

FROM THE EXPERTS

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Why Are You Overweight?



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**by Dr. Andrew T. Brady,
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I often ask this question back to people who ask me if I have any “weight loss tips.” The most common responses I get are: “I have a slow metabolism,” “I had children,” “I have an underactive thyroid,” “I’m getting old,” and “It’s genetic.” The reality is, these aren’t the reasons why obesity has doubled in our adults and tripled in our children over the past 20 years. None of these reasons are why 60% of Americans are now overweight. Why do you think people like using those reasons though? Because it takes the responsibility and the blame off of them.

The cause of weight gain is quite simple: You consume more calories than your body requires to stay alive. If all you do is consume 1 Coke a day (150 calories) for 5 years without adding any physical activity to burn it off, you will have gained 78 pounds of fat.

I see many people who are overweight who have hidden emotional traumas, like being bullied as a child, abuse, abandonment, etc., and they turn to junk foods because of the serotonin (“feel good” chemical) it releases when they consume it. This makes them feel good for a short period of time until the serotonin wears off. They then reach for more junk food to try to get the same high, but need more of it to feel the same effect. ... This is where it begins to snowball.

There are only two motivating forces in this world that drive every decision you make. *Pain* and *pleasure*. Humans do whatever we can to avoid pain and seek out pleasure. People who overeat associate more pleasure (serotonin release, taste of food) than pain (getting fat, increased chronic illness, etc.) with their unhealthy food habits. The good news is that this can be reversed!

In high school and mid-way through college, I loved eating frozen pizzas, mozzarella sticks, grilled cheese sandwiches and buffalo wings even though I knew those things weren’t good for me. I remember reading a book about how to rewire your pain/pleasure pathways, and I implemented the strategies. I walked through a hospice center and looked at the suffering that filled the hallways. It was a place I never wanted to end up. I associated making a lifestyle habit of eating unhealthy food with ending up in one of those rooms (a realistic consequence). I then listed all the things I enjoyed doing and associated eating healthy with being able to continue to do those things. Over a period of a few weeks, I completely changed my cravings for these foods. This is something EVERYONE is capable of doing and can be effective in changing any addictive behavior or poor lifestyle habit. If you want to find out how, email me at OptimalSpineWellness@gmail.com, and I will send you what you need to get started.

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