

Advancing Effective Obesity Communications Workshop

**National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and
Medicine**

A Patient Perspective: Cutting Through the Noise

Patty Nece, JD

Vice Chair

Obesity Action Coalition

The Noise



More Noise



FREE Vitamin B-12 Injections
With this coupon



“25 Pounds in Only 2 Weeks!”

**Kathleen Hodges, Calif., Results Not Typical*

Scientists Discover Rare Weight-Loss “Wonder Herb”

- ✓ **Clinically Proven Fast Weight Loss!**
- ✓ **Rapidly Melts Away Belly Fat!**
- ✓ **Get the Body You Deserve in 2009!**



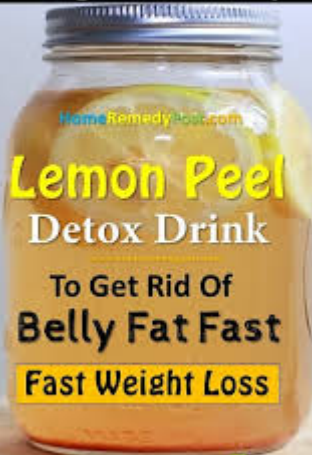
For Men & Women!



HCG INJECTIONS ONLINE



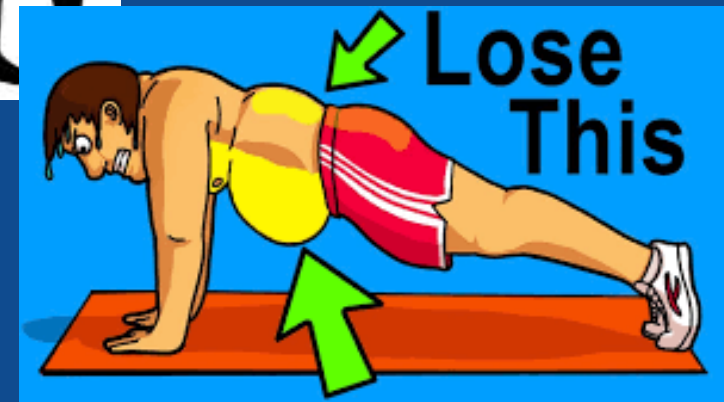
**Super Fat Burner
Weight Loss Recipe**



HomeRemedyPost.com

Even More Noise!

Lose Weight Fast in **4 Weeks** with
10 Total Body at **Home Workout**



What do we rarely hear?

- Explanations of the physiology/biology of weight
- Weight is a long-term issue
- How healthcare providers can help

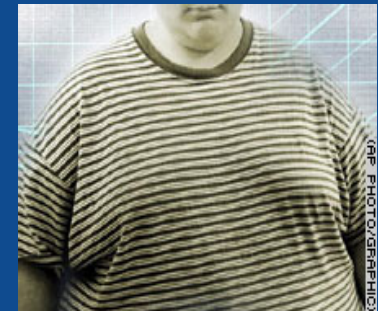
People in higher weight bodies are:

- “Less than” in society
- Failures for not controlling their weight

Explicit



More Subtle



Unintentional Stigma



Salud America!
@SaludAmerica

Follow

Latinos are hugely affected as U.S. **#obesity** rates reach historic highs, according to @HealthyAmerica1's new **#StateOfObesity** report.

Read more: salud.to/tfahreport



**Nearly 1 in 3
Americans
have obesity**

5:59 AM - 12 Sep 2019

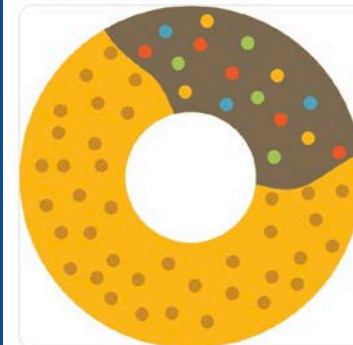


Coalition for Health Funding
@healthfunding

Follow

New report: U.S. **#obesity** rates at historic highs. Policy change needed to make healthy food and physical activity more accessible for all Americans.

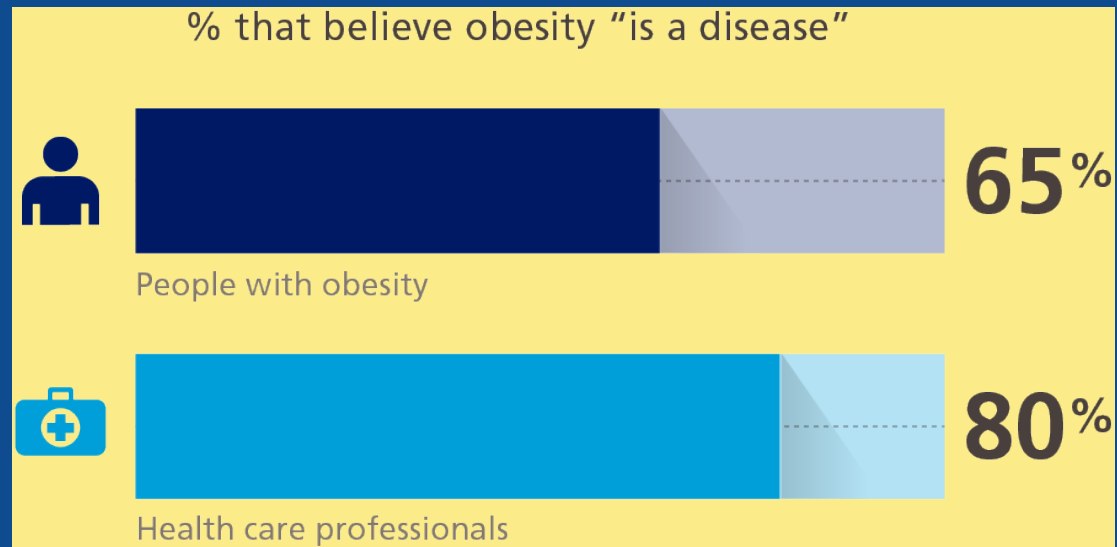
salud.to/stateofobesity... **#populationhealth**
#healthpolicies



**Nearly 1 in 3
Americans
have obesity**

6:30 AM - 12 Sep 2019

Perceptions of Obesity



Kaplan L., et al, *Perceptions of Barriers to Effective Obesity Care: Results from the National ACTION Study*, 26 Obesity 61 (2018).

Why don't people with obesity seek treatment?



Kaplan L., et al, *Perceptions of Barriers to Effective Obesity Care: Results from the National ACTION Study*, 26 Obesity 61 (2018).

Variety of Viewpoints

Fat Acceptance/NAAFA®

- Mission to eliminate discrimination based on body size and provide fat people with the tools for self-empowerment through public education, advocacy, and support.

Body Positivity

- Accepting and loving your body just as it is
- Celebrating diversity of all body weights, shapes and sizes

Obesity Action Coalition

- Obesity is a disease
- Obesity matters to health

Health at Every Size®

- Weight ≠ health or disease
- Framing “obesity” as a disease leads to more stigma
- Focuses on intuitive eating rather than on dieting

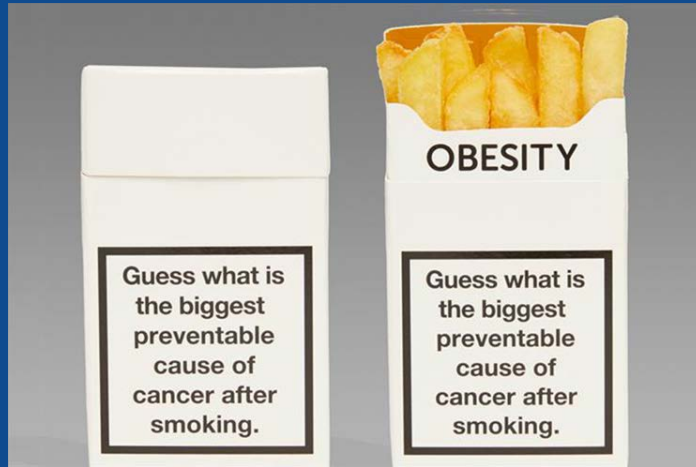
Result of Different Messages

It is so damaging that doctors say you're fat, YouTubers say you're lazy, and fat acceptance says your fat is fine, you're not sick! I joined that movement and ignored an obvious issue for half a decade because I was being taught society was wrong and my body was fine.

2:56 PM · Sep 14, 2019 · [Twitter for Android](#)

Weight bias, stigma, and discrimination harm higher weight people and must be eliminated.

Unintended Consequences – Cancer Research UK



“Implying that individuals are largely in control of and responsible for their body size (and therefore cancer) supports a culture of blame and plays into prejudices and negative stereotypes which drive the social exclusion, marginalisation, and inequality of an already stigmatised population.”

Trust for America's Health Report

The State of Obesity: Better Policies for a Healthier America 2019

- People at lower incomes and people of color at higher risk
- Latino and black adults had highest rates

Cultural Differences – An Example

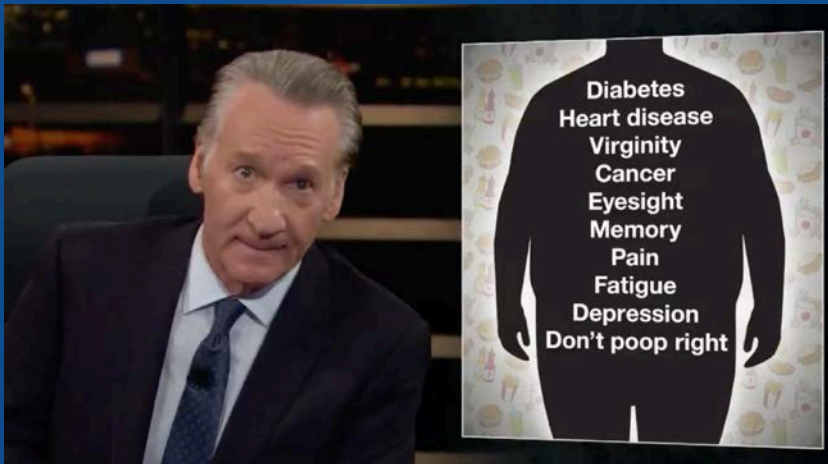
Shape Program – Weight Gain Prevention Study

- Most participants socioeconomically disadvantaged black women
- Told not a weight-loss program
- Tailored behavior change goals; weekly self-monitoring via interactive voice response (IVR) telephone calls; 12 counseling calls delivered monthly by a trained registered dietitian; tailored skills training materials; and a 12-month YMCA membership.

Result: at 12 months 62% of participants at or below baseline weights. Also observed decrease in depression.

“Promoting weight loss is a challenge in all populations, but it has been consistently and disproportionately more onerous among black women. It is clear that new treatment approaches, such as weight gain prevention, are necessary to contend with the considerable challenge of obesity in this population.”

In the News: HBO's Real Time with Bill Maher



“Being fat isn’t a birth defect. No one comes out of the womb needing to buy two seats on an airplane”

“**Fat shaming doesn’t need to end. It needs to make a comeback.**”

“Some amount of shame is good.”

CBS's Late Late Show with James Corden

“**Fat shaming never went anywhere.** Ask literally any fat person. We are reminded of it all the time.”

“There’s a common and insulting misconception that fat people are stupid and lazy and we’re not.”

“I’ve **struggled my entire life** trying to manage my weight. . . a struggle I will face the rest of my life.”

“**Fat shaming is just bullying... and bullying only makes the problem worse.** I don’t think stuff like this is going to solve the obesity epidemic.”

“If making fun of fat people made them lose weight, there’d be no fat kids in schools.”



Final Thoughts

Finding ways to cut through the noise is important.

Cultural differences are important.

All communications must avoid further stigmatizing people with obesity.

Organizations may find common ground in anti-stigma issues.

Understanding and conveying the real experiences of people with obesity is powerful.

Thank you!

Patty Nece, JD
On twitter: @Pattynece

Obesity Action Coalition
www.ObesityAction.org

National Obesity Care Week
www.ObesityCareWeek.org

