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### Obesity In America

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Final Draft  
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Obesity in America

## Obesity In America

Americans aren't perfect and that's ok. But there's one problem that the American people need to get under control. Obesity. I have sadly seen family members struggle with this issue and never want to see it again. Many of us don't realize what we are putting into our bodies. It may be delicious, but it can also lead us to a shorter life. America is known for greasy food and many other countries see us as lazy in some ways. But why out of most countries are we the ones with this issue? What are we as Americans doing differently? I believe obesity is becoming an even bigger issue in this country, and I'm here to tell you why this is happening.

Using hard evidence obtained by Zachary Ward, an analyst at Harvard Chan School Center for health decision science, Sandy brings to our attention the startling state by state data. In the article, Author Sandee LaMotte explains how fixing this obesity problem can be done. By taking small steps every day and changing our lifestyle we can decrease the obesity rate. But before we start we have to confront what we are doing wrong. This is a country where you can buy delicious pizza or celebrate fall with a pumpkin spice latte each year; at the same time, however, we also have to factor in a culture that often places more weight on convenience than health.

In *Devoured: From Chicken wings to Kale Smoothies- How What We Eat Defines Who We Are*, food writer Sophie Egan puts American eating habits under the microscope, examining how we eat and why. Using relatable examples, anecdotes, and convincing research, she highlights what characterizes our country's approach to food and makes it unique. Egan's work is accessible to everyone. This being from highly conscious eaters to those who care only for taste above all else.

There are a few things we Americans should be shocked by yet given our everyday experiences with food in the United States, they just, well, aren't. For example, Americans average only 30 minutes a day cooking. Fast food is on the menu at least once a week for half of Americans. Meals at desks are part of 40 percent of Americans' lives. There are so many more bad habits we do in our lives but it would take up most of this essay. That leads me to wonder when did this all start? Obesity has been designated as a worldwide health problem for only a few decades, and since 1980 its prevalence across the globe has doubled. The World Health Organization defines obesity according to body mass index, which is your weight in kilograms divided by your height in meters squared. Approximately 13 percent of adults around the globe have a BMI of 30 or greater, which categorizes them as obese. Mankind has dealt with food scarcity and potential starvation for most of the time we've been on earth. For much of civilization, being overweight or obese was lauded as a symbol of wealth and prosperity -- something to celebrate. Only as countries developed in the 18th century and food became more readily available did the weight of populations as a whole start to rise. Improved industrial technology created ways in which producing cheap, high-calorie foods became even easier. This was coupled with the development of technology that made life more sedentary -- such as cars, dishwashers, and washing machines -- and created a situation where it was easy to consume an excess of calories. In the United States, the prevalence of obesity barely changed during the 1960s and 70s but escalated sharply starting in the 1980s. In 1980, the obesity rate was 13.4 percent but skyrocketed to 34.9 percent as per the 2011 to 2012 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, which was reported in a 2012 issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association. As time has gone by it has not only affected our adults but children.

From the fun commercial advertised on TV to sugary cereals we all love, it's no surprise it catches a child's attention. But what we don't realize is we may be setting up our children for an unhealthy lifestyle that could lead to the worst in the near future. Now I believe kids shouldn't be on a restrictive diet at such a young age nor should anyone but parents don't realize how ice cream and pizza too often can change the way their children see food. Obesity during childhood can harm the body in a variety of ways. Children who have obesity are more likely to have High blood pressure and high cholesterol, which are risk factors for cardiovascular disease. This can also lead to psychological problems further down in their lives such as depression, low self-esteem, and social problems such as bullying and stigma.

Kids follow their parents' habits as well. Along with the videogames and different technology causing kids today to become lazier. Kids should enjoy all the fun video games and foods that are offered but moderately and not overdone. Death at a young age is something none of us want to see.

According to Professor Jonathan Valabhji, NHS England's national clinical director for obesity and diabetes said obesity leads to 23 amputations every day as 25,500 toes, feet, and legs are removed from diabetic patients in three years. "Nearly 2.5million adults and children diagnosed with diabetes will also benefit from around £42million of additional national funding, some of which will go towards advancing care and treatment and improving access to multi-disciplinary foot care teams in 50 parts of the country."- Jonathan Valabhji. Researchers say with a better diet these numbers can decrease rapidly.

Why does bad food taste so good? Nutritious, plant-based food is delicious. And that Milky Way you're wolfing down right now is only delicious because your taste buds have been

conditioned to think it's delicious. But that's just the beginning because as America has gotten more and more obese over the last two decades, our activity has gone down. And because of that lack of activity, the only dopamine your brain releases is when you eat something containing all the addictive ingredients listed above. So your body comes to crave that dopamine release, and you eat more and more according to the Wellness Training Institute.

There are small efforts we can all take for a healthier lifestyle. From walking your dog or riding a bike and enjoying the sun outside. All these fun activities can be done and before you know it you're living your healthiest and best self! Portion sizes are another huge problem that we tend to overlook. I can say from personal experiences why this is true. We have all gone to a restaurant at least once in our lives. The portion sizes they usually give could feed 2 people! 3 people max. Depending on the restaurant it can be even greater. We grow up thinking that a large amount of food is ok and slowly our appetites grow larger because of it. According to Mary Jane Brown, who holds a Ph.D., using smaller Dinnerware influences how much food someone eats. For example, using larger plates can make food appear smaller and often leading to overeating. In one study done by PubMed Central (A highly respected database from the National Institutes of Health), people using a large bowl ate 77% more pasta than those using a medium-sized bowl. Most people feel just as full after eating from a smaller dish as from a larger one.

If you compare the way we eat and our lifestyle to someone who lives in an East Asian country you can see a huge difference. They eat in not only smaller portions but most of their dishes are veggie-based. They also walk a lot more to get from place to place compared to an average American. So if you ever wonder why Asians seem slimmer, that's why.