

The obesity industry : Big business

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Fat profits in fat people?

- 1 - THE latest accessory for waiters at some restaurants in America is a handheld computer. This is not, as you might expect, to transmit orders instantly via a wireless network to the kitchen for even faster food, but to calculate for customers the amount of fats and
- 5 - carbohydrates in their entrées. As people everywhere get bigger, all manner of businesses are addressing the threat, and opportunity, in what the World Health Organisation calls "globesity".

- Fat is no longer just a problem in America. In a decade or so, even countries not now associated with bulky populations, such as France
- 10 - and Japan, could have a big problem.

- The business implications are also enormous. American girls today shop for clothes that are roughly two sizes bigger than those worn by their mothers. Seats in public places such as sports arenas are being made bigger, as are those in aircraft. Drug firms are searching for
- 15 - miracle slimming drugs and the latest dieting fads become best-sellers.

- Some food firms have announced plans: Burger King launched a low-fat chicken sandwich. McDonald's has salads on its menu and has signed up Bob Greene, an exercise guru who will promote a new chicken-based meal called "Go Active" which comes with exercise tips
- 20 - and a clip to encourage customers to walk more.

- How will consumers react? New research shows that most Americans are well aware of the risks of obesity. One of the most striking findings of his new study on "globesity" is that some 90% of American consumers believe they are personally responsible for their weight.
- 25 - Only a few blame fast-food firms.