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Titolo	Fat in the fifties : America's first obesity crisis // Nicolas Rasmussen
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Nota di contenuto	Fat and the public health before the second World War -- Obesity becomes a mental disorder -- The postwar heart alarm : new attention to an old hazard -- Fighting heart disease one calorie at a time in cold war suburbia -- The new epidemiology and its impact -- The disappearance of obesity as a public health problem.
Sommario/riassunto	"A riveting history of the rise and fall of the obesity epidemic during 1950s and 1960s America. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company identified obesity as the leading cause of premature death in the United States in the 1930s, but it wasn't until 1951 that the public health and medical communities finally recognized it as "America's Number One Health Problem." The reason for MetLife's interest? They wanted their policyholders to live longer and continue paying their premiums. Early postwar America responded to the obesity emergency, but by the end of the 1960s, the crisis waned and official rates of true obesity were reduced— despite the fact that Americans were growing no thinner. What mid-century factors and forces established obesity as a politically meaningful and culturally resonant problem in the first place? And why did obesity fade from public—and medical—consciousness only a decade later? Based on archival records of health leaders as well as medical and popular literature, Fat in the Fifties is the first book to

reconstruct the prewar origins, emergence, and surprising disappearance of obesity as a major public health problem. Author Nicolas Rasmussen explores the postwar shifts that drew attention to obesity, as well as the varied approaches to its treatment: from thyroid hormones to psychoanalysis and weight loss groups. Rasmussen argues that the US government was driven by the new Cold War and the fear of atomic annihilation to heightened anxieties about national fitness. Informed by the latest psychiatric thinking—which diagnosed obesity as the result of oral fixation, just like alcoholism—health professionals promoted a form of weight loss group therapy modeled on Alcoholics Anonymous. The intervention caught on like wildfire in 1950s suburbia. But the sense of crisis passed quickly, partly due to cultural changes associated with the later 1960s and partly due to scientific research, some of it sponsored by the sugar industry, emphasizing particular dietary fats, rather than calorie intake. Through this riveting history of the rise and fall of the obesity epidemic, readers gain an understanding of how the American public health system—ambitious, strong, and second-to-none at the end of the Second World War—was constrained a decade later to focus mainly on nagging individuals to change their lifestyle choices. Fat in the Fifties is required reading for public health practitioners and researchers, physicians, historians of medicine, and anyone concerned about weight and weight loss." -- Publisher's description.
