

# The Hidden Drivers of Obesity

Why blaming “too many calories” misses the point

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## The Obesity Puzzle: Why We're Getting Fatter Despite Doing Everything Right

### Prologue: The Great Misdirection

Obesity is the defining health crisis of our time.

Decades of research, billions of dollars, and endless public health campaigns have done little to slow it.

Ask a dozen people what causes obesity, and you'll get a dozen answers: fast food, high-fructose corn syrup, cheap calories, cars, lack of exercise, bad genes. Everyone has a theory.

But look closer, and none of these explanations hold up.

- **Genes** don't mutate fast enough to explain a worldwide obesity explosion that began in the mid-20th century.
- **Exercise?** More people hit the gym today than ever—something unheard of in 1900 when “exercise” meant walking to work or hauling buckets.
- **Fast food?** The epidemic was already underway before McDonald's had even franchised.
- **High-fructose corn syrup?** It didn't enter the food supply until the 1970s, long after waistlines had started expanding.
- **Prosperity or abundance?** During the Great Depression of the 1930s—amid soup kitchens and bread lines—New York pediatrician Hilde Bruch documented a startling rise in childhood obesity, long before Coke, corn syrup, or excess calories could be blamed.

The truth? We've been chasing the wrong suspects.

Instead of questioning the real newcomers to the food chain—industrial seed oils, refined carbs, and ultra-processed foods—medicine turned its guns on the very staples humanity had thrived on for millennia: meat, eggs, and dairy.

Americans followed the prescription: eat less, move more. Count calories. Cut fat—especially saturated fat. Pile on grains and fruits.

Low-fat products filled shelves. Margarine replaced butter. Jogging and aerobics took off. The USDA food pyramid became gospel.

And yet, the experiment failed. Obesity, diabetes, and heart disease skyrocketed. Medicine never questioned the model. Instead, it blamed the patient—willpower, gluttony, sloth.

But the failure was never in the patient.

It was in the prescription.

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# The Myths That Shaped the Obesity Narrative

## 1. The “Calories In, Calories Out” Fallacy

We’re told obesity is a math problem: eat more than you burn, and you gain weight.

But that explains nothing. Saying a town flooded because “more water came in than went out” is obvious—but was it a storm, a broken dam, or failed drainage?

By reducing obesity to arithmetic, medicine ignored the biology of hunger, satiety, hormones, and fat storage. A complex disease was reduced to a soundbite that was intuitive, easy to sell—and dead wrong.

## **2. The “Eat Less, Move More” Prescription**

From this fallacy came the universal prescription: cut calories and exercise more.

The data are clear: almost everyone regains the weight. Biology fights back—hunger hormones rise, metabolism slows, energy expenditure adapts downward. The body defends its fat stores, regardless of willpower.

## **3. The Fat-Phobia Myth**

After WWII, heart attacks surged. Yet instead of scrutinizing smoking, refined carbs, seed oils, or ultra-processed foods, blame was pinned on saturated fat—meat, eggs, and dairy—the very staples humanity had thrived on for over 100,000 years.

Wouldn't it make more sense to question the newer culprits that entered our food chain just as obesity and heart disease exploded?

- Meat, eggs, dairy — 100,000+ years
- Sugar — 1700s–1800s
- Refined carbs (white flour, breads, pastas) — 1900s–1930s
- Seed oils (cottonseed, soybean, corn) — ~1910 onward

Weston Price's research in the 1930s showed traditional populations thriving on diets rich in saturated fat, with virtually no obesity, diabetes, or heart disease. But that evidence was ignored.

Instead, Ancel Keys forced his lipid hypothesis onto America and the world:

- Fat raises cholesterol.

- Cholesterol causes heart attacks.

Both claims have since been disproven.

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## The American Diet Hijacked

The American Heart Association—funded in part by Procter & Gamble, makers of Crisco—amplified Keys’ message. By the 1970s, official guidelines urged Americans to replace natural fats with “heart-healthy” carbs and vegetable oils.

Food companies seized the opening. Ultra-processed products—cheap, profitable, addictive—flooded the market: donuts, pastries, fries, pizza, burgers. Today, 60–70% of U.S. calories come from ultra-processed foods.

The result? The opposite of what was promised: an explosion of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

Meanwhile, the packaged-food and seed-oil industries—backed by Harvard scientists, the AHA, and cultural allies (from meatpacking exposés to Seventh-day Adventist vegetarian influence)—kept saturated fat locked up behind bars.

The verdict was sealed: saturated fat was guilty. Not by evidence, but by politics, profit, and cultural convenience.

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## What Causes Obesity?

The real problem begins inside our cells.

Each cell has tiny engines called mitochondria. They turn food into usable energy (ATP). When healthy, they burn glucose and fat smoothly, without much waste.

But when mitochondria are damaged or overloaded, they produce less energy. Even though plenty of calories are coming in, the cells feel starved and pull in more glucose.

The brain senses this shortage and goes into survival mode:

- It makes us hungry, so we eat more.
- It makes us tired, so we conserve energy.
- It signals the liver to make more glucose, raising blood sugar.
- Stress hormones like cortisol rise, raising blood sugar more.
- The pancreas steps in, pumping out more insulin.

But insulin doesn't just lower sugar—it locks fat inside fat cells. These cells swell and eventually act like they have a mind of their own, hijacking appetite signals and tricking the brain into thinking the body still needs more food.

👉 “You don't become fat because you eat more. You eat more because you are fat.”

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# The Fat Paradox of Insulin Resistance

When fat cells grow too large, they become stressed and start spilling free fatty acids (FFAs) into the bloodstream.

At first glance, that sounds good. If fat is leaking out, shouldn't we burn it and lose weight?

Not quite.

- **Release (lipolysis):** Fat cells break triglycerides into FFAs. This normally happens when insulin is low.
- **Burning (oxidation):** FFAs then enter mitochondria to be burned for energy. But this process is blocked when insulin is high.

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## What Goes Wrong in Insulin Resistance

- Fat cells start leaking FFAs even when insulin is high.
  - But insulin still blocks muscles and liver from burning those fats.
  - The FFAs get trapped in organs like the liver, pancreas, and heart.
  - This “ectopic fat” poisons insulin signaling, triggers inflammation, and worsens insulin resistance.
  - The pancreas pumps out even more insulin—blocking fat burning, keeping blood sugar high, and driving hunger.
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## The Result

Instead of slimming down, the body gets stuck storing fat in the wrong places.

Obesity isn't a failure of willpower. It's an **energy mismatch disease**: the brain, liver, pancreas, and fat cells are locked in a tug-of-war that ends with high insulin, high sugar, and relentless weight gain.

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## What Really Drives Obesity

Here are the true culprits:

- **Refined Carbs & Sugar** – spike insulin, drive fatty liver, and fuel insulin resistance.
  - **Seed Oils (Industrial PUFAs)** – damage mitochondria, disrupt cell membranes, and promote inflammation.
  - **Ultra-Processed Foods** – addictive and deadly combos of sugar, refined carbs, and seed oils.
  - **Loss of Muscle & Movement** – low glucose utilization causes high blood sugar and insulin resistance.
  - **Environmental Toxins** – disrupt hormones and stress mitochondria.
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# What We Can Do About It

## 1. Cut Refined Carbs & Sugar

- Choose vegetables, low-sugar fruits, beans, and quality protein.
- Replace soda/juice with water, sparkling water, or tea.
- Apple cider vinegar with carb meals and post-meal light exercise helps reduce glucose/insulin spikes.
- Intermittent fasting (16–18 hours or longer) plus a low-carb or ketogenic diet with healthy fats (butter, ghee, coconut, olive, avocado).

## 2. Eliminate Seed Oils

- Cook with butter, ghee, coconut, olive, avocado oil, or tallow.
- Avoid fried fast food and packaged snacks loaded with soybean, corn, or canola oil.

## 3. Avoid Ultra-Processed Foods

- Avoid multi-ingredient foods.
- Shop the grocery store perimeter (produce, meat, dairy).
- Frozen whole foods (meat, fish, vegetables, fruits) are as good as fresh—and inexpensive.

## 4. Build Muscle & Move Daily

- Resistance training 2–3x per week.
- Walk after meals.
- Stand and move throughout the day; take stairs.

## 5. Reduce Toxin Exposure

- Store food in glass or stainless steel.
  - Wash produce; buy organic when possible.
  - Avoid heavily scented personal products.
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# The Core Principle

The first goal is simple: **lower insulin.**

When insulin falls, fat burning restarts, hunger normalizes, and energy returns.

There are no quick fixes—it takes patience, consistency, and time. But small steps compound into big results.

Start today.

Obesity isn't about eating less.

It's about eating right—and reclaiming the biology modern food and medicine stole from us.