part of what troubles me so much. I've read some of the other Berenstain books recently to my children, and they've been ok, but when I found this little gem (sarcasm), I was stunned.

When I was in nutrition school, and even more so since then, I have come to realize how many food issues people have, and how many of those issues are surrounded by feelings of guilt. That guilt almost inevitably leads to compulsion, and from there the cycle continues.

I understand that Stan Berenstain was attempting to help children to make better food choices, but he did it in all the wrong ways.

Example one:

(This is talking about what "Mama" notices about "brother" and "sister")

"Yes, they were chubbier from the side...they were chubbier from the front...and from the back-

Well, there was no question about it. Brother and Sister were going to have to stop eating all that junk food"

So, basically Mama bear wants her kids to stop eating junk food because they're getting "chubbier", not because she cares about their health.

And then, there's example two:

Papa asks what the family is doing with his Sugar Balls and Choco-Chums. Brother replies that "they're going into the freezer and we're going to forget about them!". Then,

"Just a minute!" said Papa. But as he leaned over to pick up his precious goodies, there was a loud r-r-r-i-p! Papa's snack habits had caught up with him, too. He had split the seat of his overalls wide open."

Again, with the body shaming! Am I advocating unhealthy eating? Of course not. The problem I have here is with the idea that skinny = healthy. Health comes in all different sizes and shapes. This book should have focused more on how if we treat our bodies with care, they will be able to do amazing things. We will be able to run faster, live longer, and feel great! Not just look good in our clothes, or fail to "split the seat of our overalls wide open".

If you'd like to learn more about the damage of body shaming, you should check out Beauty Redefined.

Calista says

This is a good story. It is also a speck preachy... or more than a speck. At the same time, it is a great message. Sugar has made an addict of me and I hate feeling so out of control with it. Junk food is too much around us and I always want it. So, the story has a true message, a good message. The candy does look so colorful and it made me want junk food.

There is a little bit of body shaming in this one, but this is an 80s mindset. This feels more like a Jan Berenstain idea.

The kids like these books and they have fun with them. They thought it was a great book and it made them want candy also. Funny, how simply seeing drawings of candy make you crave candy.

Tam says

My 8-year-old really liked this book but his school focuses on healthy eating so he's okay with giving up junk food. My favorite part was when Papa Bear wanted to know what he could drink if he couldn't drink his Sweetsie-Cola. Mama Bear replied, "Try this. It's called water." As a parent, I liked the overall message of this book. It emphasized healthy eating and exercise.

Barbara says

I have loved this book ever since I was little because I felt like I could relate to it. I loved junk food as a kid and still do as an adult, the book teaches a lesson that I may not have learned when I was little but am starting to understand now. It talks about healthy eating and why it is important. The illustrations are what drew me to the book when I was younger. When I saw this on the shelves in the store I instantly remembered why I had loved it so much. I love all of the Berenstain Bears Books and had most of the series by the time I reached the age 10. These books teach great lessons to young children and make it easy to relate to children and young adults. I would recommend these books to any children in 4th grade and up. The reading is not too difficult but they are definitely not beginner books.

Jen says

Arg with the body shaming in kids' junk food books!

The thing with this book is that the back half is actually good; the family goes to the doctor and learns about the various systems in the body (like the nervous system, bone structure, digestive tracts, etc.) and there are illustrations that are just right for kids. And the recognition that exercise is important and can be a family activity is great. Even the fact that alternative snacks are spelled out so that it's not just "eat better" but "here's what eating better can look like" and the acknowledgement that the transition is hard (the cubs really want their sweet stuff as they're getting used to the new foods) are really strong parts of this book.

But the whole of it kicks off with Mama Bear looking at her family and thinking them fat, an observation reinforced by the local doctor at the freaking grocery store. Don't make kids self-conscious in public spaces like that, Berenstains. C'mon.

I loved the Bears when I was a kid, but coming across this one was a sad realization that not all of them hold up to the requirements of my adult self. Use the back half of this book to teach your kids about nutrition, but skip the first half.

Leah says

I just like to wallow in all the pictures of junk food overindulgence.

A sad early warning of the demise of Cookie Monster.

Charity says

My three-year-old is currently enamored of The Berenstain Bears. He wants to check out the whole section every time we're at the library, but I limit him to three because that's about all my husband and I can stand to read to him over and over until next week's library trip. I won't review all of them because they're all very similar. This one, however, gets a review because it's a very good example of what a dolt Papa always seems to be in these books. Mama calls all the shots and Papa just follows along. It's like he's one of the kids---and often he's even more kid-like than the kids are. Papa's like a precursor to Homer Simpson except that *The Simpsons* doesn't try to teach life lessons. I just find it irritating. At least this newer series doesn't attempt to rhyme like the ones I read when I was an early reader.

I'll keep getting these books out for my son because he loves them, but when he's not looking, I pepper the stack with books *I've* picked out for him.

Miri Mandel says

I think it's a good book and it talks about not eating so much junk and they're growing and it talks about eating healthy and doing exercise. And it's a good book.

Sarah Adamson says

A good idea for a book but now it's dated and includes a lot of conversations that are now viewed as inappropriate. There is so much information - too much almost about body image being important when general health matters much more! Just didn't give me good feelings and led to serious discussions with my daughter about the way her body looks not being anywhere near as important as its health status which includes her mental health and being happy and feeling good and being healthy and able to be active.

Meg says

My parents must have been sick of reading this book to me as a child. I STILL knew half of the words from memory-- that's how much I loved it-- but revisiting this, I'm not sure why I was so enchanted. While the overall intention is good (eat healthy food, not junk), it basically just instructs kids to not get fat by eating too many cheese puffs. While childhood obesity is indeed a timely topic, I didn't appreciate the condescending tone of this (and I'm sure many other Berenstain) books. Momma bear is wearing a dress and cap at all times, the doctor is the high authority on WHY not to eat ho-hos for lunch... it all seemed a bit simplistic to me. Didn't assume too much intelligence on the part of kid readers. Then again, the original copyright date is 1985. And it did, after all, suck me in when I was young.

Jessica says

Oh the childhood memories this brings back.

Liesl says

Although the story means well, it's not nearly as good as I remembered. The plot falls in the unfortunate, lazy "Mama is always right, Papa is a dolt and lumped in with the kids" trap along with too many others from the series. I don't care for how all junk food is dismissed outright; it is more realistic to introduce enjoying treats both in moderation and on special occasions in addition to primarily eating healthy.

Kristine Hansen says

Correct me if I'm wrong, but shouldn't bears be naturally...stout?

Well, Papa Bear is definitely a little on the paunchy side, and the cubs were definitely not eating well, so a change definitely needed to be made. Might I suggest it start with Mama Bear, who shouldn't have bought all the junk food in the first place? Or allowed them to eat all that trash at the mall or movies? Just wondering....

Yeah, I'm a little critical here but there's a definite fat-shaming moment here that left me somewhat triggered. Putting the blame on the cubs for what they eat is entirely unfair. They're not making good choices, but what choices are you offering? And somehow I don't see how a trip to the doctor to look at pictures of the digestive system will make everyone take up jogging...

But while the book isn't necessarily realistic, it's needed. Seeing the cubs make good food choices for themselves at the end of the book is heartening, but it doesn't address the sedentary lifestyle that is also a contributing factor as to where they are physically.

Overall, I'm not liking this book as much as I first thought when I sat down to write the review. I'd been happy initially to see the Bears talk about junk food. But I'm not sure any of this goes about talking about it

in the right way. And the all or nothing attitude leaves something to be desired. So, no, this isn't the best book out there. But I'm kind of wondering just what other options there are that talk about this same issue. It's important to understand food. But there's more fun ways to discuss it I should think.

Leland T-Money Fortier says

This is some right wing medical propaganda. This is ABearica, if I want to get fat from eating Choco Chums and Sugar Balls then I CAN. This book is filled with unrealistic portrayals of current healthcare.

It really all starts when their family doctor sees them at the grocery store and "invites" them to an appointment tomorrow. Never in my life have I met a doctor that was so easy to get an appointment at, usually you are on hold for 20 minutes just to find out the next opening is 2 months from now. Second, they forgot the insurance part. A family of 4 walks into the doctor and the BOOM! \$20 copay, BOOM! \$20 copay, BOOM! \$20 copay, BOOM! \$20 copay. That's assuming they have hood insurance, or any insurance at all. In all the books I've read I've NEVER seen Papa sell any furniture, and Mamas quilting business seems to have gone under, making me think that they probably don't have that great of insurance. All a scam to get a family to spend a buttload of money on an unnecessary appointment.

While I'm at it, who the hell is Mama Bear to judge others. She seems to fill out that same nightgown she wears every book pretty well.
