

# Maddog Unleashed

## New Weight-Loss Drug Is Nothing More Than Money Down the Toilet

*Then you have housewives and the diet pills. Mom found out there's a lot more than dieting in those pills, man.* —George Carlin, FM & AM



BY PATRICK O'GRADY

It's common for actors, authors and other artistes to speak of the characters they create as if they were living, breathing human beings. I'm just a scribbler, but I have enjoyed some modest success with a character I created for *VeloNews* back in 1989—the Old Guy Who Gets Fat In Winter, or the Fat Guy for short. And I can't help but wonder whether the Fat Guy, being a cyclist and thus predisposed toward pharmaceutical shortcuts in the pursuit of excellence, would eventually resort to doping.

Not EPO, human growth hormone, or blood doping, mind you. I'm talking about the latest and greatest diet drug, Alli. GlaxoSmithKline's Alli, the first over-the-counter diet drug approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, is selling like plasma in the ProTour, if you believe the *Wall Street Journal*. Unlike other weight-loss products, which make the user feel full or suppress the appetite, Alli stops the body from breaking down and absorbing fat.

Miracle drug, right? The answer to a Fat Guy's prayers, yeah? Maybe. Until you consider the obvious question. Just where does all that unbroken-down, non-absorbed fat devoured daily by the average American go? Well, apparently, it goes right out your ass. And like a rejected suitor, all that unloved, unwanted fat is liable to make a hell of a ruckus as it hits that back door.

**The Straight Poop.** No joke. Among what GlaxoSmithKline euphemistically calls "treatment effects" are gas, oily discharge, loose stools and "an urgent need to go to the bathroom." The company also proposes that users wear dark pants (I'm guessing brown) and fetch along a set of spares to the cube farm, along with a stylish Bed, Bath & Beyond thundermug to keep under the desk for emergencies.

Okay, so I made that last bit up. Even so, if this is the sacrifice Alli demands for transforming me into Levi Leipheimer, I think I can live with my lard. All it takes to drive me to the toilet in a cold sweat these days is a cup of coffee and a peek at the front page.

**Pounds Foolish. Good God.** And we have the effrontery to criticize pro bicycle racers for storing their own blood for later reinjection, or using everything from human growth hormone to pot belge, when we're willing—even eager—to risk soiling ourselves in public to shed a little pot bulge.

And you know what? Most of these poor soggy, smelly suckers who think they can buy fitness from the pharmacy either won't lose any significant weight or keep any lost pounds off, according to a 1999 *Journal of the American Medical Association* report quoted in the *Journal* article.

Here's a thought for the gravitationally challenged. Instead of spending the summer squirting and pooting between sprints to the crapper, how about spending less time at the trough and more time on the treadmill? Maybe skip the fast food and buy a fast bike? As even the Fat Guy knows, the real wonder drug when it comes to weight loss is sweat. And best of all, it's addictive.

**The Best Body Money Can Buy.** Aw, who am I trying to kid here? This is the country that virtually patented self-indulgence. We are a drive-through nation of giant houses, giant autos and giant people. Should we wish to look more like the beautiful creatures inhabiting our wall-size plasma TVs, and be fortunate enough to have adequate health insurance, it's off to the surgeon or the druggist with us.

That being said, I hate to miss an opportunity to profit from human suffering. Maybe I'll launch a competing product called "Allez" and market it to flabby masters racers with delusions of grandeur, like the Fat Guy. Get a little side business going supplying porta-johns, Depends and power washers to bike shops and race promoters.

What do you think about Jan Ullrich as a celebrity spokesperson?