

Victims of dieting advertising

[Food & Diet](#)



Joe Cross is a prime example of what can happen to anyone who falls victim to the advertising and societal ways of dieting in our culture. Cross, of the documentary *Fat, Sick and Nearly Dead*, weighed 310 pounds and had various diseases and took many medications. He had six doctors that he had to go to and even tried acupuncture, massages, witchcraft and various other methods to attempt to heal him of his illnesses, but nothing worked.

There are many people who go through the same things that Joe Cross had gone through. With the decrease of nutrition in today's foods as well as how readily available it is, it is no wonder why the obesity epidemic is the way it is. Obesity is alive and rampant in America and the incidence has increased significantly since the time of World War II. According to the CDC, The Center for Disease Control, the average healthy weight of an American man is 195 pounds. For women the average healthy weight is 166 pounds. A person is considered to be overweight if they are between the 85th and 95th percentile in weight of their specified age group based on gender. Once a person reaches above the 95th percentile, or 25 percent body fat for men and 30 percent for women, he or she is considered obese. In 2012, based on a census taken that year, there were 112, 067, 312 obese Americans. Officially, that translates to 35. 7 percent of the population. In comparison, only 14. 5 percent of Americans were considered obese in 1960. That is an extremely significant increase, showing that there is indeed a crisis. In order to solve this crisis, one must understand the cause of such a drastic increase.

Many people believe, and are driven to believe by advertisers and entrepreneurs, that this epidemic has occurred because Americans just

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became lazy and overate too much. Even though that is a small part of it, the real reason behind the problem of obesity is the way that food is prepared. Everything that brings about disease within the body is something that potentially leads to obesity, and all events that increase poor food preparation are things that bring about disease. So, all the events that increased poor food preparation were really jumpstarting the obesity epidemic.

There are three main events that have led to increased poor food preparation since the 1940's. The first event was World War II. The second event was the outbreak of fast food restaurants. The third event that led to an increase in poor food production was the Farm Subsidy of 1973. All three events lowered the quality of food in America, each in their own way, and together helped raise the number of overweight and obese people in our country. The concept of preservatives were introduced in World War II in order to mass produce food for rationing and extending shelf life for sending food to soldiers. The concept caught on very quickly, and now preservatives are used in almost everything. The preservatives are not healthy, and with the vast majority of companies using them these days, it has helped increase the obesity rate. The introduction of fast food brought about the concept of immediate gratification when it comes to food, and the faster your food is cooked the lower its nutritional quality becomes. The lowering of the quality of Americans' food as well as how readily accessible it became definitely made it easier for people to become unhealthy. The Farm Subsidy of 1973 initiated the use of fructose corn syrup in almost all of the foods which we eat today. Fructose corn syrup makes foods taste richer, and it is human

nature to desire richer foods; therefore, it increases how many calories we take in, enhancing our chances for obesity.

World War II was the first event that led to an increase poor food preparation in America. In World War II, food was packaged in tin cans to preserve its freshness to get it overseas to the soldiers. Preservatives were also introduced to these foods, but they were not tested extensively for health safety at the time. The supermarket then erupted from the canning of goods and the added preservatives that both extended the food's shelf life.

Supermarkets gave people everything they needed all in one stop. They could choose from over 10, 000 national brands of all food groups, including items for around the house for reasonably low prices. But by 1960, the new supermarket system consisted of 70 percent of all food retail, when in 1950 it was only 35 percent. The supermarket killed the farm industry, and the new era of preserved foods began. When the supermarket lessened the need for the farming industry, it took away a lot of the fresh produce that came along with farming. Adding preservatives to already processed foods increases the human need for fresh produce but also results in major health issues. The FDDCA, The Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, defines a food additive as,

The term “ generally regarded as safe” or “ GRAS” means that a food additive has been deemed safe for its intended purpose by the FDA. Dr. Michael Hanson, who is a scientist at the ‘ policy and action from consumer reports’ firm called Consumer’s Union says most of the additives that are regarded as ‘ GRAS’ have not actually been examined by the FDA because of the process involved in getting the ‘ GRAS’ label. The companies making the <https://assignbuster.com/victims-of-dieting-advertising/>

additives are allowed to say that their product are safe and they can get the label. So, unless an additive that passes ends up causing extreme harm, it is not forced to be labeled differently or be banned altogether.

The three types of preservatives that the FDA oversees are indirect food additives, direct food additives, and color additives. The indirect food additives are the boxes, wrappers, or containers that the food product comes in. The term food product is used here because most of the processed foods in America today are more of a mere product than actual food. Preservatives and other artificial sweeteners and oils are used to replace actual foods. A fine example of this is the blueberry cereal or muffin. Normally, there are actually no natural blueberries in these foods which are viewed by the public to be healthy because of the flavoring of a natural fruit. But when the ingredients are viewed it is found that the actual blueberries are either composed of sugars, oils and colorings or completely nonexistent at all. What replaces the real foods to create the food products that are more pleasing to the human senses, as well as enhance shelf life are called the direct food additives. The direct food additives are added nutrients, added flavors, or anything that will change the integrity of the food. Color additives do what their name says they do: add color to the food.

The most prominent source of dangerous additive comes from the direct food additives. One of the main direct food additives that causes health decline is MSG or (Monosodium glutamate). MSG is most known for being in Chinese food, but in fact it is almost all of the foods we eat – just in different names or forms such as “ natural flavor” and “ hydrolyzed yeast extract.” MSG makes food smell and taste better by appealing to the basic taste

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umami. It is also very addictive, which is why many food producers use it to get people to come back to the food that overexcites their senses. Getting people hooked on foods with MSG is a big factor in weight gain, because if people do not have self control, they can find themselves unconsciously addicted to these foods and in a downward spiral. If a person get too much MSG it can cause headaches, chest pain, fatigue and other various consequences. An example of this is the “ Chinese Restaurant Syndrome” in which Robert Ho Man Kwok reported his back becoming numb and general weakness fifteen to twenty minutes after eating at a Chinese restaurant. Scientists then investigated it and found that MSG was in fact the main cause of this man’s problems. So, because of the preservatives introduced in the canning of goods in World War II, and the lack of regulation demonstrated by the FDA, food preparation has indeed been lowered and has caused Americans to become addicted to foods that have are an even lower quality than they should be.

Not only did World War II produced a decline in health that led to increasing rates of obesity, but the introduction of fast food restaurants did as well. The first fast food chain that was introduced was White Castle in 1921, but it was not until the outbreak of them, with McDonald’s in 1948 and Burger King and Taco Bell in 1950, that real problems began. Fast food caught on because it was quick, cheap, and the food tasted good. And with the happy medium between fine dining and the so called “ greasy spoon” restaurants, fast food got a lot of attention. They advertised highly to the children, with examples like Ronald McDonald. And because of the new mindset of Americans that the parents are prioritized towards their children, this concept pulled in a lot

of business. But to make the food fast enough, the restaurants had to compromise the integrity of the preparation of the foods, lowering their quality.

The first compromise the fast food restaurants started using was having the ingredients come from poor farming practices. The farmers would use shortcuts which require the use of extra pesticides and fertilizers to make things grow faster for mass production. The pesticides then get transferred to people through consuming the food. Also, chemicals and hormones get transferred to people as a result of the shortcuts used by farmers. When the chemicals are ingested by the animals, they are absorbed in the meat which is then used in the burgers that are eaten. And one of the most prominent factors is the preservatives and artificial ingredients used in foods. In the documentary, *Supersize Me*, Morgan Spurlock decided to test the effect of fast food on a person's body by eating every meal, breakfast, lunch, and dinner, at a McDonald's for 30 days. To add to the extent of this venture, he made the deal that if he was asked if he wanted to make any of his size choices larger for only a minimal price increase, he would have to say yes. This was found to be so extravagantly unhealthy for him that he was forced to terminate his mission by his advisors in fear that his liver would fail. At the end of all this, he had gained 24 pounds, had experienced mood swings and other social and medical shortcomings along his almost faulty liver. This showed how extremely bad for your health fast food really is, and with it readily available, priced so conveniently, and filled with preservatives, it did indeed produce a decline in health.

Not only did World War II and the introduction of fast food restaurants produce a decline in health that led to increasing rates of obesity, but the farm subsidy of 1973 did as well. In 1973 the US government passed a farm subsidy bill that encouraged farmers to produce a lot more corn than had been previously produced. Prior to the Subsidy, farmers were to paid not to plant crops in certain areas in order to preserve the land. However, this practice ceased and because government stopped paying for land protection, crops became overcrowded and compromised American soil. Corn can be grown much closer together than other crops and so with the more available farm land, the farmers were able to plant a lot more corn. The extra corn that was being produced was then used in Americans' foods. The main by-product of the corn being used in foods was high fructose corn syrup. High fructose corn syrup is an artificial sweetener which can be put in almost any processed food to make it more rich in calories and sugar. Both the magnification of calories and sugar pose problems inducing a decline in health. Humans were created to look for foods that are high in calories to store up for the winter. Tribes in Ethiopia do not have weight problems because all the foods that they can find are mostly plant-based fruits and vegetables which are high in nutrition and low in calories. In America, the foods which are easily distributed through supermarkets, grocery stores, convenient stores and fast food restaurants are high in calories and low in nutrition. Since most Americans get very little nutrition and never feel completely full or satisfied, they keep eating the processed foods which are readily available, and they end up getting a surplus of calories which is a major part of weight gain. The other half, the sugar or artificial sugar which our foods are enriched with, is extremely addictive. Sugar is by far one of the

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most addictive substances on the planet, even more so than cocaine. In an experiment, rats were placed in a cage and fed sugar and cocaine. The rats would eat the sugar, eat the cocaine substance, and then go back to the sugar before they would go back to the cocaine. With sugar and artificial sugars introduced in the Farm Subsidy of 1973 in almost everything processed that is eaten, it is no wonder that people can become so addicted to foods that are bad for their health.

World War II, the introduction of fast food, and the 1973 Farm Subsidy all lowered the quality of the way Americans prepare food which caused a steep decline in health. And with the knowledge that all things that produce declines in health are catalysts for obesity, it is safe to say that these events were in fact the main catalysts for obesity.

Joe Cross finally found way to heal his diseases and weight problem and is now very healthy and helping others become healthy as well. He had a epiphanous analogy of how to heal himself. He thought back to when he was younger and when he would scrape his knee playing in the streets. All he had to do was bandage and clean his scrape up then leave it be, and it would heal itself. He then applied the logic that if his body could heal itself on the outside then it should be able to heal itself on the inside. He then went on a 60 day fast of only eating juiced plant-based foods. He lost most of his extra weight, is off all of his medications and was healed of all his diseases.

To help this obesity epidemic, the only thing we can do is take care of ourselves the best we can. And that does not mean going on a plant-only diet like Joe Cross did, but it means being aware of what you eat and just

making better overall health choices. When you get hungry, instead of looking for the high caloric, sugary food that we are all drawn to, just grab an apple or something with nutritional value and see how much better you feel.