

# What contributes to obesity in the u.s.?

[Food & Diet](#), [Junk Food](#)



What Contributes to Obesity in the U. S.? What can be directly linked to the current causes of our nation's so called obesity crisis? Since 1990 the U. S. obesity rate has doubled and approximately 127 million adults are now overweight and 60 million are obese (Engler 173). Many experiments have been taking place since the early 90's trying to configure a direct link in the dramatic increase in our nations overall weight. Our society believes that being overweight is a cultural issue caused by the food we eat on a daily basis. Others believe our nation's weight gain can be contributed to the abundance of advertisement schemes and convenience factors that are repeatedly exposed to us. Or could this be an issue that should be responsible by the individual indulging themselves in the unhealthy foods? These issues have been debated for years by numerous authors and can be looked at many different ways. What we do know is in 1994, diabetes in children was generally caused by a genetic disorder and only about 5 percent of childhood cases were obesity related. Today, Type 2 diabetes accounts for at least 30 percent of all new childhood cases of diabetes in this country (Zinczenko 154). These are the different solutions each author suggest we go about fighting this obesity epidemic in the United States. Our society believes that being overweight is a cultural issue caused by the food we eat on a daily basis. According to David Zinczenko, the author of Don't Blame the Eater suggest could be an accurate suggestion as to why there is a McDonalds on every corner of most large cities. When someone's daily dinner options consist of McDonalds, Taco Bell, KFC, and Pizza Hut they cannot consider themselves to be a healthy eater. Those food options were Zinczenko's dinner choices when he was 15 years old. Also when Zinczenko

was fifteen years old he was 212lbs on a 5-foot-10 frame. His parents were split up. He was considered a latchkey child who didn't have an option to eat healthy because of the situation he was in with his parents. These same daily routines continued until he went to college and joined the Navy. Zinczenko blames the fast food industry for the growing rate in obesity and also believes that the U. S. government should regulate the restaurants and their food should be prepared under the Food and Drug Administration labeling laws. Currently, there is no U. S. policy that requires fast food restaurants to provide the nutritional information that is contained in the food item. Paul Campos a law professor at the University of Colorado and author of the article Being Fat is Ok believes that being fat is ok. Campos believes that our culture puts too much emphasis on the image we want to portray to people and not enough on self-happiness. According to our federal government Body Mass Index (BMI) most people are technically overweight. Campos doesn't think that being overweight should be an issue. If someone runs 35 to 40 miles per week and is 5-feet-8 and 165 does that make them obese? Campos believes that the BMI is just a flaw and judgment shouldn't be taken seriously meaning that people shouldn't judge themselves by this form of body measurement. Campos doesn't believe that overweight individuals are necessarily any less healthy than an individual who meets the criteria of the BMI. Another view on this topic comes from Susie Orbach, author of Fat as a Feminist Issue. Orbach is a professor in sociology at the London School of Economics. She he believes that fast food in now taken for granted in the United States. Fast food has not always been a normal dinner option for our families. Overtime it became an easy and convenient way of purchasing

food. Orbach blames the food we eat on a regular basis to be the leading contributor to the negative stigma we have on women. Orbach believes that women are born with a social context that society is constantly examining or judging them. This contributes to women being very self-conscious about their bodies at all times. Like Campos suggested, if a woman is told that her BMI indicates that she is overweight or obese she will begin to diet. Orbach claims that dieting leads to compulsive eating and unhealthy food choices. Orbach put emphasis on women who don't mind being fat, and don't worry about being the ideal woman. Orbach believes that women should have the mind state of take me for who I am, not for who I'm supposed to be. The abundance of fast food advertisement schemes we see everyday could be the main contributor to the increase in obesity in our culture. Eric Schlosser, best known for his 2001 book *Fast Food Nation* and article, *Your Trusted Friends* believes that our culture is overweight because of the market these fast food restaurants advertise towards our youth. Schlosser viewed Ray Kroc (the mastermind behind McDonalds) as a masterful salesman. Kroc perfected the art of selling things to children (Schlosser 183). This trait helped his business flourish. Kroc's success in this area of market led others to follow in his footsteps, which converted America's youngest consumers into a major target market. Schlosser believes that the main reason that our society depends so plentifully on fast food is because our youth is manipulated into thinking that Ronald McDonald knows what will be healthy for them. Also, these restaurants use play places, toys, and greasy food to reel in the children and the adults that bring them into the restaurants. Restaurants will include simple toys with kid's meals, which easily promote

their products. The marketing scheme of making people think a food item is healthy works well for fast food restaurants. Just as companies promote unhealthy foods to a group of people, diet companies market their products towards a specific target market that contribute to an increase in weight. 30 Billion dollars are invested every year in North America on diet products (Engler 175). Yves Engler, a Canadian writer and author of *Obesity: Much of the Responsibility Lies with Corporations* believes that doctors will prescribe deadly weight loss drugs to patients that desperately want to lose weight. These tactics don't work because studies prove that when individuals get on a diet or weight loss drug they are more prone to resort binge eating. Engler believes that when people begin to diet, they are more likely to binge eat in much greater quantities. Engler believes that the main reason that people are consuming more, especially unhealthy products, is the fast food industry's relentless advertising, especially to children (Engler 178). Like Schlosser, Engler states that food companies spend \$30 billion annually, to make their food products marketable to their target. " The 10 percent of 200-calorie increase in energy consumption by the average U. S. resident over the past 25 years is tied to an increase in food advertising, political lobbying and larger food portions" (Engler 175). The fast food and soft drink companies have also seen success in getting their products into our schools where our youth is most vulnerable. The companies get advertisements in classrooms and fill the school vending machines up with their calorie filled products (Engler 176). The major food companies in Texas proposed a \$54 million a year budget to schools to exclusively stock their products in their vending machines and lunch lines (Engler 176). Should increasing obesity

rates be aimed at the responsibility for the individual to withhold? Radley Balko the author of the article What You Eat is Your Business believes that what we eat should be up to the individual to realize whether the food is health or not. Balko claims that the best way to lessen obesity is to eliminate it from public health. Balko say that people shouldn't have to pay for other individuals to get medicine to treat their high cholesterol; referring to the policies of health care. It should solely be the responsibility of the individual to be able to workout regularly and be able to stay trim without the assistance of the government. Balko believes that if this policy were enforced, people wouldn't flee to the doctor every time they had a minor cough or a sneeze, overall alleviating the health care budget our society has created. Balko then continues that by citizens not using government funds for going to the doctor as regularly for minor colds, would introduce an increase in our health system. The option would be given to the consumer of rolling money reserved for health care into their retirement funds. On the other hand, David Zinczenko believes that the U. S. government should regulate the fast food industry. Zinczenko argues that the food industry should not be allowed to not inform their customers of what is going into their food. For example, a company list chicken salad item on the menu containing 150 calories. They fail to mention that the almonds and noodles that come with it in a separate also contain 190 calories. Also the dressing that is usually added on an individual's salad contains 280 calories. With all of those combined, the salad comes out to being 620 calories, which is equivalent to a lot of fast food hamburgers (Zinczenko 155). Zinczenko believes that these fast food restaurants are falsely advertising their

products to people to make them believe that what they are eating is healthier than it really is. These deceiving tactics persuade consumers into buying their products. Tactics mentioned earlier are specific reasons why oppose to Balko, Zenczenko believes should be regulated by the U. S. government to seize these misleading advertisement appeals. When looking at all of the arguments that the authors have mentioned I believe that they all have the common idea that our society believes that being overweight is a cultural issue that is caused by the food we eat daily. Some argue that it shouldn't matter whether we care what others think. But the truth is that our society weight and health has increased over the past twenty years and can be directly linked to the food we eat on a daily basis. Another similar theme I concluded about the authors is that our culture's weight gain or increased obesity rates are extremely affected by the advertisements the fast food industry makes visible to us in our everyday lives. When the fast food industry has the power to produce fraudulent advertisements to a group of people they should be able to resist unhealthy foods, even though the advertisements may be telling them otherwise. This research implies that the fast food industry and the food we eat is the reason why the obesity crisis in our society is so abundant. Without fast food would we have this issue? This could be debatable but based on the research of the scholarly authors prove that unhealthy fast food consumption is the cause of our obese health issues and won't be resolved until our culture overcomes the necessity to consistently resort to fast food as a daily meal. Work Cited Balko, Radley " What You Eat is Your Business. " They Say I Say Ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009. 157-161. Print Banzhaf III, John H "

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