Obesity is a growing issue affecting millions of Americans. As we try to combat the negative health
effects of obesity there is a push for prevention. Politicians, citizens, and researchers are scrambling
to find a cause of obesity. The problem is there is no “magic pill” or perfect solution. Causes of
obesity are debated and the search is on for something to blame for the drastic changes in
American’s weight. A recent focus has been food deserts. This term describes areas where
supermarkets, grocery stores, and other healthy food options are not readily available. To see if your
community falls under this category go to The Department of Agriculture’s food desert locator tool
below.


In two recent studies this idea of urban neighborhoods having little to no access of fresh foods might
not be the whole story. In the two studies researchers actually found an increase in fast food
restaurants, grocery stores, and supermarkets in these urban areas compared to more affluent
neighborhoods. Is lack of access to fresh foods really the problem? Activists no longer solely focus on
access but also innovation and education. A professor of public health at the University of North
Carolina described his program which focuses on increasing farmers markets in food desert areas. He
found access was not enough and expressed the need for advertising, placement in stores, and
education.

Food Trust, a non-profit organization that wishes to provide all communities with affordable and
accessible nutritious food, is now using different tactics. The Food Trust loans coolers to smaller
convenient stores. The idea behind the cooler is to market fruits and vegetables at the front of the
store with attractive lighting, recipe ideas, and signage comparing food’s nutritious elements. This
makes the items more appealing thus more traffic, purchases, and ultimately healthier food choices
at home.

Resources:
