

The Effects of Poverty on Healthy Eating Choices

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Poverty:

The state or condition of having little or no money, goods, or means of support: condition of being poor.

In the United States, the poverty rate is 45.3 million people or 14.5%. This rate shows an increase in over 8 million people since 2008.

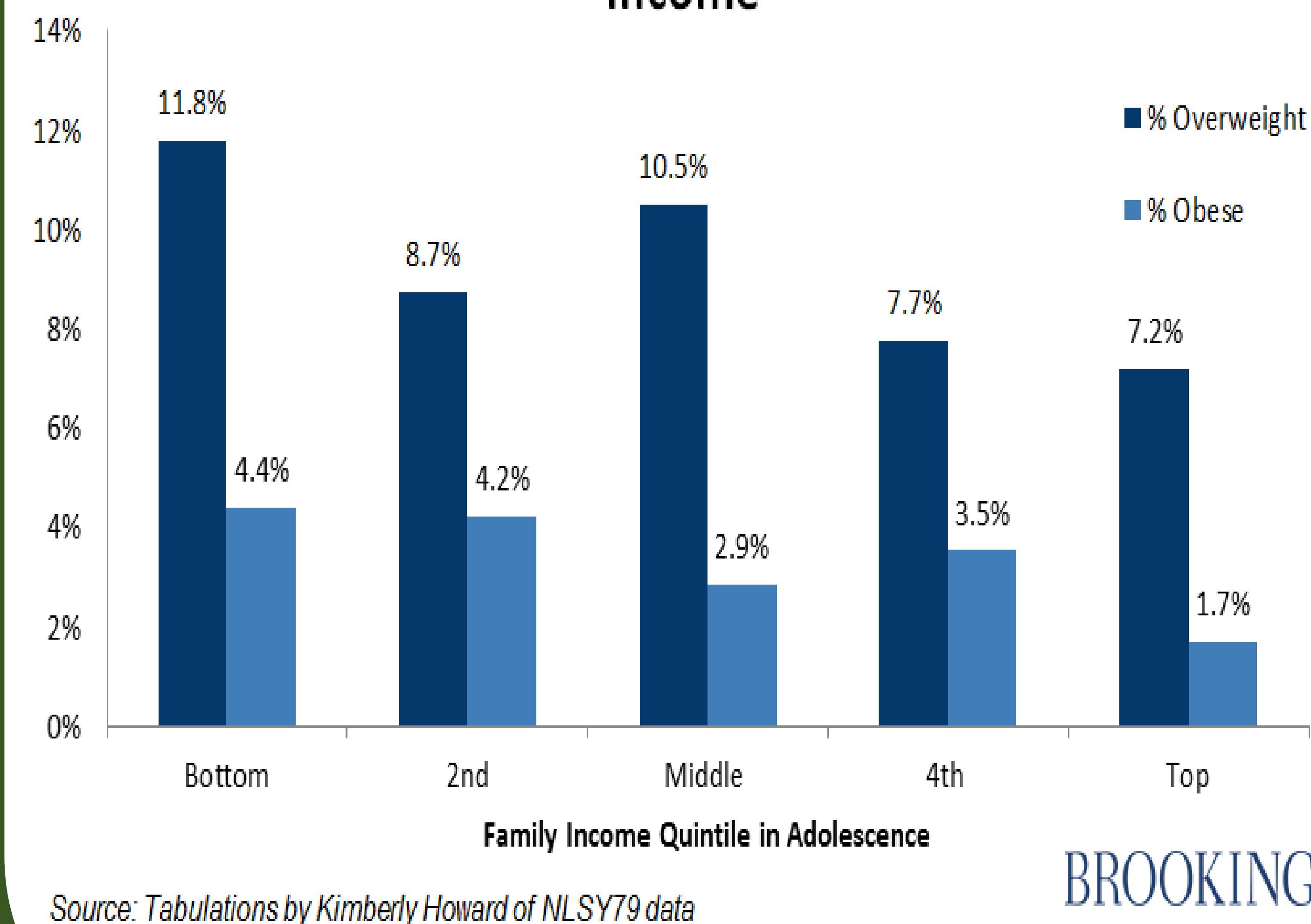
Obesity:

Poverty used to be symbolized by severely underweight individuals, but now obesity is a sign of poverty. Why?

- As income falls, the rate of obesity rises
- Dr. Adam Drewnowski (Professor and obesity researcher) found that he could purchase a larger amount of calorically dense junk foods with his dollar than healthy foods that were lighter in calories.

Adolescents overweight or obese by family income

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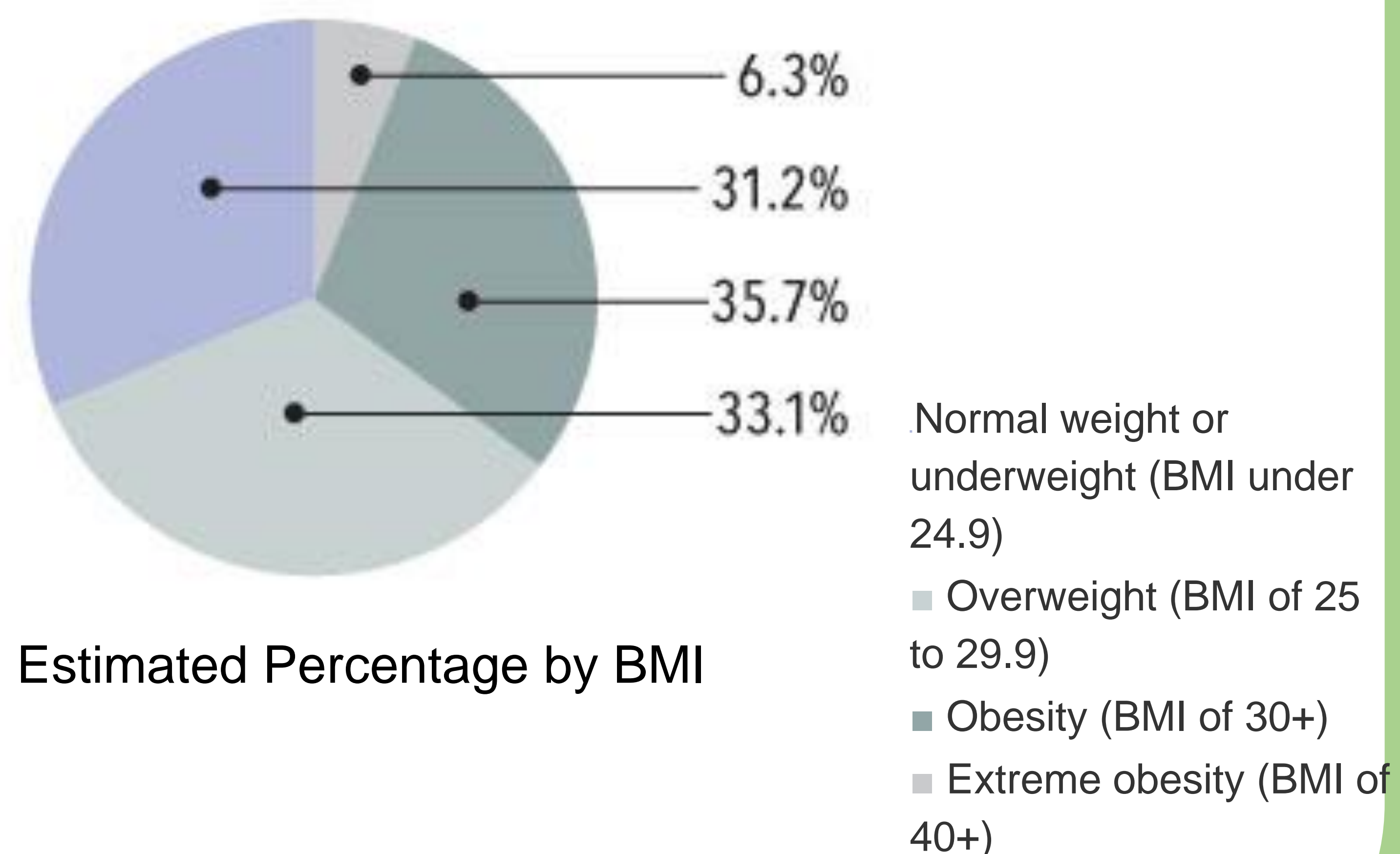


Observing Price and Caloric Density

One hypothesis for the correlation between low income and obesity is that unhealthy foods are simply much cheaper than those that are healthy.

- Observed the price per serving and caloric density, measured as calories per gram, of 57 foods found in Wal-Mart, a store chain that many low income families shop at
- Large cluster of very cheap foods with very low caloric density.
- If no relation then what is the cause?
- Other factors such as advertisements, attitudes towards stores, mental illness, perceived worth, etc.
- Health is also more than just caloric density
- Studies could focus more on things like sugar and other ingredients that affect health in food

Overweight and Obesity among Adults Age 20 and older, United States, 2009-2010



Poverty and Fast-food

Approximately 23.5 million Americans live in areas that The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines as a "food desert".

There are 5 fast-food restaurants for every supermarket in the U.S.

In a recent study done on Americans, 76% of the surveyed audience agreed that the food served in fast-food restaurants is either "not too good" or "not good at all for you". However, 8 out of 10 of those Americans also admitted to eating fast-food monthly, while almost half say that they eat it at least weekly.

In the same survey, 57% of those aged 18–29 reported eating fast-food at least weekly, while it was 47% of those aged 30–49, 44% for those aged 50–64, 41% for those aged 65 and older.

Fast-food restaurants spend more than 4.6 billion a year advertising their food, targeting children, teens, black youth and Hispanic youth.

What can we do?

Cost per Serving vs. Caloric Density

