For Embeds in the War on Fat: 
Same Old Story? Fleshting Out Your Obesity Coverage

What new questions need asking on obesity?

When covering obesity, do you ever feel like you're writing the same story over and over? Americans are fatter than they used to be... Doctors say fat is bad for us... Government and industry say it's costly... A study suggests long-term weight loss is elusive... Health experts advise to keep trying anyway...

When it comes to the depressing cycle of failed public initiatives and fruitless personal efforts to trim our waistlines, who wouldn't wish for a more hopeful angle or at least some evidence-based alternatives to the same, tired story line?

Fortunately, that information is out there, and I can lead you to it. I can point you to expert sources, peer-reviewed studies, personal anecdotes and reasoned arguments for a new approach to our nation's obesity obsession. I am Linda Bacon, PhD, health scientist, author, professor, and internationally recognized expert on weight and metabolism. With other respected scientists, physicians, psychologists, therapists, dietitians and others, I advocate the principles of Health at Every Size®, or HAES. HAES rejects a fruitless focus on fat in favor of a more hopeful, more accepting, more effective and cheaper approach to improving health. It's all about how you live, not how you look.

If you are willing to ask fresh questions about fat and obesity, we can help you find answers. Our community is growing, as is our professional organization (ASDAH) and a civil rights organization (NAAFA) advocating our cause.
What are some of these new questions that need asking? Everyone talks these days about "evidence-based" medicine, but evidence is notably absent from obesity science and policy. Ask why Medicare is now covering doctor-prescribed weight-loss efforts, when there is no evidence that any of them work. Ask why the First Lady is devoting her energies to eradicating childhood obesity, when the latest meta-analysis of 55 such interventions showed an approximate mean weight loss of ... one pound. And ask why supposed obesity experts, in their zeal to make other people thin, are ignoring serious physical and mental harms that more commonly result from a weight obsession.

In the Health at Every Size community, "show me the data" is our mantra. Following the fact trail, we can direct you to rigorous studies showing:

- not just that weight-loss rarely works, but that it's unnecessary;
- that the harms we blame on obesity-and the benefits we attribute to weight loss-stem from factors like how we exercise and eat, not what we weigh;
- that stable fat poses little lifelong risk, but yoyo'ing weights common to dieters are really dangerous;
- that mortality is actually higher for those with "normal" and "low" BMIs than it is for those deemed overweight (Sound crazy? It comes from the Centers for Disease Control, and was published in JAMA); and
- that life spans have expanded almost in lockstep with waistlines, casting doubt on the supposed deadliness of fat.

We can demonstrate why fat stigma is more dangerous than rolls of fat. We can underline the distinctly un-healthy ways a drive for profits motivates private and public spending on fat. (Just one example: The for-profit health care company running Georgia's notorious anti-fat-kid ads also markets costly, unproven lap-band surgery to teenagers.) And we can point to ways that governments and individual Americans waste billions of dollars each year pursuing weight-loss goals that are not just impossible, but unwarranted.

The "obesity epidemic" is not a one-sided story, and far from scientific fact. Get the whole story. Get the skinny on fat. Get me, Linda Bacon, on the line.

Have a weight-related story or question? Contact Linda for critical perspective and connections to additional experts and resources. Linda has been interviewed and quoted in national TV and radio broadcasts, and in blogs, reports and feature articles in outlets including the World News with Diane Sawyer, Good Morning America, New York Times, and Prevention magazine. She has also addressed significant professional gatherings including the American Dietetic Association and the UCSF Center for Obesity, Assessment, Study and Treatment (COAST). More info can be found on Linda's website, her online press kit, and in this more detailed press introduction.

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