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The Obesity Epidemic – How To Avoid The Coming Whirlwind

By Kathryn O'Neill

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The statistics are shocking.

The World Health Organization labels obesity an epidemic. The International Obesity Taskforce labels it a fully global epidemic – a pandemic.

Two out of every 3 Americans are overweight. One out of every 3 is obese. Even our kids are affected. An estimated 17% of North American kids are now considered seriously overweight.

Every day new statistics surface showing that rising numbers of North Americans are overweight - and gaining.

And yet it's not like we WANT to be overweight. We all know the health consequences.

Doctors tell us that excess weight:

- shortens our lifespan
- puts a tremendous strain on our body
- contributes to heart disease, stroke, diabetes, some cancers and a host of other health problems

And we're only beginning to understand what it does to our children in their fragile developmental years.

But there are more than just physical hazards. Psychologically, being overweight can:

- destroy your self esteem
- drain your self confidence
- hold you back from taking risks
- significantly reduce your quality of life

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Depressing? Yes.

Should we be scared? You bet.

But what can we do?

It's important to realize that we CAN do something.

First of all, let's recognize what is CONTRIBUTING to the problem so that we can take steps towards a healthy solution. Here, in my opinion, are the top 3 contributing factors to the growing weight epidemic:

#1) Diets

Surprised? Examine the evidence:

>> We have more diets on the market than ever before, more diet food, more diet books, more diet information. And yet we're BIGGER than ever before.

>> It's a proven fact that diets make your body more efficient at fat storage so that when you go back to eating `normal' food, you will actually GAIN weight.

>> Diets boast a dismal 2–5% success rate. Looking at it another way, that's a 95% FAILURE rate.

I believe that diets actually make the problem WORSE:

#1 by slowing your metabolism

#2 by teaching us to value highly calorie dense food (the food that is restricted on diets - and what is restricted ALWAYS takes on more value so we want more of it)

#3 by teaching us that we can lose weight with a temporary quick-fix, not a lifestyle change.

Diets are one of the TOP reasons we're in such a weight loss mess today - and yet they will stay as long as they make money.

#2) Lack of Exercise

Elevators, escalators, reduced gym classes in schools, television, video games, computers, microwaves, dishwashers, washing machines...

We're a society of energy conservation. I love convenience as much as the next person but there also needs to be a balance. Compared to our ancestors, we're putting out less energy and taking in more. It doesn't take a genius to do the math.

#3) Too Much Misinformation

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There's so much weight loss MISinformation out there that people are doing MAJOR damage by following it.

It doesn't matter if you have the best of intentions: if you eat according to WRONG information, you WON'T lose weight.

For example, if you believe you need 2500 calories a day to lose weight but the ACTUAL TRUTH is that you only need 1500 - you're not going anywhere but up if you follow that belief.

Another great example of the misinformation out there is the belief that 'a calorie is a calorie'. I guarantee you that your body will respond differently to 2000 calories of Mars Bars a day than it will to 2000 calories of fruits, veggies and lean protein. Convenient though this belief may be, it will wreak havoc if you set your weight loss plan by it.

So what can you do?

Well, first realize that you are NOT doomed to be overweight. You can lose weight and reclaim your naturally slim body, but it will involve changing your thinking and maybe even your lifestyle.

Stop dieting and start listening to your body. Observe what it's telling you. Seek out information and then EVALUATE this information. Does it make sense? What does the evidence say?

You can lose weight in a world that is skewed against weight loss, but YOU have to make up your mind to do it. It won't just fall on you. Figure out what works for you in weight loss and do it - for your health's sake.

Want To Learn How To Reclaim Your Body and Lose Weight Without Dieting? Kathryn O'Neill is a Certified Nutrition and Wellness Specialist & holds a degree in Behavioral Psychology. She has authored several e-books on how to lose weight naturally without harmful diets. Check out her website by clicking here: <http://www.weightmasterycoach.com>

The Role of Obesity

By The Icon Diet Reader

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You would have to be a hermit not to know about the dramatic rise of obesity levels in North America. Health issues have been plastered around the media non stop for the better part of the last five years. The problem is that for the most part the message has been falling short of its mark. There are more obese people in 2004 than there were in 2003. The number of diet related health complications is growing and children are ballooning at a rate comparable to their adult counterparts. On the flip side,

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the health industry has been showing strong signs of growth, with one in four women and one in five men on a diet at any given time. While times have been tight financially, people have been opening up their wallets in record numbers to buy fitness products and gym memberships.

So the bottom line is that while people are actively aware of health and fitness concerns, and are spending more than ever before on products and services to battle poor fitness, North America as a whole is getting fatter. It seems like a contradiction but it is the truth none the less. For one thing, the most people try to fix their health and then give up because it is too challenging. Often they lack the support from friends and family or even the proper skill set to be successful.

However, that being said, North America is in a bad way when it comes to health. We are a society that allows itself to binge to a point where obesity is considered an epidemic. Historically epidemics are things that rage outside of the ready control of human kind. When we typically think about epidemics we think about cholera, typhus or even 'the plague' - bubonic fever. In North America we have allowed our own poor habits to become an epidemic. It is really a shameful situation. We are simply eating ourselves to death. It is so serious that we have declared a war on fat. A war, on fat. Somehow by drawing on images of fighting, of military might, of violence, we will be able to battle obesity.

Are we that soft (no pun intended)? Can we not take responsibility for our own actions, including what we put into our bodies? Recently there have been lawsuits filed against fast food establishments that charge them with knowingly selling harmful goods. The lawsuit does not surprise me, after all it's the American way, it does surprise me that we are willing to acknowledge that we cannot feed ourselves safely. That is, by assuming the position of a victim we allow someone else to be responsible.

In North America, the sad truth of the matter is that we have managed to take the normal daily necessity of eating and pervert it into a national killer of epidemic proportions. We are, as a society,

beginning to ask why this has happened. Fingers are being pointed at corporations who used processed foods to enlarge their bottom lines at the expense of health, at the creation of 'big box' food companies who saturate the media with their products inciting us to eat, at the government for being so passive and allowing obesity to become such an issue, at budget cuts that see physical education programs taken out of schools. Everywhere you look you can find a guilty party.

While all this seems to make sense – after all you can start healing after you find the culprit– this mode of reasoning deprives us of our individuality and our integrity. If we allow others to be responsible over such base matters as our eating, then what we are really doing is labeling ourselves as incapable.

Yes, obesity is an epidemic. Yes, drastic measures should be taken to stem the growth of our waist lines. However, the only one to really blame for this is ourselves. Except in a very few cases, nobody forces you to eat anything. What you eat is predicated on choice alone. Make a choice and choose to be healthy. Take responsibility for what goes into your body. Be capable of guiding your own health and well being.

The Icon Diet offers a step by step weight loss program to help people

quickly, naturally

and effectively. Visit the site by going to...<http://www.zizzoo.com/guides/loseweight/index.php>



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