

Brian tries to lose weight

Part 1

Brian's beloved cat died a few months ago. Then Brian tried unsuccessfully to clone the cat. He has been feeling down lately. Today is no different, it's raining and he's fed up.

Lunch time arrives and he pulls out the lunchbox his wife handed him as he left early this morning. He opens it....."blah, salad sandwiches", not what he's in the mood for, "maybe it'll do for a snack later on". He grabs his umbrella and heads out into the rain. The first place he comes across is McDonalds so he goes in and surveys the menu.... "Hmm, a Quarter Pounder® with cheese or a McChicken®.....well, I had a chicken burger yesterday so maybe I'll go with the Quarter Pounder® today". He orders a Quarter Pounder® with cheese, a large French Fries and a large Coca-Cola. The attendant adds a ketchup packet and a salt packet to the bag and tells Brian to have a nice day. "Gee, I love this place" thinks Brian.

Question 1:

Go to the 'Bag a McMeal' section of the McDonald's website:

<http://app.mcdonalds.com/bagamcmeal>

Assuming Brian has a daily requirement of 2000 calories – what percentage of his daily calories did this one meal provide? What about fat and sodium?

Question 2:

If Brian had ordered the Bacon Ranch Salad with Ranch dressing, butter garlic croutons and a large iced tea how would these values change?

The next day Brian feels like a change so he goes across the street to Burger King. He orders an Original DOUBLE WHOPPER® Sandwich with all the trimmings, a 'King' size French Fries, a small portion of Onion Rings with zesty dipping sauce and a medium Dr Pepper.

Question 3:

Go to the Burger King website: <http://www.bk.com/Food/Nutrition/NutritionWizard/index.aspx>

How did Brian fare this time?

Question 4:

If Brian continues to consume such a diet several days a week, what do you think will happen to him in terms of weight and health?

Question 5:

How much of the blame for the widespread obesity problem lies with the fast food industry?

Part 2

A few months later Brian is noticing that he has put on a bit of weight and his wife has taken to calling him pudgy as a pet name. This upsets him. When he breaks his son's chair by sitting in it he decides enough is enough, time to do something about his weight problem. All of the girls at work talk about being 'on Atkins' and various 'Low Carb' diets so he decides to give it a try.

Brian goes to the Atkins website and reads about the diet. He surveys the list of acceptable foods for phase one of the diet.

After a couple of weeks on the diet Brian notices that his breath smells kind of funny and he is constipated.

Question 1:

Why do you think Brian is experiencing these symptoms?

Question 2:

What do you think of the scientific merits of the Atkins nutritional approach?

Question 3:

Do you think that people who are on Low Carb diets follow the diets exactly? Why/Why not?

Brian decides that the diet is too difficult to stick to; there must be another way where he doesn't have to give up the foods he loves completely. He contemplates joining a gym but thinks that his busy schedule would be a deterrent.

That evening he sees an advertisement on TV "Are you over 30, overstressed and overweight? Try Relacore" He checks out the website <http://www.relacore.com/> and reads "Simply stated, a bulging midsection is not your fault, it's the harmful combination of everyday stress, overeating, and excess cortisol, all conspiring to keep you over-stressed, tired, and thick around the middle." Brian couldn't wait to show this to his wife, she'd been nagging him about overeating lately. Now he had scientific evidence that it wasn't his fault!

Question 4:

How does Relacore work?

Question 5:

Do you think that Brian will lose weight?

Part 3

After six weeks taking Relacore, Brian hasn't lost any weight. He decides to do some more research to see if there is something else out there for him.

Question 1:

Why do you think Brian hasn't lost weight?

Brian starts to do some research. He finds two interesting looking products, Xenadrine EFX and Hydroxycut and reads some reviews. He notices that many products seem to contain lots of caffeine. "Why don't I just drink coffee if that's all that's in them?" asks Brian. There are several ingredients in these that he doesn't recognize so he goes to www.pubmed.com and types 'Xenadrine EFX' into the search box and clicks on 'go'.

Question 2:

Go to www.pubmed.com and type 'Xenadrine EFX' in the search box, then click 'go'. What did Brian find?

Next Brian decides to look at prescription weight loss drugs. He reads about a drug called Xenical. He likes what he reads about how the drug works, "this could be the answer I've been looking for" thinks Brian "I could keep eating fast food but just not take up the fat"! Next he reads about the side effects associated with the drug...."oh, maybe not the miracle cure I'm looking for after all" he concludes.

Question 4:

What did Brian find that put him off Xenical?

Question 5:

All of these drugs, prescription or otherwise, recommend the use of the drug in conjunction with a healthy diet and exercise. Do you think that these drugs would work on their own? Is it necessary to have them at all?

Question 6:

With regard to 'all natural' and 'herbal' weight loss products, do you think they are safer than 'synthetic' ones?

Part 4

Brian does some more browsing and comes across the following website:

<http://wemarket4u.net/fatfoe/>

“That does it” he says “I just need to accept the fact that I’m fat”! He googles the words ‘fat acceptance’ and lo and behold he finds there is an association for people just like him! He visits the association’s website www.naafa.org and finds there is a chapter in New York. “Yes” he thinks, ‘salvation is near’!

Question 1:

Go to <http://wemarket4u.net/fatfoe/>

Browse through the site. Why didn’t Brian buy the product?

Question 2:

Do you think weight loss drugs are targeted at specific audiences (gender, age, economic or social status)?

Question 3:

Do you think the public are too gullible when it comes to advertising by the weight loss industry?
Do you think the government needs to protect the public from themselves?

Question 4:

Do you think the general public view obesity as a public health issue equivalent to for example, smoking?

Question 5:

What do you think the government’s responsibility in educating the public with regard to the health risks of obesity is?

Question 6:

What is NAAFA’s message?

Question 7:

What are the pros/cons of the NAAFA approach?