

# Eat McDonald's for 3 months, lose 37 pounds?

Bruce Horowitz , USA TODAY 6:45 p.m. EST January 6, 2014

**Science teacher goes on McDonald's-only diet to prove it's not where you eat, but what you eat (and how much you exercise) that matters.**

(Photo: Scott Olson, Getty Images)

## Story Highlights

- Teacher says McDonald's doesn't make folks fat, but food and lifestyle choices do
- He stuck to about 2,000 calories per day, but ate much more than McDonald's salads



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McDonald's executives aren't just loving it — they're eating it up.

Roughly one decade after the film *Super Size Me* skewered McDonald's for selling food that the hit documentary film claimed was not healthy and lacking in key nutritional elements when consumed regularly, there's a new, unexpected twist to the experiment that had director Morgan Spurlock gaining weight and getting sick after chowing-down on McDonald's food for only 90 days.

The new twist: A high school science teacher in the Colo-Nesco School District in Colo, Iowa, says he lost 37 pounds in 90 days also by eating only McDonald's food — but he followed strict nutritional limits laid out by his students. That included limits of 2,000 calories a day and attempts to stick with daily recommended allowances for protein, carbohydrates, cholesterol and several other nutritional restrictions.

"I'm the perfect example of a slob," says the teacher, John Cisna, in a phone interview on Monday. He insists that he ate a variety of stuff on the McDonald's menu — including Big Macs, Quarter Pounders and even desserts, including sundaes and ice cream cones. His mission: to demonstrate to his students that it's how and what you eat — not where you eat — that matters most. During the three months, he says, his cholesterol dropped from 249 to 170.

He had two Egg White Delight McMuffins, a bowl of McDonald's Fruit & Maple Oatmeal and 1% milk for breakfast and, typically, a salad for lunch. Then, at dinner, he'd often have a more traditional Value Meal. He also adopted a new exercise regimen of walking 45 minutes daily.

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"McDonald's had absolutely nothing to do with this," he says, although he did coax a local McDonald's franchisee into giving him the three-month meal supply for free. "If you had a McDonald's senior executive serve me a Quarter Pounder in person, I wouldn't know him."

For McDonald's, which has been repeatedly baffooned — if not lambasted — in the news media for selling junk food, the experiment is both an eyebrow raiser and an I-told-you-so moment that is surely gloat-worthy.

"We congratulate John Cisna on his weight loss and improved overall health, and we are pleased he was able to accomplish his goals by making balanced choices, which included many of his favorite McDonald's menu items," says Cindy Goody, senior director of nutrition at McDonald's USA, in a statement.

Spurlock, who had a very different experience eating only at McDonald's 10 years ago, was filming the CNN show *Inside Man* on Monday and unavailable for comment.

Jo Ann Hattner, a nutritional consultant at Stanford University School of Medicine, says McDonald's has much improved its menu. "You have to give them some credit," she says.

But, she notes, "I don't advise a McDonald's diet," she says. "You need more fresh vegetables and fresh fruits."

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