

Super Size Me: Data and Information

Doctors and Specialists

- Darryl M. Isaacs, MD, Internal Medicine
- Lisa Ganjhu, D. O., Gastroenterologist and Hepatologist
- Steven Siegel, MD, FACC, Cardiologist
- Bridget Bennet, RD, Nutritionist and Dietician
- Eric Rowley, Exercise Physiologist

Initial Statistics and Observations

- 6'2" and 185.5 lbs. (BMI within normal range)
- 11% body fat
- blood pressure 130/105, 140/95, 120/80
- "perfect" reflexes (Dr. Isaacs)
- cholesterol 168
- triglycerides 87
- SGOT (liver enzyme) 21
- SGPT (liver enzyme) 20
- no evidence of diabetes; fasting blood sugar is very low
- electrolytes, kidney function and liver function are "perfect" (Dr. Siegel)
- "general health is outstanding" (Dr. Isaacs); "you're starting off terrific" (Dr. Seigel)
- "above average fitness for your age group" (Rowley)

Doctors' Predictions

Dr. Gahnju: "I think the worst-case scenario is that you increase your triglycerides and your cholesterol level, and if you have any heart disease in your family or any underlying heart disease you're putting your heart at risk."

Dr. Seigel: "I expect to see an increase in your triglycerides, because that can be affected. You're at 87 now and I think that will change. And I think that's the only thing that will change. . . out of everything. There might be some minor variations."

But the body is extremely adaptable, and the kidneys will handle any extra salt that you're taking in and your liver will be able to metabolize additional fats."

Dr. Isaacs: "As far as you gaining weight, you probably will. As far as your cholesterol going up, it probably will. As far as you feeling miserable, maybe, I don't know."

Further Weigh-Ins

- Day 5: 195 lbs. (5% of body weight gained)
- Day 10: 203 lbs. (10% of body weight gained)

Day X Statistics and Observations

- 3rd weigh-in: 202 lbs.
- Blood pressure 150/90
- cholesterol 225
- SGOT 130
- SGPT 290

Dr. Isaacs: "A liver that's sick in any way will leak some of its enzymes out into the blood. This is very non-specific, but it means your liver is sick. The cause of your sickness is fatty liver. Your liver is now like paté."

Dr. Isaacs: "Anybody would say now that you're sick. You feel fatigued with this, you feel lethargic with this, you feel very numb with this. If somebody were doing this to themselves with alcohol, they could theoretically wipe out their whole liver. . . My advice to you is stop doing what you're doing because it's hurting you."

Day 21 Statistics and Observations

Dr. Isaacs: "I don't have a ready explanation for your chest pain. Would you at least consider taking aspirin once a day now you're on this ridiculous diet? . . . You saw these numbers, right? These numbers are absolutely outrageous. For the first time we're seeing uric acid elevated, so you're giving yourself hyperurecemia and the danger of hyperurecemia is gout, kidney stones. The results for your liver are obscene beyond anything I would have thought. . . . My advice to you as a physician is, you've got to stop. You're pickling your liver. . . . If the pain starts to radiate to your jaw, down your arm, that's life-threatening, and immediately so, so I need to hear about that, or you need to call 911."

Dr. Seigel: "My suggestion would be to stop the diet, to go on a low-fat diet and re-take a blood test in a couple of weeks."

Morgan's Summary of His Results

"In only 30 days of eating nothing but McDonald's I gained 24.5 lbs., my liver turned to fat, and my cholesterol shot up 65 points [to 230]. My body fat percentage went from 11 to 18%, still below the average of 22% for men and 30% for women. I nearly doubled my risk of coronary heart disease, making myself twice as likely to have heart failure. I felt depressed and exhausted most of the time, my mood swung on a dime, and my sex life was non-existent. I craved this food more and more when I ate it, and got massive cravings when I didn't. In my final blood test, many of my body functions showed signs of improvement, but the doctors were less than optimistic."

Doctors' Conclusions

They were asked the question "Should people eat fast food?"

Dr. Isaacs: "No. The answer's no."

Dr. Seigel: "It certainly needs to be very restricted, balanced with overall a healthy diet, and overall a lot of exercise."

Dr. Ganjhu: "It's a cheap form of food and it does keep you full for a while, so you get your money's worth, but unfortunately you cause some major harm to your heart, your liver, your blood. . . . We've got numbers to show that it [a Mac Attack] attacks your liver, too."

Morgan's Conclusion

"But the scary part is there are people who eat this food regularly. Some people even eat it every day. So while my experiment may have been a little extreme, it's not that crazy. But here is a crazy idea. Why not do away with your Super Size options? Who needs 42 oz. of Coke, a half pound of fries? And why not give me a choice beside French fries or French fries? That would be a great start. But why should these companies want to change? Their loyalty isn't to you—it's to the stockholders. . . . If this ever-growing paradigm is going to shift, it's up to you. But if you decide to keep living this way, you risk getting as sick as I did. And you may wind up here [emergency room], or here [cemetery]. I guess the big question is: who do you want to see go first, you or them?"