

Minimize Me

By ACSH Staff — June 1, 2004

People who view Morgan Spurlock's movie *Super Size Me* can be forgiven if they walk out thinking fast foods like those served at McDonald's and Burger King are particularly fattening. Mr. Spurlock ate (gorged, really) only at McDonald's for thirty days and ordered the super-sized versions whenever he was asked. As a consequence of his gluttony, he gained twenty-five pounds, raised his blood pressure and cholesterol, and saw deleterious changes in his liver.

But, as we've pointed out numerous times (see: [Health Panel: "Supersize Me" Movie Trivializes Obesity, a Serious Problem](#) [1] and [A Supersized Distortion](#) [2]), when it comes to controlling body weight, it's not just what one eats that makes the difference but how many calories the food contains and how many calories are balanced by physical activity. This truism was demonstrated by two other "thirty-dayers" people who also ate only at McDonald's for thirty days but didn't gain weight or wreck their health in the process.

Mr. Chazz Weaver, a resident of Costa Mesa, California, and a fitness and nutrition advocate, says he got fed up with the misinformation and partial nutrition information most consumers get. He thought Spurlock's movie was the final straw. So Weaver decided to show that, with an understanding of the basics of human biology and nutrition, a person can eat pretty much anything without getting fat if he balances calorie intake and output.

On April 1, he began eating all his meals four or five per day at McDonald's. He ate upwards of 3,000 calories per day and after two weeks had lost eight pounds (yes, lost). Since he didn't particularly want to lose weight, Weaver then increased his food intake to about 5,000 calories per day and managed to gain back about two pounds by the end of the month. His cholesterol improved, his blood pressure dropped a bit, and he says he feels just fine. How did he do it? Weaver works out at a gym daily about an hour and fifteen minutes per day split between aerobic exercise and resistance training. He was in good shape before he began his McDiet and remained so throughout. Anyone who wishes to do so can check the numbers for themselves at his website, www.truthinfitness.org [3]. It is an impressive testimonial to the importance of staying physically active.

Ms. Soso Whaley is the second thirty-dayer I've met. Unlike Chazz Weaver, Ms. Whaley wanted to lose weight. And she chose McDonald's food to help her do so. She, too, started her McDonald's diet on April 1 and documented her food choices on a website (http://www.cei.org/pages/debunk/debunk_the_junk.cfm [4]). Ms. Whaley consumed under 2,000 calories per day and stepped up her usual exercise program she likes using exercise videos and roller skating. By making appropriate choices, such as eating salads with low fat dressing and snack-size desserts, Soso lost ten pounds while eating at McDonald's.

After her visit to the ACSH offices at the end of April to discuss her experiences (see [photos](#)), we

shared lunch at a local McDonald's. She said her motivation was, in part, her feeling that Spurlock's movie did not emphasize the importance of individuals making appropriate food choices for themselves but rather blamed the food industry for America's problems with overweight and obesity. She is also a documentary filmmaker and plans to turn her experience into a movie of her own.

Neither of these thirty-dayers were paid by McDonald's to do what they did, nor, they told me, was anyone at McDonald's involved in advising them about what to eat or how much to exercise. Both have thoroughly documented their experiences on the Internet and their sites are freely available to all.

So the next time you hear someone bemoan the supposedly fattening nature of a particular type of food, think about Chazz and Soso and their experience with McDonald's foods.

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[1] http://acsh.org/healthissues/newsID.880/healthissue_detail.asp

[2] http://acsh.org/news/newsID.175/news_detail.asp

[3] <http://www.truthinfitness.org/>

[4] http://www.cei.org/pages/debunk/debunk_the_junk.cfm