



# Nutrition epidemiology

with Dr Andrea Richardson

## Talking points

### Knowledge

1. What is redlining?
2. What is the obesity epidemic?

### Comprehension

3. How does redlining lead to poor health outcomes?
4. How is obesity influenced by both biology and environment?

### Application

5. “In Chicago, it was found that Black women living in areas with a history of redlining were more likely to have premature births,” says Andrea. How might redlining have led to this health outcome?
6. How does the lack of financial investment in a neighbourhood physically change the “opportunities available” for a person to stay healthy?

### Analysis

7. Why was it important for Andrea to use a longitudinal study (tracking people from 1985 to 2016) rather than just looking at a single point in time?
8. Critics of body mass index (BMI) say it has limited usefulness given it does not incorporate other body metrics such as muscle mass. Why do you think Andrea used BMI in this research study?

### Evaluation

9. Given that the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation was created by the US government, how much responsibility do you think the government holds today for fixing the health disparities in formerly redlined areas? How could the government address this issue?
10. How do you think the obesity epidemic will develop over the next few years? What do you think population obesity levels will look like in 10, 25 or 50 years, and why?

## Activity

“People in formerly redlined neighbourhoods may still face unfair treatment when seeking investment and mortgages,” says Andrea. Imagine you are part of a campaign group working to convince your local jurisdiction (e.g., county, state, etc.) to strengthen anti-redlining legislation.

Create a communications material – this could be a presentation, poster, leaflet, video or speech – for this campaign. Think about the following:

- What is your key message?
- How can you make it clear what you are asking for?
- How does scientific research justify and strengthen your case?
- Why is this an important topic?
- How could policy makers address this issue?
- What would meaningful change look like?

With the above points in mind, seek out the following resources to integrate in your material:

- Powerful images and graphics
- Robust scientific findings
- Examples of how other jurisdictions have addressed redlining
- Resources or talking points from similar campaigns

Once you have made your communications material, share it with your class or group. Take time to examine your classmates’ communications too. What lessons can you take from each approach? What factors from each are the most powerful, and why?

## More resources

- Andrea recommends exploring molecular biologist and nutritionist Marion Nestle’s ‘food politics’ blog, which discusses current affairs in nutrition policy: [foodpolitics.com](http://foodpolitics.com)
- This video from Harvard Kennedy School unpacks the history and legacy of redlining: [youtube.com/watch?v=cUI3I4w5CYw](https://youtube.com/watch?v=cUI3I4w5CYw)
- This video from Al Jazeera English asks if and how we can reverse the obesity epidemic: [youtube.com/watch?v=pWeQRbSjzke](https://youtube.com/watch?v=pWeQRbSjzke)