

***Consumer Ill-Being:  
Who's at Fault?***

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# Two Different Worldviews

## Faulty Individuals:

*“Guns don’t kill people. People kill people.”*

## Faulty Society:

*“Fingers don't kill people. Bullets kill people.”*

# What We Tell Ourselves

Marketing enhances well-being by:

- \*Expanding consumer choice
- \*Creating new and better offerings
- \*Meeting specific customer needs
- \*Offering hope and meaning

Note: These claims have recently been challenged by consumer researchers (e.g., Chernev 2003; Fournier and Mick 1998).

# What Others Say About Us

Marketing reduces consumer well-being:

1. Spiritual well-being (Kavanaugh 1991)
2. Psychological well-being (Kasser 2002)
3. **Physical well-being** (Spurlock 2004)

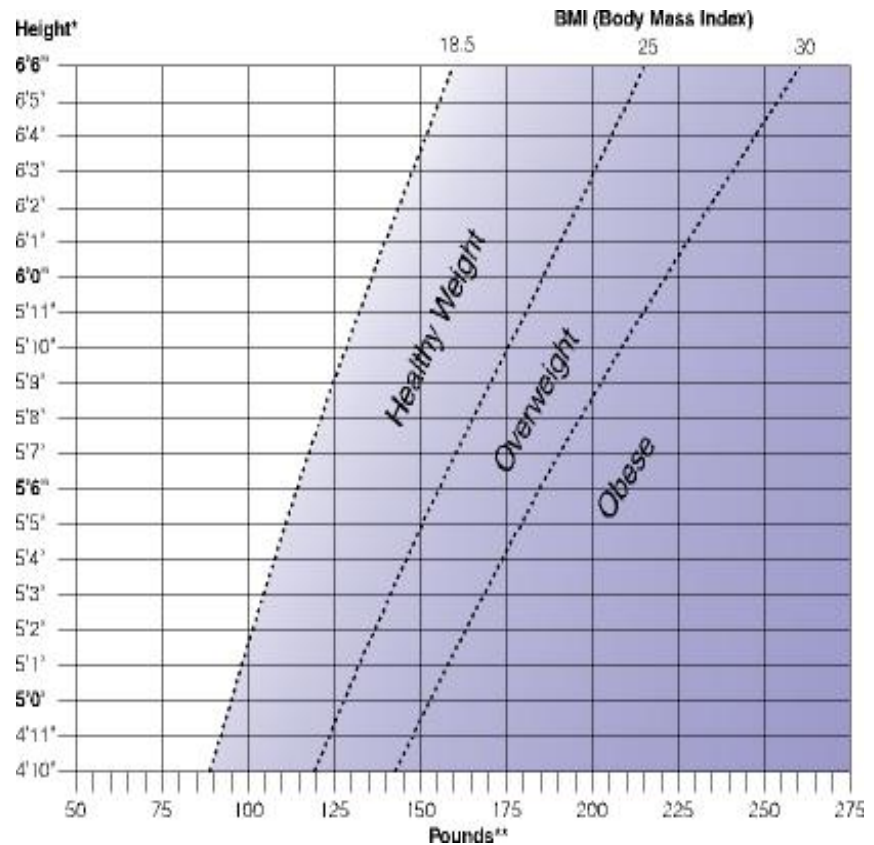
# Obesity



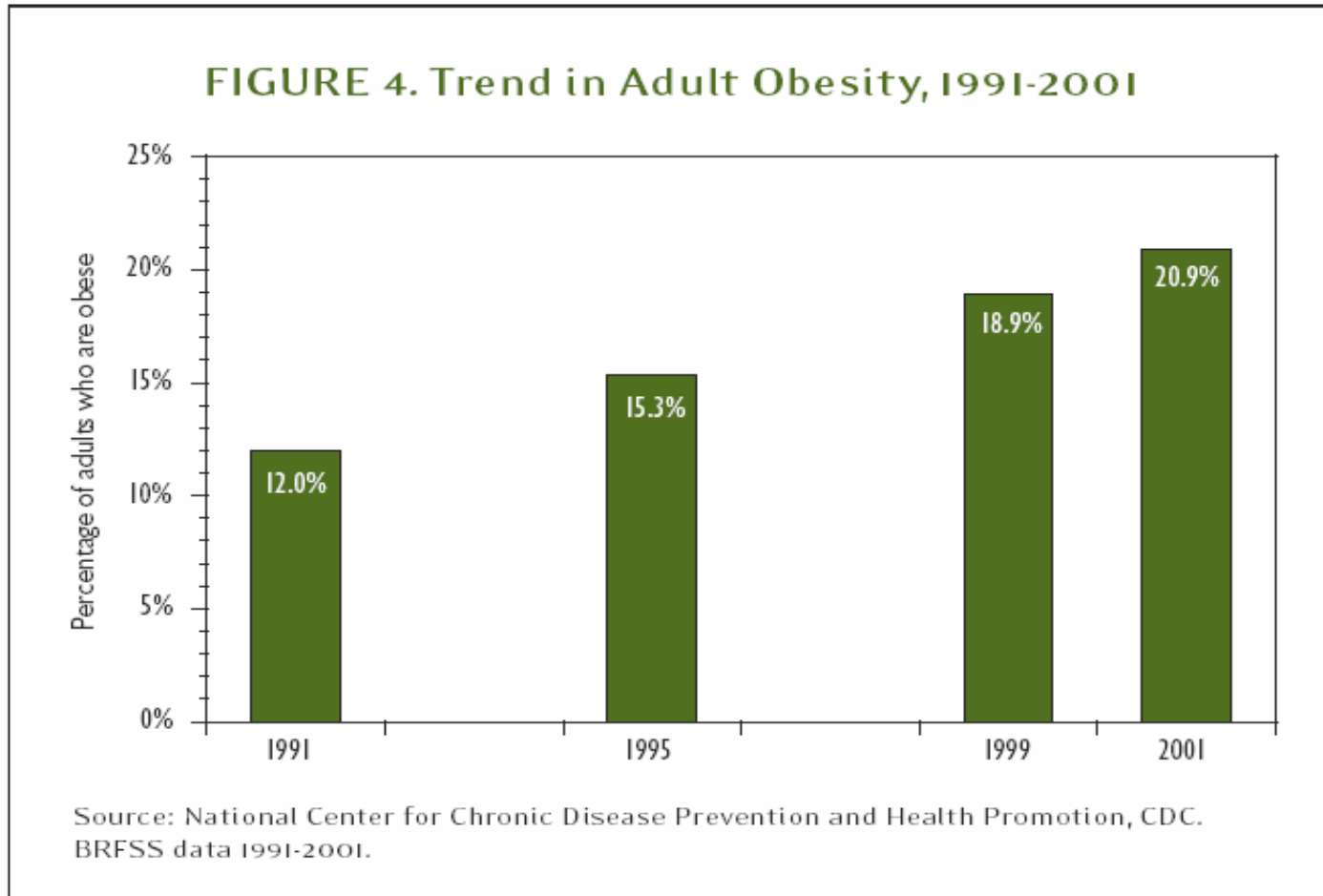
# Am I Obese?

$$\text{BMI} = \left[ \frac{\text{Weight}}{\text{Height} \times \text{Height}} \right] \times 703$$

- < 20 Underweight
- 20-24.9 Normal Weight
- 25-29.9 Overweight
- 30-34.9 Obese
- > 35 Morbidly Obese



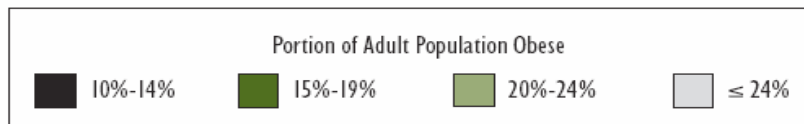
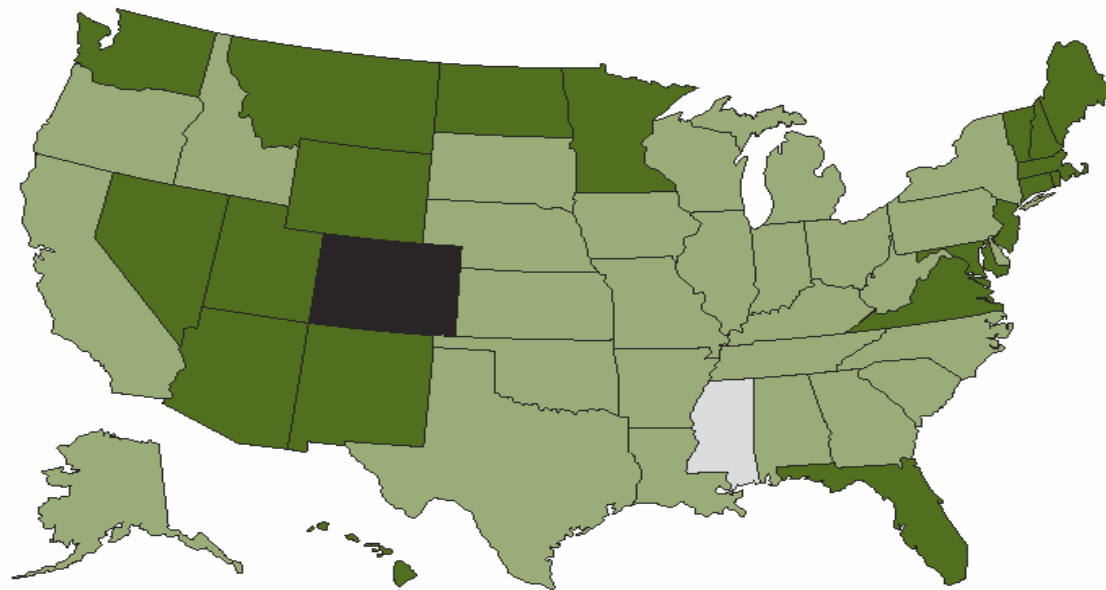
# Obesity is a Growing Problem



# “We’re not the Fattest!”

FIGURE 3. Obesity\* Among U.S. Adults

\*BMI  $\geq$  30 or  $\sim$ 30lbs overweight for a 5'4" woman



Source: Mokdad A H, et al. *J Am Med Assoc* 2001;286:10.

# America's #1 Public Health Concern

- Obesity is worse for one's health than smoking, drinking or poverty.
- Obesity accounts for over 300,000 premature deaths a year.
- Obesity is linked to type II diabetes.
- Obesity is negatively related to subjective well being.

# Marketers



# What is the Relationship Between Marketing and Obesity?

**Shelley Rosen (McDonalds):** “There is no connection. McDonald's has an advisory council of doctors and it is fascinating when you hear the real experts talk about it. The obesity problem is about energy balance. It's not just what you're consuming, it's how you're expending it. So, it's an equation.”

# Critics



# What is the Relationship Between Marketing and Obesity?

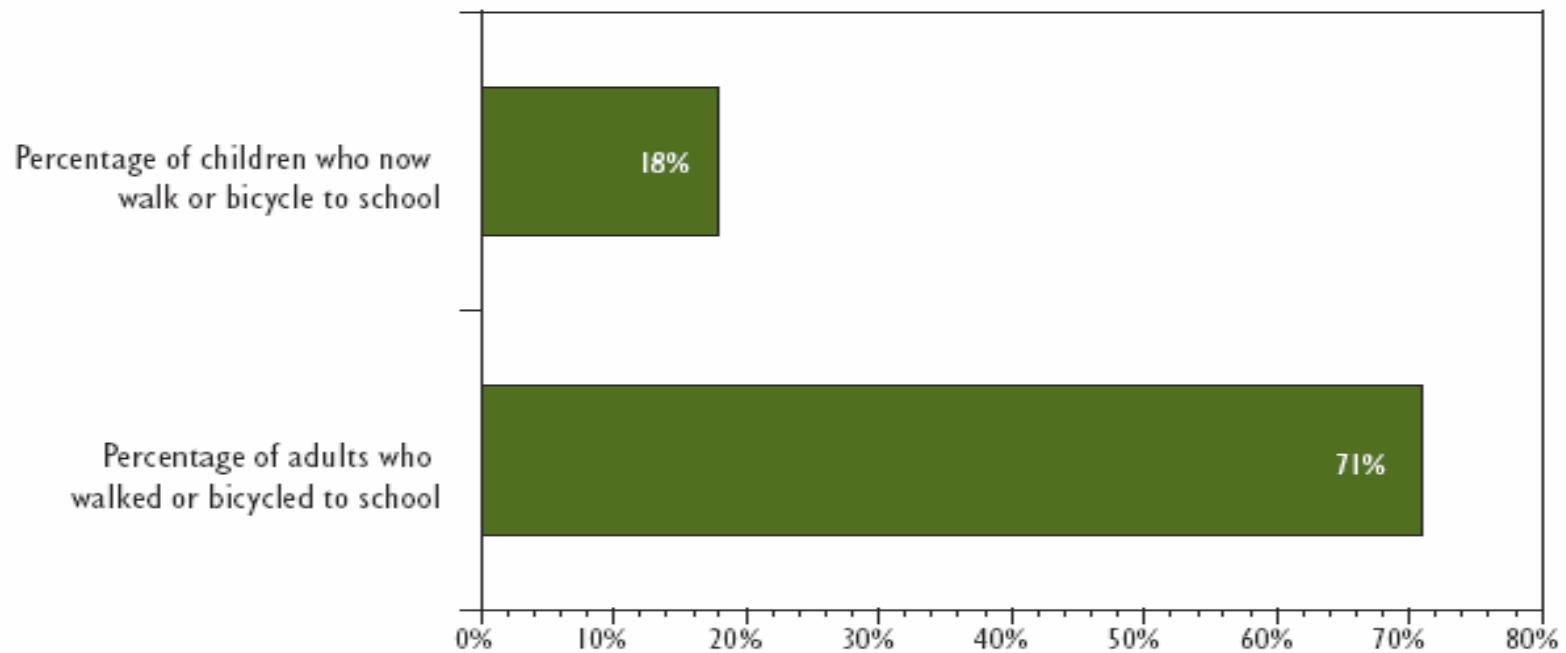
**Robert Lawrence (Johns Hopkins):** “I don't think there's been any smoking gun evidence of a connection. But each year about \$11 billion have been spent on persuading us to eat M&M's, Big Macs and drink Budweiser. The marketing of high-fat foods, particularly by the fast food industry, is contributing to the trend for more and more consumption of their products. I would assume they wouldn't put \$11 billion dollars into it if they didn't think they were getting some positive return.”

# Other Blame Agents

- Our parents
- Our jobs and families
- Our culture
- Our environment

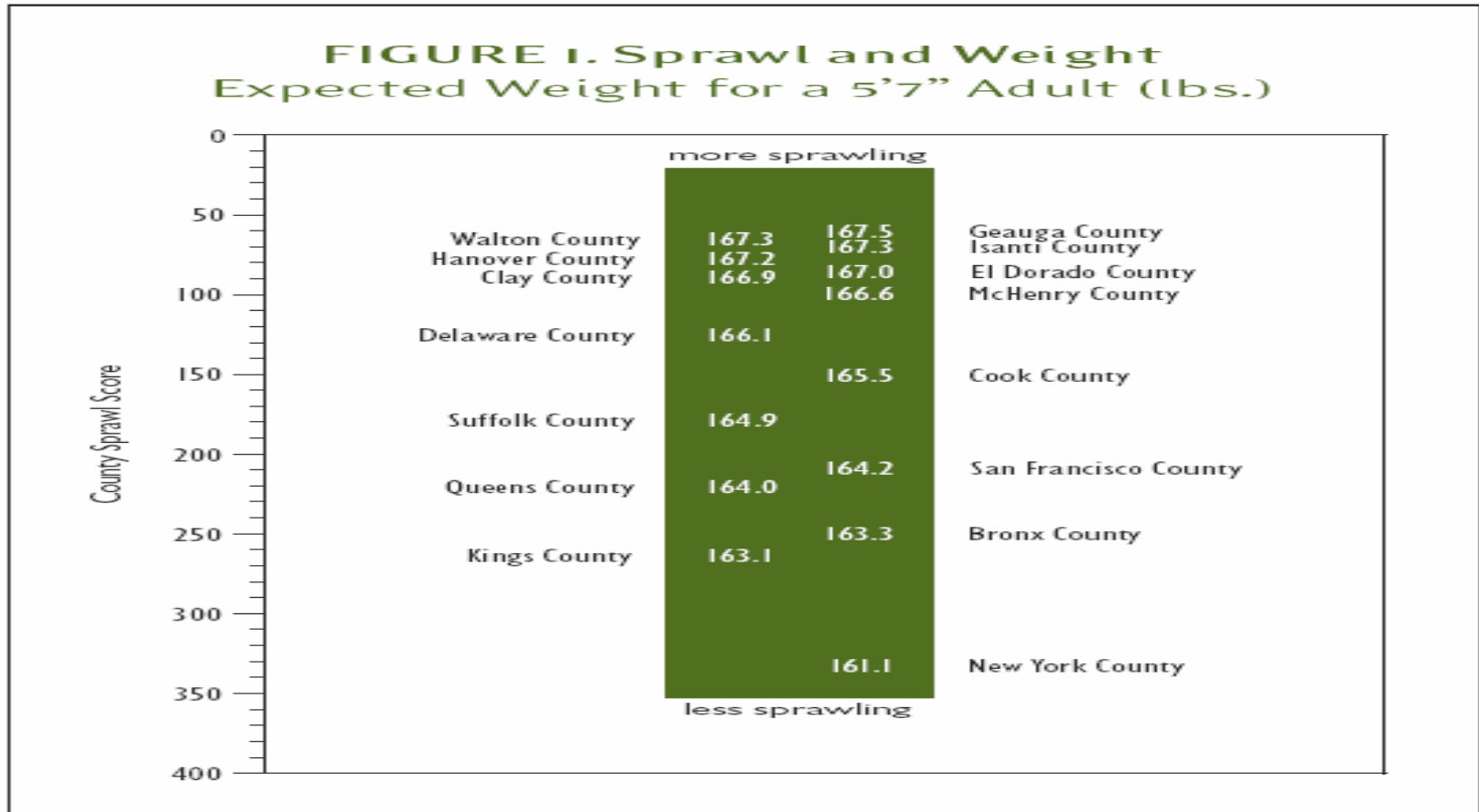
# We Drive More and Walk Less

FIGURE 5. Fewer Children are Walking to School



Source: Surface Transportation Policy Project. *American Attitudes Toward Walking and Creating Better Walking Communities*. April 2003.

# Urban Sprawl as a Culprit



# Interesting Questions

1. Will obesity be positioned as a behavior or a trait?
2. How does obesity affect consumer attitudes and behaviors?
3. Can marketers successfully limit consumer choice and access?



# Top 5 Weight Loss Tips



1. Liposuction - It takes a lot out of you.
2. Everyone knows that the calorie content of food is what puts on the weight so spit the calories out.
3. You burn calories even when you sleep, so just spend lots of time doing that.
4. Check the wrapper of everything you eat for calorific content. If it doesn't state anything, it must be calorie free!
5. If you suck the cream filling out of a Twinkie then you don't get any of the calories.