

'Forks Over Knives': A bad-diet horror story

🌐 Web Clip

'Forks Over Knives': A bad-diet horror story

ADVERTISEMENT

Posted: May 19, 2011 - 3:19 PM

[Carrie Rickey, Inquirer Movie Critic](#)

RATING I

Forks Over Knives is an earnest and fact-filled work of food evangelism. Eating a whole-food, plant-based diet reverses coronary artery disease, reduces health-care costs, and elevates sexual appetite, says Lee Fulkerson's film. He has the numbers to prove it.

His title refers to choosing food that won't make you require the scalpel. As he tells it, Americans are eating themselves to disability. The solution? Whole fruits and vegetables and grains.

Were the unassuming Fulkerson as engaging a figure as Morgan Spurlock, his movie could be a companion piece to *Super Size Me*. Despite graphics reminiscent of 1950s docs narrated by Dr. Frank Baxter, you could call Fulkerson's effort *Minimize Me (and my health-care*

spending).

A veteran writer and producer of television documentaries, Fulkerson is a tall, affable guy who introduces himself as a caffeine freak dependent on Red Bulls and coffee - and various meds to manage his elevated blood pressure and cholesterol.

ADVERTISEMENT

When he consults Dr. Matthew Lederman, the doc puts him on a plant and grain diet. Not only does he lose weight, but because his cholesterol and blood pressure decline to safe levels, he loses the meds, too.

ADVERTISEMENT

THINGS TO DO NEWSLETTER

Want to know what's going on in Philly? Find out about upcoming concerts, shows, and other events with our weekly newsletter.

He hypothesizes that if the 500,000 Americans who required coronary-bypass surgery (at \$100,000 per operation) annually did what he did, it would save the health-care system \$50 billion a year. And he doesn't stop there. He follows others with diabetes and other life-impacting diseases who go on a diet of plants and whole grains and get better and less meds-dependent.

Caldwell Esselstyn of the Cleveland Clinic and Colin Campbell of Cornell are the heroes of Fulkerson's story. (Campbell was the researcher on the famed longitudinal China study that saw spikes in the incidence of coronary disease and cancer among Chinese who had adopted Western diets.) These glowing and energetic septuagenarians who made the correlation between casein, a milk protein, and cancer, are the best argument on behalf of the whole-grain and plant diet.

ADVERTISEMENT

Fulkerson debunks the health benefits of milk and eggs, once touted by the Department of Agriculture as the perfect foods, by making the casein and cholesterol arguments against them. He argues that agribusiness

arguments against them. He argues that agribusiness has too much control over national food policy. Sequences of what cholesterol-clogged arteries look like to a cardiologist performing bypass surgery act as a kind of aversion therapy that will make any viewer think twice about eating a cheeseburger.

Its surgical candor makes *Forks Over Knives* a little bit like a food horror movie.

Movies are like food. There are popcorn pictures that entertain you and the spinach movies that are good for you. In more ways than one, *Forks Over Knives* is a spinach flick.

EndText

Contact movie critic Carrie Rickey at 215-854-5402 or crickey@phillynews.com. Read her blog, "Flickrll," at <http://www.philly.com/philly/blogs/flickrll/>.

Posted: May 19, 2011 - 3:19 PM

[Carrie Rickey, Inquirer Movie Critic](#)

We Recommend

**Horoscopes:
Thursday,
December 17, 2020**

Holiday Mathis

**The Latest: DePaul
calls off 2 more
men's basketball
games**

The Associated Press

**Ten states, led by
Texas attorney
general, sue
Google over
'monopolistic
power'** ADVERTISEMENT

Jake Bleiberg and Michael Liedtke,
Associated Press

**Nursing students
should keep
training in-person
during COVID-19 |
Opinion**

Aaron Wasser, For the Inquirer