

# Can you be fat and healthy?

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sengers," said Dr. JoAnn Manson, chief of preventive medicine at Harvard's Brigham and Women's Hospital. These substances can damage blood vessels, increase the risk of blood clots and cause insulin resistance that makes people prone to diabetes — all without elevat-

ing blood pressure or cholesterol, said Manson, who was not involved in the Northwestern study.

Still, there is a common misconception that excess weight is nothing to worry about until high blood pressure and poor cholesterol develop, and those can then be treated with medications,

Manson said. "Patients say that all the time, and many doctors actually will say that to patients" too, she said.

The study "will help define obesity as a disease" in itself, said Dr. Samuel Klein, an obesity expert at Washington University in St. Louis.

Dr. David Katz, an obesity researcher and director of

Yale University's Prevention Research Center, said the findings help prove obesity is a real public health crisis. "People who say obesity has been hyped are wrong," Katz said.

On the Net:  
JAMA:  
jama.ama-assn.org

## School cafeteria starts veggie lunch

ATLANTA—Miriam Archibong remembers the food offerings her high school cafeteria used to serve for vegetarians: bland salads and greasy cheese pizza.

But salads are "not sufficient to survive," she says. "Cheese pizza that's not healthy because of all that grease."

Archibong often brought her own food, lunching on applesauce, carrots and water. Finally, she and other vegetarians at Grady High School demanded and won some changes two years ago.

Today, Grady High has a separate vegetarian lunch line with a menu as varied as veggie eggrolls, pasta salad, vegetarian pizza and sloppy joes made of tofu.

"My favorite thing was the veggie burger. It was so good," said Archibong, who graduated in 2005 and now is pursuing more vegetarian options at her new school — Spelman College, an all-girls and historically black school, also in Atlanta.

For years, school cafeterias have tried to please students with vegetarian offerings. The American School Food Service Association says more than a third of U.S. high schools have meatless items that include salads and cheese pizza.

However, a new trend—vegetarian-only lunch lines—has started in the unlikelyst of places — the South, home of the "Stroke Belt," long known for its trademark fried and fatty foods and higher rates of heart attacks and strokes than other parts of the country.

The urban Atlanta high school's vegetarian-only lunch line is believed to be one of the first in the country. It's an odd birthplace for such a healthy innovation, considering the school is only blocks from the city's downtown bastions of Southern cuisine,

including the fried chicken and fried green tomatoes at the historic Mary Mac's Tea Room and the fried peach pies at the landmark Varsity restaurant.

Schools in Eugene, Ore., and in other

progressive, health-conscious cities of the Pacific Northwest are beginning to look to Atlanta's example, said Tom Callahan, senior vice president of Sodexo Inc., the company that provides Grady's food service.

Emphasis in the past was simply on making sure there were meatless options, Callahan said. Last year his company brought the separate vegetarian menu to Eugene "and now we're starting to see some momentum building," he said.

In the middle of a national obesity epidemic in which up to 30 percent of U.S. children are overweight or obese, health officials long have been concerned about what students eat, or whether they eat. For example, Atlanta schools' cafeterias only serve meals to about one in five high schoolers, who aren't allowed to leave campus for lunch. School officials worry that many of the students either are bringing junk food for lunch or are not eating at all.

"There are students who are coming to us on empty and leaving on empty. We constantly have to look at creative ways to engage middle and high school students," said Dr. Marilyn Hughes of Atlanta Public Schools' nutrition department.

"That concerns us overall for the obesity rate and for our commitment to academic excellence. We know they never had the opportunity to

reach that if they never had proper nourishment," Hughes said.

But Grady's vegetarian line has been a popular cafeteria draw. Originally designed for the 30 students in Archibong's Vegetarian Club, meat-eaters also jumped in line and the cafeteria now serves vegetarian entrees to up to 400 of the school's 1,200 students each day. This past fall, the school district offered the vegetarian option to other schools, although so far there have been no takers.

At Grady, non-vegetarian students who graze in the vegetarian line said they like having better non-meat choices.

"I get the vegetarian meals because they have a decent selection you can choose from," said ninth-grader Jessica Fortney, 15. "Otherwise, I would have to eat the disgusting pizza every day."

On The Net:  
Atlanta Public Schools:  
www.atlantak12.gaus



## Committee suggests study of complaints against police

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. — North Charleston should set up an independent committee to review complaints against police officers, a civil rights leader suggested.

During recent months more than a dozen black residents have alleged they were mistreated by police, complaining they were stopped for no reason, treated rudely or had their rights violated.

Police appear unwilling to find fault with their officers, said Dot Scott, president of the Charleston chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

"If you can never find any wrong within your house, then maybe you might need someone else to do the looking," said Scott, who lives in North Charleston.

City leaders have discussed

holding a summit to deal with relations between blacks and police. While police deny there is racism, officials say they are willing to discuss residents' concerns.

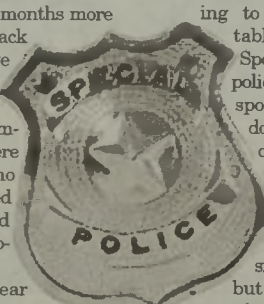
"We've done that in the past, and we are always willing to come to the table," said Spencer Pryor, a police department spokesman. "Our doors are always open to folks if they have a problem."

Scott said she would consider a summit but the department should first look at itself and "be honest about what is happening."

Scott has complained that last year, police looking for drugs conducted a cavity search on her cousin's son, a charge police deny.

Sixteen other complaints were compiled by a group known as the Committee on Better Racial Assurance.

Police seem quick to dismiss Please see COMMITTEE/4B



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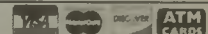
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