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Health 1020

Nutrition Perspective

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**Super-Size Me**

 The documentary “Supersize Me” directed by and starring himself, Morgan Spurlock. “Supersize Me” is about Morgan Spurlock takes on a challenge to eat McDonald’s three times a day for 30 days straight and ONLY McDonald’s. His reason behind it, is that two overweight girls are suing McDonald’s because according to them, they became obese because of consuming McDonald’s food. Also, because of the epidemic that’s going on in the United States which is obesity. McDonald’s could make a claim, if proven that eating McDonald’s food is not unreasonably dangerous, so Spurlock decided to take on the challenge and see for himself.

He first went with three doctors: a cardiologist, gastroenterologist, and a general practitioner. He was in normal body weight, height, blood levels, body fat, blood pressure, and everything was fine and he was a healthy man. They all said the same thing, that this diet will bring effects to the body but nothing too drastic. He also went with a registered dietitian and she recommended hip what to do and what items from McDonald’s he could have. For example, he was consuming too many calories, over 5,000, the dietitian told him instead of soda to drink water or instead of a shake to eat yogurt. The day before his “new” diet or like they call it in the documentary “McDiet”, his girlfriend made him a vegan meal since she’s a vegan chef.

So, his new McDiet consists of just eating McDonald’s for 30 days and eating it three times a day: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. He’s only allowed to supersize his meals if the McDonald’s employees offer it. He can only consume food that’s over McDonald’s counter and he must eat at least once of the items on the menu. He’ll be recording his meals on a log of what he ate. He can only have a walking distance of 5,000 steps per day since that is how much the average American citizen walks. In the documentary, they discuss why all the sudden people are overweight when diners have always been here. If it’s the responsibly of the consumer who is consuming and buying the food or the producer’s fault. They also discussed how people will hector a smoker and tell him/she how bad it is, like it’s a norm but if you saw a bigger person it’s not socially acceptable to tell him/she; it’s not a norm.

After five days, Spurlock gained 9.5 pounds from his new diet (starting at 185). Throughout the days he starts experiencing shortness of breath, depression, headaches, etc. Spurlock said that when he feels like depressed and eats a McDonald’s meal after, he suddenly feels better and a lot happier. One of the doctors tells him he’s now addicted to McDonald’s food. After a few days, he gains eight more pounds and is now at 203.5 pounds. After, he lost one pound but the dietitian said he probably lost muscle mass since muscle weighs more than fat. According to Spurlock’s girlfriend, Alex, he starts losing his energy and his sex drive. They also performed an experiment on children. The children were shown pictures of President George Washington and Jesus Christ then they were shown pictures of “mascots” from fast-food restaurants. Most of them knew who the mascots from fast-food restaurants than George Washington or Jesus.

At the end of the month, he has gain more pounds ending with 210 by the end of the challenge. Also, he starts having complications-heart palpitations and his doctor tells him to immediately stop but he continues the challenge. At the end, they physicians are surprised on how much more this diet affected him-lot worse than expected. After the documentary released, McDonald’s stopped serving their supersize meals and have said the film had no correlation to their decision.

I chose this documentary because I have seen it around many times and I haven’t watched it till now. It caught my attention especially when it documents the epidemic in the United States which is obesity and the contributions that fast food restaurants have among this epidemic. Also, because nowadays, our meals are consumed so much by fast food restaurants or eating out all the time.

The producer and writer of this documentary is Morgan Spurlock, an American independent filmmaker. His diet is great and his overall health is great as well. All his health levels were in normal conditions. In the film, he mentions how when he was younger, his mother would always cook and they would never eat out that much.

This documentary was produced in February of 2003 to March of that same year but released in 2004. The themes of the film are still applicable today because not much has changed since then with the obesity epidemic, it’s gotten worse. I do believe there has been some changes but nothing that’s decreased obesity. I think it’s the consumer’s fault for their health problems/weight. I do believe fast-food restaurants, in this case McDonald’s do play big factors into it but it’s the consumer’s responsibility for their actions and what they’re putting into their bodies. Though, I thought it was a bit bizarre that the two girls were trying to sue McDonald’s because of them gaining weight but I think it was the parents fault for telling them “lies” that it’s the food, I mean I’m sure it plays a factor but no one’s forcing them to eat that food. They themselves are putting that food into their mouths when McDonalds’ has stated before that it’s not good for you according to the film.

 According to the textbook, “Nutrition – Wardlaw’s Contemporary Nutrition: A Functional Approach” by Anne M. Smith and Gordon M. Wardlaw, you should be eating 2,000 calories a day but Spurlock for this challenge he was eating over 5,000 calories a day. Spurlock in the beginning had 11% body fat and at the end of the challenge it turned into 18% of body fat. Also, according to the textbook we should be exercising at least one hour a day for four to five times a week. But in the documentary, some people think that they can get away with not exercising at all and losing weight. Lastly, Lisa Young, a professor of nutrition, said in the film that the 7-Eleven “double gulp” which are 64 ounces, which hold 1,600-1,800 calories, 48 teaspoons of sugar and one person drinks that by themselves. But according to our textbook, we should consume 2,000 calories and no more than six teaspoons of sugar.

What I learned about nutrition from completing this assignment that what we eat and what we decide to put in our body will affect us in a good or bad way. Anything bad your body will have repercussions. I learned that what you eat is very important and we should watch what we’re eating and putting into our bodies. I for sure have probably ate more fast food than it is recommended and it makes me think twice about it now, watching this documentary. I will not be doing this challenge myself, eating McDonald’s three times a day for 30 days but maybe do something like not eating out or fast food for 30 days and see how my body reacts and how I will feel.

References

Spurlock, M. (Director). (2004, May 7). *Super Size Me* [Video file]. Retrieved November 29,
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