

Book Review

Down Sizing Your Body – How The Industrial Food Complex Breeds Fat Americans by Bill Sardi (ISBN 0-9774272-2-6; Here & Now Books, 457 West Allen Ave. #117, San Dimas, California 91773 USA; www.downsizingyourbody.com; paperback, 256 pages; \$14.95)

It was the early 1960s and Americans were fit and trim. The Kennedy Family posed for a photograph at the family home in Hyannisport, Massachusetts. Jackie Kennedy Onassis was the slim woman America adored. President John F. Kennedy, his brothers Bobby and Teddy, and actor Peter Lawford weren't overweight, and neither were any of their spouses or parents, pictured in the photo. Americans weren't going to the gym to lose weight – that was for body builders.

That was then. What happened over succeeding decades became known as the over-sizing of Americans. An unprecedented diabetes epidemic was underway.

In the early 1970s Americans began complaining about bouts of hypoglycemia. Doctors explained it away saying it was all in their head. There were veiled changes in the American food chain. Processed foods were being clandestinely designed to drive Americans to overeat.

The answer to widening American waistlines were diet books – *The Hollywood Diet* book, *The Grapefruit Diet* book, *The Jack LaLanne Way To Vibrant Good Health* diet book, up to today's editions – *The South Beach Diet* book and the *French Women Don't Get Fat* diet book. It became trendy to be reading diet books rather than losing weight.

In recent times the Atkins (high protein), Ornish (low-fat), and Dr. Barry Sears Zone (balanced) diet have all seen their day. In the final analysis, a committee of physicians and dieticians, writing in a February 2009 issue of *The New England Journal of Medicine*, concluded that every diet was equally ineffective at reducing waistlines and simply consisted of depriving oneself of fats, sugars or calories. None addressed the reason why Americans were eating larger portions and had higher hunger levels.

So you guess what causes Americans to overeat compared to Europeans or Asians – calories, fats or sugars? If you said none of the above you were correct.

Certainly hormones are to blame. American women are having fewer children and once hormone levels are high and no babies onboard, women will eat and eat. Turns out

women were biologically designed to produce rapid-fire babies, one after the other. But even then, European and Asian women are not growing out of their wardrobes after their last pregnancy.

Europeans and Asians can hide in the shadow behind most Americans. Why? In the 1970s American food producers began to learn how to engineer foodstuffs to make Americans eat more of their food products. Potato chips and cookies were designed to make it easy to eat them to the bottom of the bag. Americans had no idea.

Over time they began to accept the blame – they had lost self control and needed to push away from the dinner table sooner. Then came oversized clothes to hide their girth. Doctors began measuring body mass index (height and weight), not just pounds.

Then came the weight-loss drugs – with even more failure for dieters. Stimulants and fat burners and starch blockers. It turns out most every anti-diabetic drug causes a person to gain weight. Modern medicine saw overweight Americans as a new market. Obesity was to be treated like a disease and a drug deficiency. Forget diets, take a pill!

America over-accommodates tubby Americans. Grocery stores provide electric carts. Orthopedists replace painful knee joints stressed by the extra weight Americans are carrying instead of recommending they see a dietician.

Now wearing table-cloth sized clothes and having been led around from one diet plan to another, and on the precipice of undergoing that lap-band operation, some Americans say they must be genetically prone to gain weight. But that is not apparent in any photos of their forefathers.

So what exactly happened in the 1970s to spawn the diabetes epidemic? It started with white bread. Thereafter it was a combination of additives to foods that food producers soon realized would increase their profits. White flour was fortified with a highly absorbable metallic mineral. High-fructose corn syrup replaced sucrose and increased mineral absorption from foods. So did hydrogenated (trans) fats in baked goods. The rest is history.

Insulin resistance rose, so did hunger levels, and Americans were no longer fitting into their clothes. Health journalist Bill Sardi delves into these and other causes of the modern diabetes epidemic in his latest book *Downsizing Your Body*. To learn more, go to www.downsizingyourbody.com. 

