



LAKELAND CHIROPRACTIC

▪ LIFETIME FAMILY WELLNESS ▪

How to Get Fat without Really Trying

On December 8, 2003 ABC News broadcast a TV News special entitled, "How to Get Fat Without Really Trying". The show was about the growing number of Americans that are obese, and why as a nation, America has gotten that way. The hour long special was hosted by Peter Jennings, ABC's top news anchor. The show revealed some startling information that gave insight into a problem that was described as the largest health problem facing Americans.

The story goes on to note several disturbing facts:

- According to the federal government, nearly two-thirds of Americans are overweight and almost one in three Americans is obese.
- The average American child sees 10,000 food advertisements a year on television.
- Children spend more of their own money on food than anything else — more than on CDs or movies or clothes or toys.
- Last year there were more than 2,800 new candies, desserts, ice creams and snacks on the market — but only 230 new fruit or vegetable products.

The direction of the story is to point out that although eating habits are a lifestyle choice, that choice may be influenced by the food industry and the US government. The story noted, "Some say that personal health and well-being are a matter of personal responsibility. But the processed food industry and the government know what is happening — and they are making a bad situation worse." Michael Jacobson, director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest commented about the amount of advertising of unhealthy food, "We're besieged. Wherever we go, we're encouraged to eat junk food."

The story noted that the problem is Americans are choosing foods with more sweeteners and more calories, drinking more sodas, eating more candy, and snacking all day. The representatives from the food industry appearing on the show claimed that personal responsibility is the reason for Americans being overweight as a society. In contradiction to that view, Marion Nestle, a professor of nutrition food studies and public health at New York University noted, "I don't think that you can talk about giving the public what the public wants without discussing the \$33 billion a year that the food industry spends to try to promote that kind of want."

The story spent a considerable amount of time on the problem of marketing junk food to children. Margo Wootan, director of nutrition policy at the Center for Science in the Public Interest said, "The problem is that most of the foods that are marketed to children are unhealthy foods and the children are exposed to so many messages about junk food that the cultural norm around food has changed. So that children think that they should be getting candy and cookies and chips and soda and these other junkie foods all the time."

The story also took aim at the US government for huge subsidies of only one portion of the food industry. The story noted that during the Depression of the 1930s, the government began subsidizing farmers to save them from financial ruin, but the money never stopped. This year, the U.S. government will put roughly \$20 billion into agriculture, most of it going directly to the farmers. However, most of this is given to products such as corn and soybeans which are used to produce fats and oils, the foods government says we should eat least. The report noted that these foods got about 20 times more subsidies than health food such as fruits and vegetables.

Professor Marion Nestle, noted that the huge government subsidies cause a price reduction that then drives the purchasing habits of the public. "So what these subsidies do is to lower the cost of the ingredients that go in processed foods, particularly high-calorie processed foods, and they make those foods cheaper." The story noted that in many other countries, advertising of junk food to children is illegal. However, it was reported in the story that attempts in the past to regulate food advertising in the US met with strong political opposition and defeat.

▪ LAKELAND CHIROPRACTIC IS DEDICATED TO SERVING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH CONSERVATIVE CARE AND PATIENT EDUCATION ▪