

### **Weight of the Nation 3: Challenges**

Please write a 250-word response to your reflections on this video. Please be sure to include observations on location, Physical activity and movement throughout the day, screen time, access to healthy foods, changes over the last century in agriculture and how all these affects the trend toward greater obesity. No copying and pasting will be permitted.

Unfortunately, in our nation there has been a concern about adult/kids/youth being overweight and obese. More than 18% of our children are obese, 2/3 of Americans are overweight or obese which leads to chronic diseases such as: sleep apnea, diabetes, Hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases. 25% of Americans have excess fat in their liver or they are borderline diabetic. In addition, Diabetes may contribute to more than 40% of the deaths in this country every year. Moreover, individuals present symptoms such as: getting dizzy when waking up; their body hurts; cold feet/ neuropathy. Today obesity is a significant contributing factor to 5-10 leading causes of death which makes it the biggest threat in the States.

In the Nabholz construction Corporation which is the largest commercial contracting company in Arkansas with nearly 1000 employees have health issues in their company. Nabholz conducted a campaign wide screening to assess the overall health of their employees. First time doing the screening they had so many health concerns that one of them was what is going to kill that person faster? 55% of employees weighted over 200 pounds; had high BP; high cholesterol and DM. People ask themselves why are they eating so much? There is stigma; nothing is working; and people cannot stop eating. The other question is what changed in the last 30 years to make this obesity epidemic happen? People drive to work, they drive their kids to work, no playgrounds or parks; we industrialized our food supply also. Our communities have become car dependent and we don't walk or ride bikes, and our kids don't walk to school like they used to. , Looking back in 1969 , 42% of our children walked or biked to school and today more than 80% drive to school.

Another problem is that people don't exercise like they used to 50 years ago and we became an automatic society. Children consume screen time around 7.5 hours per day, watching commercials with foods that are not healthy; not having a family meal because we are busy. All these factors contribute to increasing in obesity. Also, the restaurants portion meals are 5 to 10 times of what people and eating way too many calories.

Furthermore, obesity affects some communities more than others. For instance, South East has a higher percentage of obesity. In low income communities the rates of obesity are way higher, different in communities of color with low income. For instance, in Cuyahoga county Ohio, Haugh, the life expectancy IS 64 years while in Luherst is 92 years. In Santa Ana, Ca, 68% of people live below poverty, there are communities where the kids don't have par or enough spaces where they can exercise, play, do gym etc. Another good example is in Bronx, NY where small stores sell soda, chips, candy and processed prepare foods at low cost and families are buying it for their kids. In West Philadelphia there are meals over 1\$ per day, chips, soda for kids. Unfortunately, more than 50% of Philadelphia school children shop at corner stores daily before and after school.

Another contributing factor to obesity in our nation is the food industry that spends more than 12 billion of dollars on advertising unhealthy foods. Over the past few decades, we have seen an increase in obesity rates but at the same time we have seen an increase high in corn and soil production and a proliferation in fast foods restaurants which make foods inexpensive. Over the last

30 years we have seen an increase in added sugars  $\frac{1}{4}$  ;  $\frac{1}{4}$  from added fat;  $\frac{1}{2}$  from refined grains such as corn starch.

Farmers overproduce the foods that we are overeating such as corn and soybeans. We are eating foods that are most profitable. 50% of US farmland planted with corn and soybeans. Getting subsidies to plant corn lots of corporations control farming operations. Corporations very influential and resistant to change. There are no subsidies for fruits and vegetables. For instance, Good Natured family Farms alliance of 150 farms around Kansas City trying to integrate into modern food system to be able to supply a mainstream supermarket. Eco friendly and wallet friendly Diana Enticatt and Ball supermarkets have been recognizing by the USDA for pioneering cost effective of moving food from the farm to the supermarket. Sale of local fruits and vegetables comprises only 2% of all US agricultural sales. Less than 3% of U.S farmland is planted with fruits and vegetables.