

Obesity - US - August 2013

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“Despite consumers’ interest in eating healthier, they also want food that tastes good. While government, food manufacturers, and restaurants try to provide healthier options to Americans, these organizations are up against several challenges, especially regarding how to market healthy items.”

– Emily Krol, Health and Wellness Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- What opportunities exist for food companies that want to help curb the obesity epidemic?
- How is the obesity epidemic driving change in the foodservice category?
- How are food retailers responding to the obesity epidemic?

Obesity is a major public health issue that has reached epidemic proportions. According to the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, 27.1% of Americans are obese in 2013, while an additional 35.6% are overweight. This puts nearly two thirds of Americans at unhealthy weight levels.

Obesity can lead to a variety of diseases, such as hypertension, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and various forms of cancer. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), obesity contributes to \$147 billion in healthcare costs per year. The American Medical Association (AMA) voted in June 2013 to define obesity as a disease, rather than a condition or epidemic, which will likely have an impact on programs to help manage obesity.

The incidence of obesity is impacted by a variety of factors including genetic disposition, family history, age, economic situation, behaviors, culture, preexisting conditions (i.e., hypothyroidism), medications, and metabolism. Lack of exercise and poor diet are also leading causes of obesity. Being able to get food anywhere, anytime, as well as larger portion sizes, and a trend toward eating out rather than cooking at home have helped to increase the number of calories people consume.

While all of the factors that contribute to obesity are important, this report will focus specifically on how a poor diet relates to obesity and offer opportunities for brands in the food service, food manufacturing, and food retailing industries.

Understanding consumer struggles with these issues, as well as potential solutions, will be useful to brands that operate in this space. This report will discuss consumers’ struggles with weight management, as well as tactics people use or are interested in using to manage their weight. The report will focus on solutions for those who are overweight, obese, and extremely obese.

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DID YOU KNOW?

This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market

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