Chapter 4

"Eating is a Cultural Affair" — The "Obesity Epidemic"

pp.105-118
“The Fat Ladies rebelled against a society that despises fatness.”
“It’s the last taboo, isn’t it—fat?”

—Jennifer Patterson

of The Two Fat Ladies fame

Sherrie A. Inness, Secret Ingredients, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 177
“The Fat Ladies rebelled against a society that despises fatness.”

• American culture scapegoats fat people in much the same way that it scapegoats white trash.”

• Redneck jokes reassure the middle class that they have not fallen that low.

• Similarly, jokes about fat people reassure less-fat individuals that they have not gained as much as heavier people.
“The Fat Ladies rebelled against a society that despises fatness.”

• “The American Mainstream hates fat people and seems to feel little or no need to hide that emotion.”

• “U.S. society belittles fat people of all genders, socioeconomic backgrounds, races, ethnicities, and ages.”
Friedman noted this prejudice in his address to the 2010 Nobel “Making Food Good” Conference...
He pointed out that prejudice against fat people is one of the few prejudices still openly tolerated in America.
“The Fat Ladies rebelled against a society that despises fatness.”

• “The American Mainstream hates fat people and seems to feel little or not need to hide that emotion.”

• “U.S. society belittles fat people of all genders, socioeconomic backgrounds, races, ethnicities, and ages.”
for example . . .
Another McCain Throws Down a Challenge

By Kathleen Parker
Wednesday, March 25, 2009; Page A15

The GOP's identity crisis just got more interesting with the media splash of Meghan McCain, daughter of the senator who did not become president.

Young McCain, who began blogging during her father's presidential campaign, recently made waves at the Daily Beast when she picked a fight with conservative media mavens Ann Coulter and Laura Ingraham.

This is enough sport to make the little dog laugh, to say nothing of the dish and the spoon.

McCain, just 24, is one smart cookie. In a matter of weeks, she has created a brand, presenting herself as a fresh face of her daddy's party and a voice for young people. She's easy to like -- and easy to mock.
Another McCain Throws Down a Challenge

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www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/24/AR2009032402465.html
and what *immediately* became the issue in the fight?

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McCain, just 24, is one smart cookie. In a matter of weeks, she has created a brand, presenting herself as a fresh face of her daddy's party and a voice for young...
Next, McCain went after Ingraham, who had parodied McCain on her radio show in a Valley-girl voice: "Okay, I was really hoping that I was going to get that role in 'The Real World,' but then I realized that, well, they don't like plus-sized models."

McCain fired back at the athletically trim Ingraham with a new blog posting: "Quit talking about my weight, Laura Ingraham."
Boom! McCain was on "The View" encouraging women to stop worrying so much about their bodies. In an inspired flourish, she suggested that Ingraham "kiss my fat [ahem]."

Well, if McCain doesn't make it in journalism, she has a future in marketing. She has learned, perhaps from a lifetime of observing political strategy, how and when to pick a fight. Trying to provoke Coulter (who so far has gamely ignored her) was shrewd. And engaging American women in solidarity against market-imposed body images was a stroke of genius.
beauty is, of course, relative . . .

but I think it’s fair to say

that Ms. McCain is not ugly . . .
different cultures have different ideals for beauty and for body size . . .

*The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed.*, p. 105
In some—maybe even many—a culture’s fatness is valued as a sign of wealth, and thinness as evidence that women are poor and undernourished.
cultural notions about ideal body size and shape have important implications for the publics’ health

The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed., p. 105
let’s have a look at what
*The Cultural Feast*
has to say . . .
• The Obesity Epidemic
• Disordered Body Image and Eating Behaviors
• Eating Disorders
  • Anorexia nervosa
  • Bulimia nervosa
  • Binge eating
  • Orthorexia nervosa
  • Selective Eating Disorder (SED)
  • Pica
  • Others

• What Causes Eating Disorders?
• Applications
• The Obesity Epidemic

• Disordered Body Image and Eating Behaviors

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  • Others

• What Causes Eating Disorders?

• Applications
Despite their idealization of thinness, increasing numbers of North Americans have become overweight, and in the last three decades the problem has reached epidemic proportions.

*The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed.*, p. 105
"After a short stay in America, Michelangelo's David has been returned to Europe"
remember the “Three Major Debates” from Week 1?
the three major perennial debates . . .

• Biological Determinism vs. Cultural Constructionism
  (“nature vs. nurture”)
  (“learned vs. inherited”)

• Ideationism vs. Cultural Materialism

• Individual Agency vs. Structuralism
  (“free will” vs. “power structures”)
all three of the classic debates surface during discussions of the obesity epidemic . . .
Friedman in his talk “Leptin and the Biologic Basis of Obesity” said the obesity problem is genetic based . . .
Jeffrey M. Friedman says the obesity problem is genetic . . .

- **Biological Determinism vs. Cultural Constructionism**
  - (“nature vs. nurture”)
  - (“inherited vs. learned”)

- **Ideationism vs. Cultural Materialism**

- **Individual Agency vs. Structuralism**
  - (“free will” vs. “power structures”)

and many blame
the fast food industry . . .
which is popular anywhere and everywhere you find Americans . . .
the question of corporate “bottom line” “profit motives” regularly surfaces as a main “cause” of the American obesity epidemic during the discussions . . .
“profit motives” are archetypal examples of . . .

- **Biological Determinism vs. Cultural Constructionism**
  ("nature vs. nurture")
  ("learned vs. inherited")

- **Ideationism vs. Cultural Materialism**

- **Individual Agency vs. Structuralism**
  ("free will” vs. “power structures”)
the question of “free will” also surfaces during the discussions of the obesity epidemic, and even in the courts of law . . .
the three major contemporary debates

- **Biological Determinism vs. Cultural Constructionism**
  (“nature vs. nurture”)
  (“learned vs. inherited”)

- **Ideationism vs. Cultural Materialism**

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  (“free will” vs. “power structures”)

Is our environment to blame for the obesity epidemic?

By Shari Roan Los Angeles Times
Tuesday, January 22, 2008

Here's an interesting thought: What if you're not to blame for your weight problem?

What if the fault could be laid squarely at the feet of food manufacturers and marketers, grocery store managers, restaurant operators, food vendors — the people who make food so visible, available and tasty?

Several recent studies, papers and a popular weight-loss book argue that eating is an automatic behavior triggered by environmental cues that most people are unaware of — or simply can't ignore. Think of the buttery smell of movie theater popcorn, the sight of glazed doughnuts glistening in the office conference room or the habit of picking up a whipped-cream-laden latte on the way to work.
To make Americans eat less and eat more healthily, they contend, the environment itself needs to be changed — with laws regulating portion size, labeling or the places where food can be sold or eaten. That would be much easier, the researchers add, than overcoming human nature. The theory that our society — not us — is to blame for our overall expanding waist size is garnering support from health and nutrition experts. To recap the statistics: In the past 25 years, the number of obese Americans has increased from 14.5 percent to 32.2 percent. Two out of three adults are overweight, as are 19 percent of children, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
Yum! Now I can eat twice as much before I have to sue them for killing me with my own fat.
'Sorry sir, you've had enough.'
Supersizing

Does portion size affect how much we eat?

In 2000 a study in America revealed that the size of a container can powerfully and unknowingly increase how much food a person consumes.

To illustrate this we reconstructed the study to see if a larger container led to an increase in consumption.

We took 150 movie goers and gave half of them large size buckets of popcorn (120g) and the other half extra large ones twice the size (240g). As an added test we even gave half of the audience stale popcorn. Then we waited until the film was over to see just how much they left behind.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/humanbody/truthaboutfood/slim/popcorn.shtml
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http://www.bbc.co.uk/sn/humanbody/truthaboutfood/slim/popcorn.shtml
does “branding” affect what we eat?
“Study author Dr. Tom Robinson said the kids’ perception of taste was ‘physically altered by the branding.’ The Stanford University researcher said it was remarkable how children so young were already so influenced by advertising. Even carrots, milk and apple juice tasted better to the kids when they were wrapped in the familiar packaging of the Golden Arches.”

http://francisanderson.files.wordpress.com/2007/08/supersize_me.jpg
Chapter 4: “Eating is a Cultural Affair” — Body Image and Health

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  - Others

- What Causes Eating Disorders?
- Applications
Obesity danger 'rivals smoking'

Being severely obese is as hazardous to health as a lifetime of smoking, shortening life by a decade, a group of Oxford University experts has warned.

Even moderate obesity cuts life expectancy by about three years, says the Clinical Trial Service Unit.

The findings, published in The Lancet, come from data on almost a million people from around the world.

In the UK, a quarter of adults are now considered obese, with a body mass index (BMI) above 30.

Keeping pounds off may be easier than losing weight once it is gained

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7946290.stm
2,130 get benefits 'for obesity'

More than 2,000 people claim incapacity benefit because they are obese, according to government figures.

The figures show that in August 2008, there were 2,130 claimants in Britain whose "primary diagnosis" was obesity.

Tory benefits spokesman James Clappison said taxpayers were paying the price for Labour's failure to address the "ticking obesity timebomb".

Ministers say being obese alone does not entitle people to claim, as they have to have a medical assessment.
Study finds 1 in 5 obese among 4-year-olds

By LINDSEY TANNER
The Associated Press
Tuesday, April 7, 2009; 7:49 AM

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Overall, more than half a million 4-year-olds are obese, the study suggests. Obesity is more common in Hispanic and black youngsters, too, but the disparity is most startling in American Indians, whose rate is almost double that of whites.
"The cumulative evidence is alarming because within just a few decades, America will become a 'minority majority' nation," he said. Without interventions, the next generation 'will be at very high risk' for heart disease, high blood pressure, cancers, joint diseases and other problems connected with obesity, said Flores, who was not involved in the new research.

Almost 13 percent of Asian children were obese, along with 16 percent of whites, almost 21 percent of blacks, 22 percent of Hispanics, and 31 percent of American Indians.

Some previous studies of young children did not distinguish between kids who were merely overweight versus obese, or they examined fewer racial groups.
Better Access to Healthy Food

Recent studies have shown that for every 10% increase in poverty, obesity rises 6%. One reason is lack of access to healthy foods. “Nutritious food is expensive,” says Vicki Escarra of Feeding America, a network of 200 food banks across the country. “For people with limited incomes, it’s out of their reach.”

With many Americans struggling to put healthy food on the table, anti-hunger organizations are finding innovative ways to meet their needs.
US Census Bureau report: 40 million living in poverty

By Kate Randall

October 01, 2009 "WSWS" --- 30 September 2009 -- The overall poverty rate in the US rose to 13.2 percent in 2008, as workers across all sectors of the economy became jobless and increasing numbers of families were forced into destitution, according to a new government report. Real median household income also declined by 3.6 percent.

The report released Tuesday, part of the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, is the most recent to measure the recession’s impact on working class families and the poor. Based on the changes between 2007 and 2008, the first full year of the recession, its findings do not reflect increases in poverty and joblessness this year as the consequences of the crisis have become even more acute.

The official poverty rate of 13.2 percent in 2008 was up from 12.5 percent in 2007. This figure translates into 39.8 million people in poverty across America. The official poverty level is set at $22,000 annually for a family of four with two children or $12,000 for an individual, an absurdly low threshold. This means that far more people than indicated by the survey do not have adequate resources to pay for food, shelter, medical care and other basic necessities.

The poverty rate rose across virtually all demographic groups. Poverty among Hispanics climbed from 21.5 percent in 2007 to 23.2 percent in 2008. Non-Hispanic whites saw poverty rise from 8.2 percent in 2007 to 8.6 percent in 2008, while poverty among Asians was up from 10.2 percent in 2007 to 11.8 percent in 2008. African-Americans were the only group where poverty remained statistically unchanged at a staggering 24.7 percent, or about one in four people.

The Census Bureau reported a rise in poverty in 31 states and the District of Columbia. Two of the four most populous states — California and Florida — saw poverty rates rise by 1 percent, to just over 13 percent in each state.

http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article23604.htm
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the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

obesity map the United States looks like this . . .
and the population of every state but Colorado is considered obese—and Colorado just barely sneaks under the wire of the CDC definition.
Minnesota's obesity rate continues climb upward

Study shows obesity increased to almost a fourth of its population, but rates of diabetes didn't rise.

By PAUL WALSH, Star Tribune
Last update: August 21, 2008 - 11:47 PM

The rate of adult obesity in Minnesota is on the increase, but the state is still better off than most.

That's the word this week from an annual report issued by the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

The report ranks Minnesota 30th, with 24.8 percent of its adults being clinically obese. That's up from 23.7 percent in the previous year's report.

Nationally, adult obesity rates rose in 37 states in the past year. No state saw a decrease.
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More than 25 percent of adults are obese in 28 states, which is an increase from 19 last year. More than 20 percent of adults are obese in every state except Colorado. In 1991, no state had an obesity rate above 20 percent.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines obesity as having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or above. BMI is calculated using height and weight. For example, an adult 5 feet 9 inches tall who weighs 203 pounds would have a BMI of 30.

Leading the rankings is Mississippi at 31.7 percent. Colorado had the lowest rate at 18.4 percent.

Among other Upper Midwest states, Iowa came in 19th (26.3 percent), South Dakota 20th (26.1), North Dakota 21st (25.9) and Wisconsin 25th (25.5).

Rates of Type 2 diabetes, a disease typically associated with obesity, increased in 26 states last year, but not in Minnesota. Minnesota ranks 48th in Type 2 diabetes, with 5.7 percent of the population affected, and it ranks third-lowest for hypertension.
Colorado: 18.4%
Mississippi: 31.7%
Colorado is lowest . . .
Alabama is second highest . . .
Alabama has tried new measures to address the problem . . .
Alabama set up a program to fine state employees who are overweight . . .
($25 per month)

"It's terrible," said health department employee Chequia Motley. "Some people come into this world big."

Computer technician Tim Colley already pays $24 a month for being a smoker and doesn't like the idea of another charge. "It's too Big Brotherish," he said.
The University of Minnesota, by contrast, uses the carrot rather than the stick approach.

It pays participating faculty and staff $65 to agree to try to live a healthier lifestyle.
Alabama was the first state to propose “to charge overweight state workers who don’t work on slimming down . . .”

Computer technician Tim Colley already pays $24 a month for being a smoker and doesn’t like the idea of another charge. “It’s too Big Brotherish,” he said.
Alabama already charges workers that smoke...
Alabama proposed to fine “... anyone with a body mass index of 35 or higher who is not making progress.”

The board will apply the obesity charge to anyone with a body mass index of 35 or higher who is not making progress. A person 5 feet 6 inches tall weighing 220 pounds, for example, would have a BMI of 35.5. A BMI of 30 is considered the threshold for obesity.

The board has not yet determined how much progress a person would have to show and is uncertain how many people might be affected because everyone could avoid the charge by working to lose weight.

But that's unlikely -- government statistics show Alabamians have a big weight problem. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 30.3 percent are now obese, ranking the state behind only Mississippi.

E-K. Daufin of Montgomery, a college professor and founder of Love Your Body, Love Yourself, which holds body acceptance workshops, said the new policy will be stressful for people like her.

"I'm big and beautiful and doing my best to keep my stress levels down so I can stay healthy," Daufin said. "That's big, not lazy, not a glutton and certainly not deserving of the pompous, poisonous disrespect served up daily to those of us with more bounce to the ounce."

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, a few states offer one-time financial incentives for pursuing healthy lifestyles. Ohio workers, for instance, get $50 for having health assessments and another $50 for following through with the advice.

Arkansas and Missouri go a step further, offering monthly discounts on premiums for employees who take health risk assessments and participate in wellness programs to reduce obesity, stress and other health problems.
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"I'm big and beautiful... I'm not a glutton and I'm not more bounce

A recent study shows that a BMI of 30 or more is associated with high blood pressure and increased risk of death from obesity.

Walter Lindstrom, a chief wellness officer with the state, said:

"The state will not consider a person to have a chronic disease of having a chronic disease," he said.

William Ashmore said he had a year on screening.

Ashmore said receiving a score of 30 or higher than someone who does not is more likely to suffer from high blood pressure.

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*The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed., p. 107*
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or one’s body weight divided by the square of one’s height
Chapter 4: “Eating is a Cultural Affair” — Body Image and Health

\[
\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{weight (lb)} \times 703}{\text{height}^2 (\text{in}^2)}
\]

or use a calculator

or a BMI table . . .

*The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed.*, p. 107
it’s easier to figure out by looking at a BMI height/weight table . . .
If your BMI is equal to or above 25, you are considered overweight.

If it is equal to or above 30, you are considered obese (unless you are extremely muscular).

Underweight is defined as having a BMI below 19.

*The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed., p. 107*
Because the relative amounts of fat and muscle tissue and bone size vary greatly from person to person, ideal weights are given as ranges . . .

*The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed.*, p. 117
Many experts argue that these ranges should be made even more flexible . . . and point out that the health hazards are associated only with extreme overweight and underweight (that is, 20% over or under the ideal range)

*The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed.*, p. 117
Recommendations to diet, therefore, should be directed only to those who are extremely over- or underweight ... (that is, 20% over or under the ideal range)

*The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed.*, p. 117
Rise in excess weight gain is accompanied by the increased risk in . . .

- coronary heart disease
- hypertension
- stroke
- gallbladder disease
- type 2 diabetes
- osteoarthritis
- some forms of cancer
- emotional problems

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*a degenerative joint disease in which the connective tissue (cartilage) is lost*

*The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed., p. 105*
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have launched a major initiative to prevent and control obesity

*The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed.*, p. 107
Obesity is especially problematic for children...
Obesity 'often set before age of two' "The "tipping point" that sets children on the way to a lifetime of obesity often occurs before the age of two, say US researchers."

A study of more than 100 obese children and teenagers found more than half were overweight by 24 months and 90% were overweight by the age of five.

A quarter were overweight before they were five months old, the researchers reported in Clinical Pediatrics.

In the UK, around 27% of children are now overweight.

The children in the study - who had an average age of 12 - were all overweight or obese by the age of 10.

Although the reason for rapid weight gain in early life is not well understood, the researchers said the findings suggest children should be assessed for obesity screening at a very early age.

"Getting parents and children to change habits that lead to overweight is not easy, and we need to develop new strategies in this area," said lead researcher Dr James Mason.

More than a quarter of children in Britain are overweight.

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Study finds 1 in 5 obese among 4-year-olds

By LINDSEY TANNER
The Associated Press
Tuesday, April 7, 2009; 7:49 AM

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as mentioned above . . .

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Metabolic changes that accompany excess weight gain during childhood make it more difficult for them to lose weight later in life . . .

*The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed., p. 107*
“About one-third or overweight preschoolers and one-half of overweight school-aged children will become overweight adults. . . .

The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed., p. 107
Obesity in under-fives targeted

A new programme to tackle obesity in children is being launched in southern regions of Northern Ireland.

In NI, it is estimated one in four girls and one in five boys are overweight or obese at Primary 1 age.

Inactive lifestyles and poor nutrition are blamed for the rising levels of child obesity.

'Healthy Steps for Life', developed by Southern Investing for Health Partnership, aims to promote healthy lifestyles in under fives.
Obesity in under-fives targeted

A new programme to tackle obesity 'often set before age of two'

Obesity levels in children are rising.
and the obesity epidemic is spreading throughout the world . . .
The World Is FAT

The Fads, Trends, Policies, and Products That Are Fattening The Human Race

Barry Popkin
Child obesity bid in £28m plans

Childhood obesity is to be tackled as part of a £28m package to improve healthcare in Stoke-on-Trent.

The primary care trust NHS Stoke-on-Trent said the cash would also be used to help pregnant women stop smoking and to encourage more adults to exercise.

The plans are part of the trust’s new budget, which will see £469m spent on healthcare in Stoke this year.

Graham Urwin, the trust’s chief executive, said it aimed to modernise health care services.

Money is also to be spent supporting more than 150 mothers with breastfeeding.
Many factors contribute to the obesity epidemic . . .

- easy access to an abundant food supply
- sedentary lifestyle
- environmental factors encouraging soft-drink and calorie-rich food product consumption
- growth of the fast-food industry
- a growing tendency to socialize with food and drink
- “supersize” me-ing
- school lunch meals

_The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed., p. 107_
Many factors contribute to the obesity epidemic . . .

• “Although school breakfasts and lunches must meet federal nutrition requirements, including guidelines restricting the amount of fat they contain, students who participate in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program have been shown to have higher intakes or energy, fat, and saturated fat than those who bring their lunches.” (USDA 2001)

The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed., p. 107
Many factors contribute to the obesity epidemic . . .

- “A la carte foods and vending machines that sell soft drinks, cookies, and candies are not subject to these nutritional restrictions and give students mixed messages, as well as excess calories.”

_The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed., p. 108_
At the same time food consumption has increased, physical activity levels have declined . . .
Also contributing to sedentary lifestyles among adults one finds . . .

• automation of workplaces
• use of labor-saving machinery for household chores
• reliance on automobile travel instead of walking and cycling

*The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed., p. 108*
Children have become more sedentary . . .

- little to no vigorous regular physical activity
- TV
- computers
- electronic games

*The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed.*, p. 108
The more time children spend watching TV, the less time they spend burning calories on more active forms of recreation . . .

The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed., p. 108
The more time children spend watching TV, the less time they spend burning calories on more active forms of recreation . . .

. . . and children consume more energy during and after watching TV advertisements for food . . .

_The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed., p. 108_
It is also difficult to exercise in unsafe neighborhoods and play areas . . .

. . . or communities that lack sidewalks and trails for safe walking . . .

_The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed., p. 108_
Children are also less likely to exercise today because many schools have eliminated or greatly reduced physical education in an attempt to save money and increase time for other activities . . .

*The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed.*, p. 108
schools have eliminated or greatly reduced physical education.

... even though increasing physical activity during a school day actually increases students’ ability to learn ...
The bottom line?
The Surgeon General of the United States has declared obesity as a national epidemic

The Cultural Feast, 2nd ed., p. 107
Obesity

- Hypertension
- Psychological Problems
- Infertility
- Cardiovascular Disorders
- Gastrointestinal Disorders
- Type 2 Diabetes
- High Cholesterol
- Gallstones
- Osteoarthritis
- Cancer
- Stroke
- Sleeping Disorders

Depression

Colon, Rectum, Prostate, Breast, Ovarian

Sleeping Apnoea

*PA=physical activity
Hashed lines represent cross-links between the different factors and contexts influencing childhood obesity

and various government representatives and agencies are beginning to address the problem . . .
Michelle Obama leads fight against obesity

(FIFA.com) Monday 8 March 2010

FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter has lent his support to a campaign to fight obesity led by Michelle Obama, the wife of the US president who set a fine example last Friday by doing some exercises herself. "I think that it's really motivating for children to see someone as famous as this taking the lead," said Blatter. "And one thing I do know is that sport in general and football in particular can help to fight this curse."

A month ago to the day (9 February), First Lady Michelle Obama launched a campaign to fight obesity among children – something which has become a veritable scourge throughout the United States. "Let's move" has set the bar high, hoping to eliminate obesity among children in the space of one generation no less. President Obama's wife is determined to back up these words with deeds, and on 5 March she visited the US Youth Soccer Foundation in Washington to do various exercises with obese children to help them to lose weight.

The initiative is aimed at getting to the root cause of a phenomenon which is of real concern to the US government, who state that one child in three in the United States is overweight or obese, and that they are spending 150 billion dollars each year to treat obesity-related illnesses.

Michelle Obama was accompanied in Washington by a number of the country's most famous sports figures including Fenway Park's pitcher of the Boston Red Sox, Josh Beckett.
Colorado to remove tax breaks on soda and candy

15-Feb-2010

The Colorado State Senate has passed a bill to remove a tax break on soda and candy, voting along party lines after days of debate.

Republican Senators said they considered the repeal to be illegal, because voters need to be consulted under Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights rules before new taxes can be implemented, KRDO-TV reports. Democrats, meanwhile, argued that no new tax has been imposed – an exemption has been removed.

Proponents of removing the tax break say it could help boost the state’s economy by millions, but its opponents say that it could...
New Mexico food tax passes state Senate

By Caroline Scott-Thomas, 16-Feb-2010

Related topics: Food prices, Legislation, Cereals and bakery preparations

The state Senate of New Mexico has voted to implement a food tax that applies to nearly 40 percent of foods sold in the state in order to help balance the state's budget.

Included are taco shells, candy and soda, and perhaps most controversially, white flour tortillas, one of the most commonly consumed foods in New Mexico.

However, the tax would be exempt from foods that are listed by the Health Department as available to members of the state’s nutrition program for women, infants and children, known as the WIC program. The WIC card is available to women, infants and children with earnings at least 185 percent below the poverty line.
fighting the obesity epidemic has become a worldwide effort . . .
A European "Sin" Tax?

"Chocolate tax' to tackle obesity"
reads the BBC News headline of 12 March 2009

"A Scottish GP has called for chocolate to be taxed in the same way as alcohol and cigarettes to tackle increasing levels of obesity and type 2 diabetes."

Almost within minutes a spokesperson for the Food and Drink Federation (FDF) published a defense: "FDF defends industry against fat tax for..."
Experts to design molecule to shut down fat gene

(Reuters) - Scientists in China may have discovered how a gene responsible for obesity kicks into action and want to design a molecule to shut it down.

The fat mass and obesity-associated gene (FTO) sits on human chromosome 16, and several
Economic Costs Related to Overweight and Obesity

As the prevalence of overweight and obesity has increased in the United States, so have related health care costs. The statistics presented below represent the economic cost of obesity in the United States in 2006, updated to 2008 dollars.[12]

Q: What is the cost of obesity?
A: On average, people who are considered obese pay $1,429 (42 percent) more in health care costs than normal-weight individuals.[12]

What is the cost of obesity by insurance status?
A: For each obese beneficiary:
- Medicare pays $1,723 more than it pays for normal-weight beneficiaries.
- Medicaid pays $1,021 more than it pays for normal-weight beneficiaries.
- Private insurers pay $1,140 more than they pay for normal-weight beneficiaries.[12]

What is the cost of obesity by the type of service provided?
A: For each obese patient:
- Medicare pays $95 more for an inpatient service, $693 more for a non-inpatient service, and $608 more for prescription drugs in comparison with normal-weight patients.
- Medicaid pays $213 more for an inpatient service, $175 more for a non-inpatient service, and $230 more for prescription drugs in comparison with normal-weight patients.
- Private insurers pay $443 more for an inpatient service, $398 more for a non-inpatient service, and $284 more for prescription drugs in comparison with normal-weight patients.[12]

Almost 10 Percent of U.S. Medical Costs Tied to Obesity

Only a return to healthy behaviors will bring expenditures down, experts say.

By Steven Reinberg
HealthDay Reporter
July 28

MONDAY, July 27 (HealthDay News) -- Obesity in the United States now carries the hefty price tag of $147 billion per year in direct medical costs, just over 9 percent of all medical spending, experts report.

In fact, people who are obese spend almost $1,500 more each year on health care -- about 41 percent more than an average-weight person. Beyond these costs are the disability and early deaths caused by obesity, Dr. Thomas R. Frieden, director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said during a press conference Monday.

http://abcnews.go.com/Health/Healthday/story?id=8184975&page=1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Obese:</th>
<th>Cost:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>378,721</td>
<td>$541,192,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>1,295,488</td>
<td>$1,851,253,272</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Percentage**
- Minnesota: 24.6%
- Rhode Island: 24.6%
The obesity index—the cost of obesity by state—suggests that the costs could be $700 billion. For example, in Wisconsin, the cost is $10,163,792,043, with 28.7% of the population obese. In Ohio, the cost is $2,319,152,877, with 28.8% of the population obese.
and most expect
the problem to get worse . . .
People that live in the world's richest, most developed countries are getting more and more overweight, and nowhere is that more evident than the United States. That's according to a group of the world's leading economies, in its first-ever “obesity forecast”. It's predicted that three out of four Americans will be either overweight or obese by the year 2020, causing health care expenditures and disease and death rates to skyrocket unless there is intervention by federal, state and local governments.
more information is available on the class on-line site . . .
Obesity

- anorexia nervosa
- binge eating
- bulimia nervosa
- orthorexia nervosa
- pica
- Selective Eating Disorder (SED)
- purging
- Nutrition transition
- diets
- fast food

http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anthfood/afobesity.html