

LIFETIME FAMILY WELLNESS

Super-Size Me...The McDonald's Diet

In the January 22, 2004 issue of the New York Post was an interesting story about a man named Morgan Spurlock (right) who decided to become guinea pig for a unique diet. He decided to eat three meals a day for 30 days at McDonald's and document the impact on his health. Prior to this experiment he was a strapping 6-foot-2 New Yorker - who started out at a healthy 185 pounds.

After the 30 day regime Spurlock had gained 30 pounds and suffered other health consequences. Within a few days of beginning his drive-through diet, Spurlock, 33, was vomiting out the window of his car. "It was really crazy - my body basically fell apart over the course of 30 days," Spurlock told The Post.

The doctors who examined him were shocked at how rapidly Spurlock's entire body had deteriorated. Upon testing they noted that his liver became toxic, his cholesterol shot up from a low 165 to 230, his libido flagged and he suffered headaches and depression.

Spurlock recorded his journey from fit to flab in a tongue-in-cheek documentary, called "Super Size Me", which he has taken to the Sundance Film Festival with the hopes of getting a distribution deal. Over the course of the film, Spurlock is regularly examined by a gastroenterologist, a cardiologist and SoHo-based general practitioner, Dr. Daryl Isaacs, who told the Post, "He was an extremely healthy person who got very sick eating this McDonald's diet." Dr Isaacs continued, "None of us imagined he could deteriorate this badly - he looked terrible. The liver test was the most shocking thing - it became very, very abnormal."

In the article Spurlock further recounted his ordeal, "I got desperately ill," he says. "My face was splotchy and I had this huge gut, which I've never had in my life. My knees started to hurt from the extra weight coming on so quickly. It was amazing - and really frightening. I was feeling like a typical American on Thanksgiving - very bloated and happy on the couch - and at some point on the news they were talking about two women who were suing McDonald's. People from the food industry were saying, 'You can't link kids being fat to our food - our food is nutritious.' I said, 'How nutritious is it really? Let's find out."

Not surprisingly, Spurlock has steered clear of the Golden Arches since the filming of his documentary was completed.

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