A big, fat problem

This past weekend I took a little trip out to the beach in Rehoboth, Delaware. The weather was great and hanging out near the ocean is always relaxing. You see all types out on the beach but what struck me as I looked around was how many obese people were there. In fact, I am seeing more and more obese people everywhere. The New York Times reports that obesity rates are rising, so it really is no surprise. Pretty close to one out of three Americans is obese.

As the New York Times article points out, obesity is a national health epidemic. Obesity can be tied to many deadly diseases, including heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure.

Is marketing to blame for obesity? On the boardwalk in Rehoboth it is hard to avoid the aroma of french fries and candied popcorn. Candy stores are everywhere, and healthy food is hard to find. There were a lot of people jogging on the boardwalk, but there were many more people just sitting on the beach. Fast food and junk food don't really have to market too much—they just have to be available. Which begs the question, if healthy options were available (and made to look as tantalizing), would people choose to buy those instead?

Is there an effort being made by public health authorities to market a healthier lifestyle? I don't see any evidence of it. Obviously, it is hard to change people's habits. And when on vacation, people tend to want to reward themselves with treats like fried dough and salt water taffy. How many people want to use vacation to start a healthy eating plan? Not many—because it is not appealing.

If marketing has a fault in the obesity epidemic, is that not enough is being done to market healthy choices, or the benefits of NOT being obese. Or perhaps, more should be done

to show people the MORTAL DANGERS of obesity. It is not just about looks—our society certainly markets thinness as an equivalent to beauty—but about health. Fat people are at risk, and the sad thing is they can do something about it: eat less, exercise more.

What are your thoughts? How can society convince people to stop piling on the pounds?