

HEALING WORDS

Doctors move from the office to the Web to TV to books: no waiting.

BY GWENDA BOND

NOT SO LONG AGO, GETTING EXPERT HEALTH information usually required waiting in line—or at least having an appointment. These days, a click of the remote or pressing the power button on your computer can call up a host of medical professionals willing and ready to dispense advice.

The sheer number of people tuning in to TV shows like the fictional *House*, new reality series *Boston Med*, and syndicated daytime show *The Doctors* demonstrates how firmly cemented the place of medicine is in today's pop culture pantheon.

Next month, *The Doctors* leaps from the small screen onto the page with its first book, *The Doctors 5-Minute Health Fixes* (Rodale). The title features the show's trademark style of translating complex and confusing medical information for the lay person, using the expertise of pediatrician Dr. Jim Sears, ER physician Dr. Travis Stork, ob-gyn Dr. Lisa Masterson, and cosmetic and reconstructive surgeon Dr. Drew Ordon, with author Mariska van Aalst.

Rodale's publishing director, Colin Dickerson, says the book's release is timely, pointing to a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study that reported nine out of 10 adults had difficulty following routine medical advice because they couldn't understand it.

"*The Doctors* enables patients to approach a confusing and even scary subject with a sense of comfort and ease," says Dickerson. "Having this book at

home is just another way for viewers to feel empowered to take their health into their own hands."

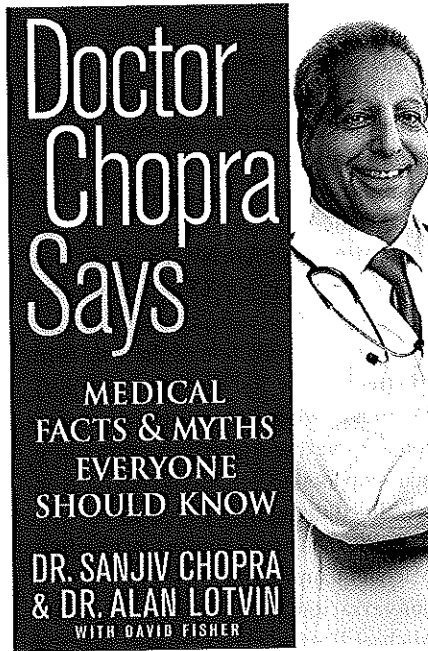
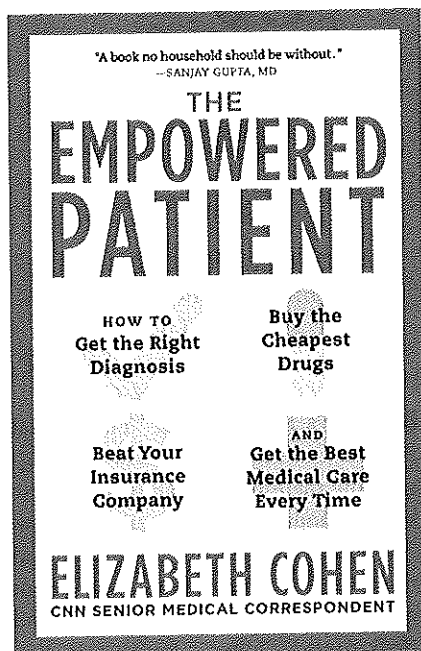
Doctor's Orders

Increasingly, viewers and readers are doing just that—supplementing the news they get in their own doctors'

offices with the expert guidance of other medical professionals via TV, the Internet, and, of course, the offerings of publishers in the health category. The bedside manner of an engaging, well-researched health book can be hard to beat, since it's always accessible, can be read when not under the stress of an office visit, and likely includes only as much jargon as the reader can easily take in. And health books can also provide access to the biggest names in medicine and the most cutting-edge details about new research and therapies.

For example, St. Martin's/Dunne will release *Doctor Chopra Says* by Dr. Sanjiv Chopra and Dr. Alan Lotvin in December. Chopra is the dean of continuing medical education at Harvard Medical School, a role in which he's required to communicate the latest developments to thousands of doctors attending continuing-education courses every year to stay current in their fields. He and cardiologist Lotvin have partnered on a work that—like *The Doctors*—aims to help the general audience separate media hype from medical fact.

Among the topics covered are questions on diet, cancer screening, and how to get enough vitamin D. The pair also



Ballantine and St. Martin's endeavor to bring medical expertise and advice direct to consumers.

WOMEN'S WORLD

The push to change the way the medical establishment treated women's health began gathering serious momentum in the 1960s and '70s, and the legacy of that movement can be seen in several new books this season.

Not only is breast cancer still one of the hot topics in women's health, but it's one of the most rapidly changing, due to a steady stream of research findings on treating the disease and thriving afterward. As Breast Cancer Awareness Month approaches in October, a flood of related titles are on the way. Diana Roth Port's *Previvors: Facing the Breast Cancer Gene and Making Life-Changing Decisions* (Avery) flows directly from groundbreaking science that now allows the identification of genetic factors indicating a predisposition for the disease.

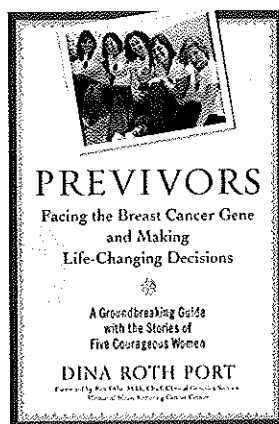
Says Avery and Gotham editorial director Megan Newman, "With genetic testing, more and more women are grappling with what to do when faced with daunting odds. This book helps them navigate the choices."

Also due in October are survivor/activist Gina Maisano's *Intimacy After Breast Cancer* (Square One), an updated edition of the popular *Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book* (Da Capo), and Mary Flynn and Nancy Verde Barr's *The Pink Ribbon Diet* (Da Capo). "Breast



cancer remains a major health issue and, with one in eight women eventually diagnosed, there's more emphasis on prevention," says Katie McHugh, Da Capo Lifelong executive editor. "Women increasingly want to take charge of their health care through lifestyle changes they can make on their own."

A high-profile memoir from the founder of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, *Promise Me*, by Nancy Brinker (Broadway, Sept.), coincides with the 30th anniversary of Komen's death. The book details Brinker's emotional journey in losing her older sister to breast cancer and her promise made good to dedicate her life to ensuring that other women would not



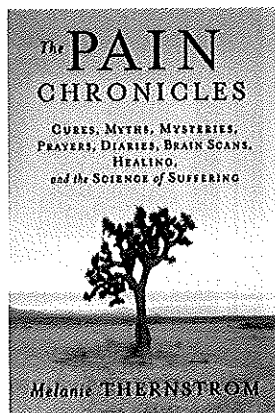
have to feel the same pain her sister did.

Other forthcoming women's health titles tackle previously taboo subjects, such as gynecologist Dr. Lissa Rankin's *What's Up Down There?* (St. Martin's, Sept.) and *No More Dirty Looks* (Da Capo, Aug.), in which Siobhan O'Connor and Alexandra Spunt assess the risks posed by carcinogens in beauty products and advise on choosing safe products.

Says McHugh, "It's not about giving up your favorite lipstick for good—it's about making safer and cleaner choices."
—G.B.

HISTORY OF PAIN

According to the National Centers for Health Statistics, chronic pain may affect as many as 76.2 million people in the U.S.—dwarfing the numbers for conditions such as diabetes, cancer, and coronary disease. Author Melanie Thernstrom became interested in the subject after suffering chronic pain and navigating the confusing maze to find effective treatment in a country where there are only 2,500 board-certified pain specialists. The result is *The Pain Chronicles* (FSG, Aug.), an ambitious blend of personal narrative, research, interviews, and history that took nearly a decade to produce. Noting a planned 75,000-copy first print, FSG editor-in-chief Eric Chimski believes the book has the potential to reach a wide audience, comparing its appeal to that of Andrew Solomon's breakout work on depression, *The Noonday Demon*. "The book is grounded on personal experience," says Chimski, "but also includes the kind of research and interviews that the average person can't find online. It transcends the medical and stands on its own as a literary work due to the writing and sensibility."



—G.B.

addresses a number of myths, such as the claim that vitamin E may stave off certain cancers, and other serious health problems.

Megan Newman, editorial director for Avery and Gotham, says that books by top medical professionals continue to fill an important place in the market. "It's easy to get lost on the Web, especially in the thicket of misleading health information," she says. "Books written by experts help readers make sense of conflicting info."

She cites Avery's *Dr. Peter Scardino's Prostate Book* as an example of a title whose strong backlist sales are due to the publisher's continually refreshing the content. An updated edition comes out this month, just in time for September's National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. And Square One, a health-focused publisher celebrating

its 10th anniversary, has two new titles offering up-to-date takes on treatment and prevention for specific diseases—*What You Must Know About Kidney Disease* by Rich Snyder, a doctor of osteopathy (Nov.) and Dr. Raymond Chang's *Beyond the Magic Bullet: The Anti-Cancer Cocktail* (Jan.).

Despite the wealth of titles available in the category, staying current—particularly when an emerging approach is considered controversial—can still be difficult for readers. Several publishers have books this season that revisit traditional wisdom. Dr. Bankole Johnson's *The Rehab Myth* (Da Capo, Jan.) proposes a more medically centered approach to fighting alcoholism, arguing against the conventional belief that 12-step programs and rehab are the best choice and urging the use of medications. From Simon and Schuster comes *After the Diagnosis* by Dr. Julian Seifter (Aug.), writing with his wife Betsy Seifter, about his experiences as both doctor and patient dealing with a chronic condition. The book provides a closeup of his emotional and physical strategies for managing a long-term diagnosis like his own diabetes.

Coming in January from S&S is Ruth Davis Konigsberg's *The Truth About Grief*. Although editor-in-chief Priscilla Painton doesn't specialize in health-focused books, she was intrigued by the Konigsberg title because of its potential to revolutionize the way we think about coping with pain and loss. She says, "So much of what we know about grief turns out to be wrong, and Konigsberg's book is a very liberating experience because it frees people to think about the experience in a new way, not in the way society has prescribed it."

Healing Thyself

People are seeking empowerment in the health arena, focusing on both preventing illness to stay healthy and on finding solid facts when there is a specific problem or diagnosis. While it's easy enough to find health information on the Web with just a few keystrokes,

judging the quality and legitimacy of what turns up can prove difficult for the layperson. Also, many older people may not find it easy to access medical info online. For these reasons, books aimed at building a home medical library continue to sell. Firefly has two comprehensive home medical reference titles due next month, *The Ultimate Medical Encyclopedia*, edited by

Martine Podesto, and *Anatomica*, a collaboration between several academic authorities and a physician.

Many publishers see a trend toward books that consumers can use at home to improve their health through nutrition, supplements, and other strategies—or use to augment the conventional medical treatments their doctors recommend. One such title is nutritionist Deanna

THREE QUESTIONS WITH JOHN ROBBINS

Red Wheel/Weiser's 10th anniversary edition of John Robbins's *The Food Revolution* (Nov.) will feature a new introduction by the author.

Are you encouraged by the increased interest and awareness about the issues surrounding the American diet and its impact on health?

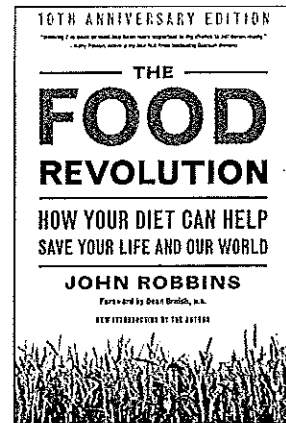
Yes and no. I'm encouraged by the increasing numbers of people who understand that food doesn't simply come from the supermarket or the restaurant kitchen. It originates on a farm and involves soil, water, weather, human

labor, plants, and animals. There is an increased recognition that eating is not just a culinary act. It's also an agricultural and a political act, with profound economic and environmental consequences. At the same time, I'm discouraged by the proliferation of what Michael Pollan aptly calls "edible foodlike substances." Many of these come in packages adorned with health benefit claims. These products are everywhere, some even sporting endorsements from the American Heart Association—few people realize that that association sells its endorsement to food manufacturers.

Do you foresee changes over the next decade in how food is produced and what we consume, for better or worse?

I'd love to see us move away from confined animal feeding operations, otherwise known as factory farms. These environmental and public health nightmares are only made possible by laws exempting animals destined for human consumption from what legislation exists to prevent cruelty to animals. They depend on the rampant misuse of antibiotics as growth promotants, not as medicines, a process which is systematically undermining the viability of antibiotics in human medicine by breeding resistant bacteria. What's the one step you would urge people to take for their health immediately?

Become a food activist. Read labels. Talk about how your food was produced. Buy fair trade coffee and chocolate. Eat far less meats and dairy products, and never eat any that come from factory farms. Nobody likes to be told, for the thousandth time, to eat more vegetables, whole grains, and fruits. But when you eat a plant-strong diet with a minimum of processed foods, you are taking a stand for your health, for the planet, and for our kinship with all life.



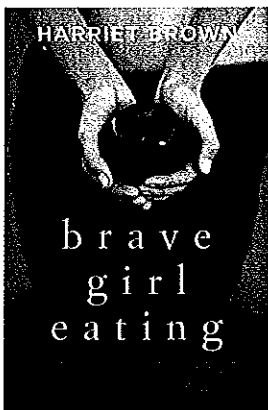
With news stories about the negative effects of obesity and studies showing more and more correlations between diet and health, the health category is brimming with a wide range of nutrition-focused titles.

Red Wheel/Weiser's 10th-anniversary edition of John Robbins's *The Food Revolution: How Your Diet Can Help Save Your Life and Our World* (Nov.), is called by publisher Caroline Pincus "one of the standout books of the first wave of interest in food politics and health." (See sidebar, p. 25.) With some 100,000 copies in print, the publisher reports higher sales now than 10 years ago—perhaps unsurprising, since Robbins's message about how the food we choose ties closely to personal fitness and environmental health, and the fact that concerns about food safety have become more mainstream.

Other forthcoming titles dealing with dietary changes for better health include Bharat B. Aggarwal's *Healing Spices: Use Spices to Boost Health and Beat Disease* (Sterling, Jan.); Paula Bartimeus's *Natural Wonderfoods* (Sterling/Duncan Baird, Jan.); Kami McBride's *The Herbal Kitchen* (Red Wheel/Weiser, Oct.), and Dr. Natalie Geary and Oz Garcia's *The Food Cure for Kids: A Nutritional Approach to Your Child's Wellness* (Lyons Press, Oct.). A mission statement for correcting America's eating habits by former FDA commissioner David Kessler, *The End of Overeating*, is coming in paperback next month from Rodale.

Two new memoirs share an intimate look at different ends of the weight spectrum, showing the complexities of one's relationship with food. In *Designated Fat Girl* (Globe Pequot/Skirt! Sept.), Jennifer Joyner recalls her powerlessness to stop eating, even as health problems mounted, and describes how she overcame her obstacles.

On the flip side, Harriet Brown's *Brave Girl Eating* (Morrow, Aug.) is told by the mother of a girl with severe anorexia. The story of her daughter's battle, which began at age 14, encompasses the entire family and highlights a new approach to treating anorexia. Methods have traditionally involved sending the sufferer away to a treatment program, but the family-based treatment, or "Maudsley Approach," involves the family gathering around the person at home and treating food as medicine. Editor Kate Nintzel calls the book "a large, heartfelt, and soulful memoir of a family going through a terrible situation."



Minich's *The Complete Handbook to Quantum Healing* (Red Wheel/Weiser, Jan.), which seeks to marry "the world of hard, evidence-based science and the world of experientially based healing" through an A-Z index about self-healing various ailments by such methods as dietary changes and meditation.

Says associate publisher Caroline Pincus, "We're seeing an unusually high number of submissions about self-care

and self-healing—everything from destressing techniques, a perennial favorite, to herbal medicine and shamanic healing and foods that balance the chakras."

Indeed, there may be nearly as many approaches to self-healing titles as there are people. From the fifth edition of "category killer" *Prescription for Nutritional Healing* (Avery, Oct.) and *The Secrets of People Who Never Get Sick* by Gene Stone

(Workman, Oct.) to *Mindfulness for Dummies* by Shamash Alidina (Wiley, Sept.), publishers truly offer something for everyone who wants to improve health at home.

The bottom line for books in the health category is that they must leave the reader feeling more knowledgeable and in control of their own health—even better if the reader also feels more confident in dealing with the health care system. Just as medicine itself is moving toward more holistic, patient-centered approaches, so are publishers with their health titles. Perhaps the book that best encapsulates this shift is Elizabeth Cohen's *The Empowered Patient* (Ballantine, Aug.). As a CNN senior medical correspondent who has educated the public on health issues for more than 17 years, Cohen makes the case that people must take charge of their own health destinies, capturing stories of people who uncovered medical mistakes and sought out treatments they would never otherwise have received.

Another look at empowerment through shared stories and camaraderie is *Planet Cancer: The Frequently Bizarre Yet Always Informative Experiences and Thoughts of Your Fellow Natives* by Heidi Schultz Adams and Christopher Schultz (Lyons Press, Sept.), which focuses on the robust young adult online cancer community fostered by Livestrong. Due in January from Lynne Rienner Publishers are two titles that focus on helping individuals better understand and cope with disabilities: *The Politics of Neurodiversity: Why Public Policy Matters* by Dana Lee Baker and *Love, Sex, and Disability: The Pleasures of Care* by Sarah Smith Rainey.

"People are increasingly realizing that better health starts with making better lifestyle choices," observes Da Capo Lifelong executive editor Katie McHugh. "We're seeing people turn to books for reliable, accessible, up-to-date information on emerging health issues, ones that they simply may not get the full story on in a 15-minute doctor's appointment." ■