

# The Obesity Epidemic

Minalkumar Patel MD MPH



# Objectives

- “Size the issue”
- Review root causes
- Propose solutions

# OBESITY...Sobering STATS

- 2/3 of American adults are overweight or obese (BMI >25)
- 14% of adolescents 12-19 years old are overweight
- 300,000 annual obesity related deaths
- Overweight and obesity are related to heart disease, cancers, diabetes, stroke, arthritis, breathing disorders and depression

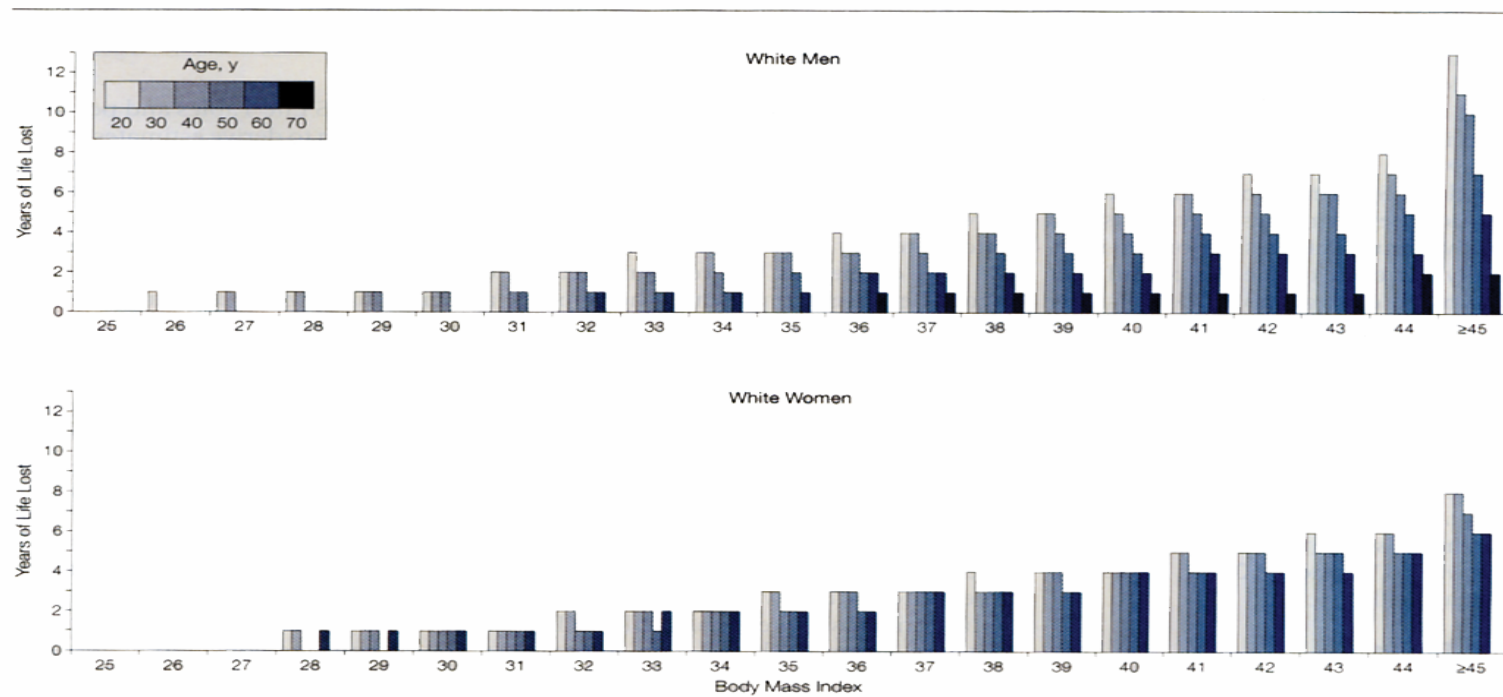
*\*\*U.S.Food and Drug Administration*

# Top causes of deaths

- Tobacco related 18.1%
- Poor diet and physical inactivity 16.6%
- Alcohol consumption 3.5%
- Microbial agents 3.1%
- Toxic agents 2.2%
- Motor vehicle accidents 1.7%

# Years of life lost due to obesity

**Figure 1.** Years of Life Lost Among White Men and Women



# Big Spending

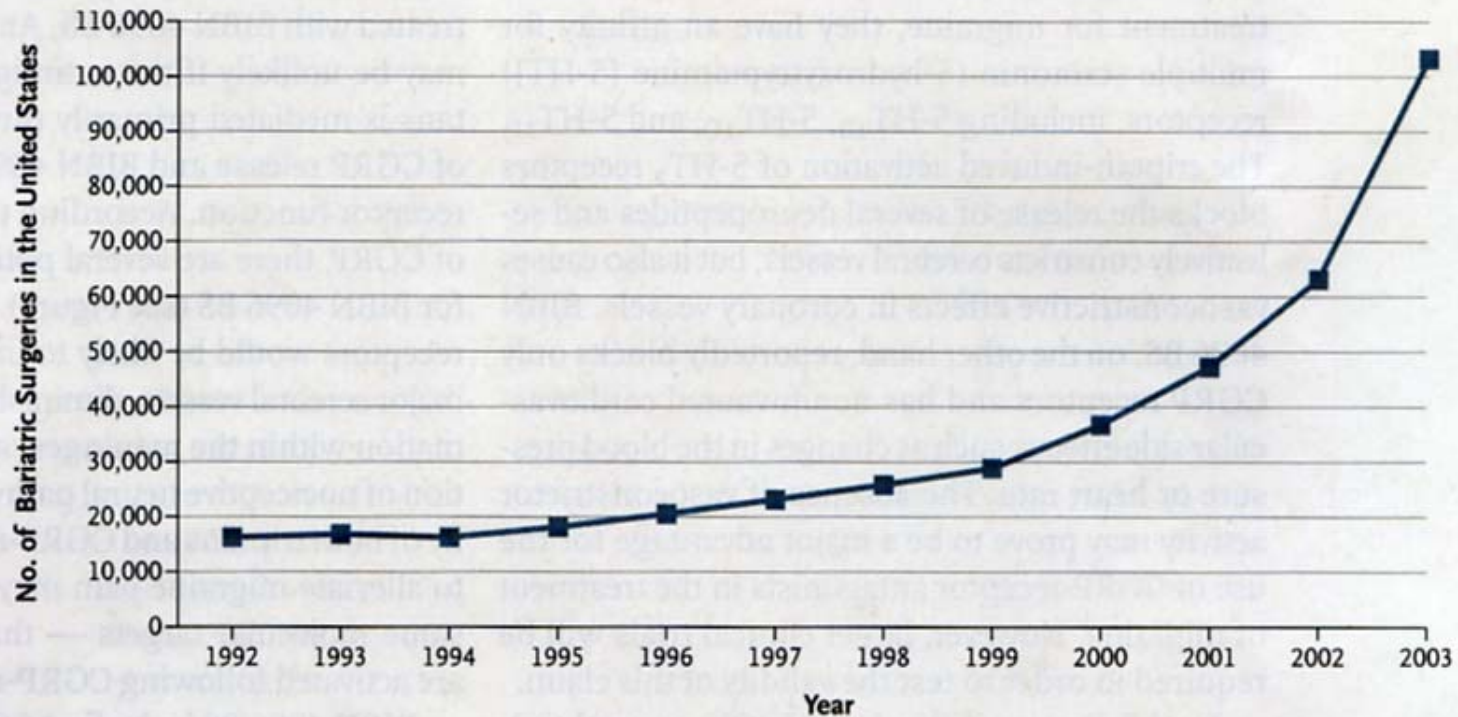
States with the highest burden of the country's \$75.1 billion in estimated medical expenditures attributed to adult obesity

STATE	OBESITY-RELATED EXPENDITURES	% OF TOTAL MEDICAL SPENDING
Calif.	\$7.68 billion	5.5%
N.Y.	6.08	5.5
Texas	5.34	6.1
Pa.	4.14	6.2
Fla.	3.99	5.1
Ill.	3.44	6.1
Ohio	3.30	6.1
Mich.	2.93	6.5
N.J.	2.34	5.5
N.C.	2.14	6.0

Sources: RTI International; CDC

50% of these costs are paid by Medicare and Medicaid... your tax dollars!

# Costs will continue to rise



**Figure 1.** Estimated Number of Bariatric Operations Performed in the United States, 1992–2003.

Data are from the American Society for Bariatric Surgery.

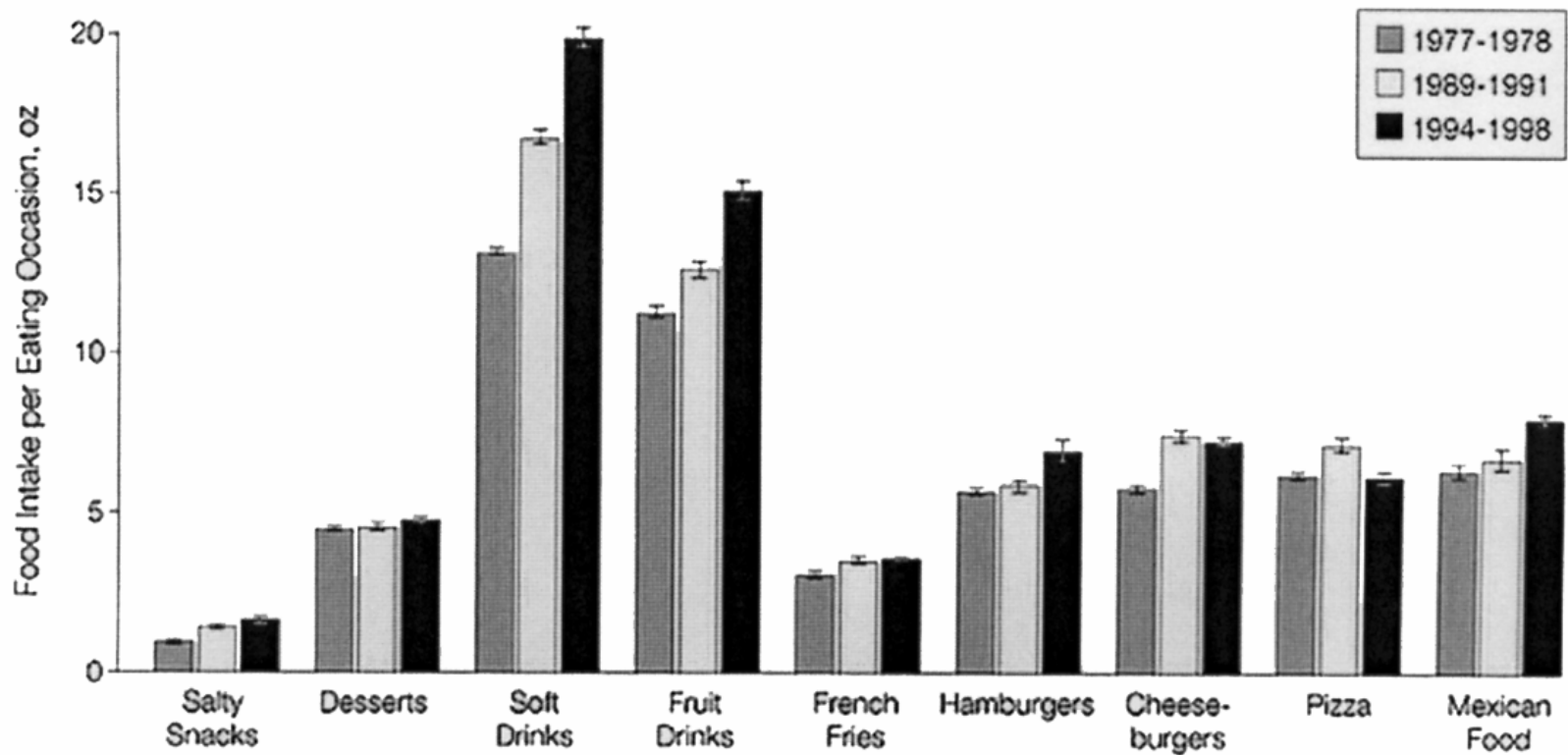
# Causes of Obesity...

- Greater calories consumed than used
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Genetics
- Behavior
- Environment
- Cultural influences
- Socioeconomic influences
- Public policy

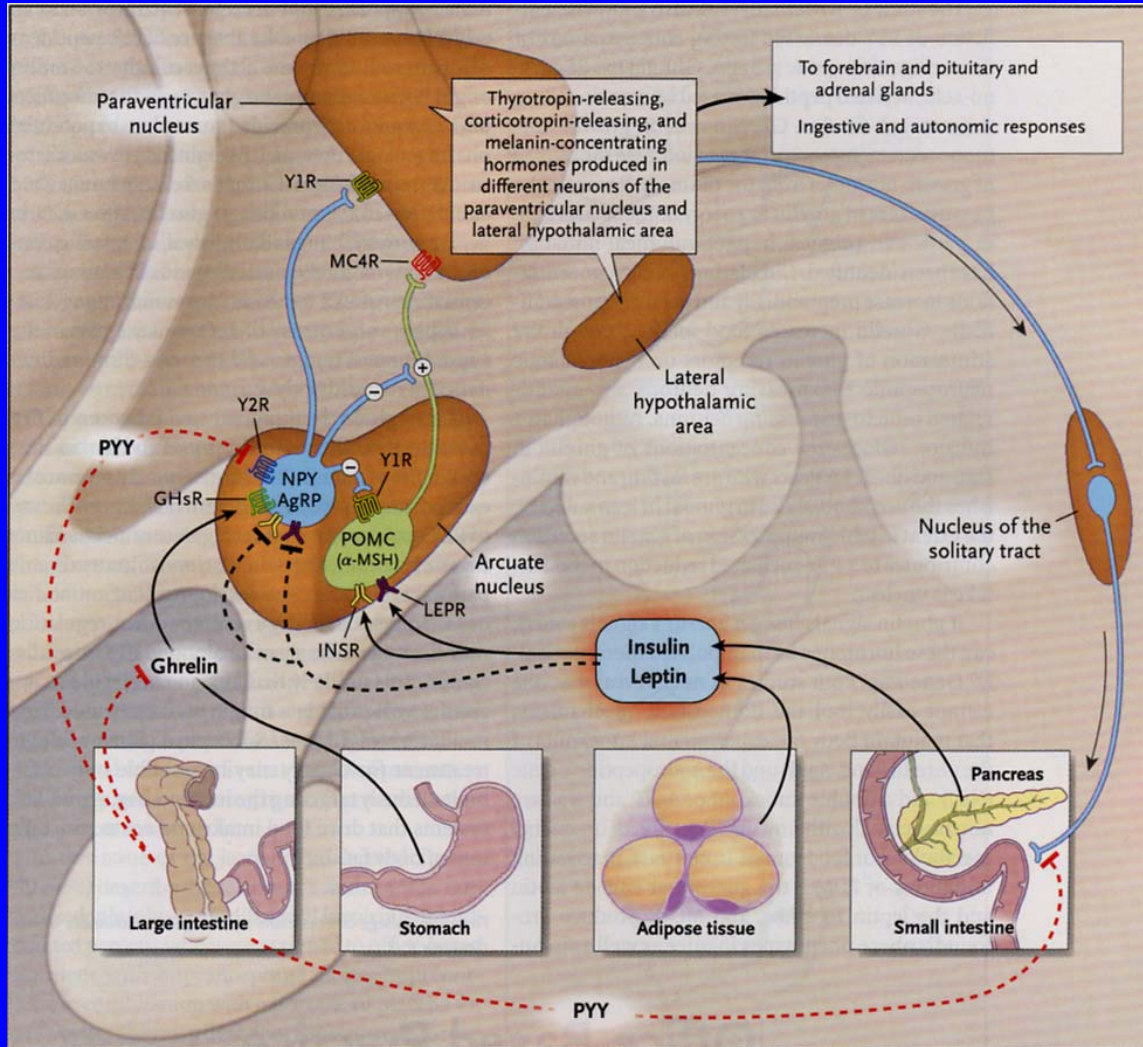
*\*\*National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion*

# Growth in food portions

Figure 1



# Food intake regulation



# Possible solutions

- Healthcare industry
  - Physicians and hospitals
  - Payers
  - Pharmaceutical manufacturers
- Government policy
- Corporate activities
- Community leadership



18<sup>th</sup> Annual

Practical Approaches to the Treatment of Obesity:  
***Obesity Medicine: Emergence of a  
New Discipline***

The Royal Sonesta Hotel, Cambridge, MA

# Public policy

- Public mass education
- Food labeling in restaurants
- Banning empty calorie foods in schools
- Promoting research agenda for obesity prevention
- Urban planning
- Tax credits and levies

# Corporate activities

- Realize the tangible impact on workplace productivity
- Scrutinize food offerings at the workplace
- Promote physical activity
  - Allowing breaks
  - Subsidizing fitness centers
  - Workplace weight programs/competitions
- Provide direct financial incentives

# Civic leadership

- NO MORE BAKE SALES!!
- Promote education
- Provide supportive environment
- Foster competition

# Horizon BCBSNJ's approach

- Preventive health education
  - Discounts to fitness centers
  - Pedometers and health kits
  - Education through multiple media
- Health and Wellness programs
  - Telephonic access to professionals
- World Class Clinical Quality
  - Exploring new programs...Weigh to Live
  - Funding research
  - Raising awareness
  - Forming broad-reaching partnerships

# Joining forces

- Complex problem requiring strong, well-coordinated interventions that are long-term that show results
- No one stake holder can do it alone
- Horizon BCBSNJ is calling for a group of committed leaders to convene to address this issue
- Executive health policy forum to be held in October 2004

# Questions or Open Discussion?

