



Healthy Eating Initiative: Benefits of Intermittent Fasting

Intermittent fasting is an eating pattern where you cycle between eating and fasting periods, allowing the body to burn through the calories consumed during your last meal and begin to burn fat. It is important to check with your doctor before starting an intermittent fasting routine, but the actual process is very simple. Some popular approaches to intermittent fasting include:

- Alternate day fasting. Eat a normal diet one day and either completely fast or have one small meal (less than 500 calories) the next day.
- 5:2 fasting. Eat a normal diet five days a week and fast twice a week.
- Daily time-restricted fasting. Eat normally only within a 5-8-hour window each day. For example, skip breakfast and eat the first meal in the afternoon and dinner no later than 6 p.m.

Intermittent fasting is safe for many people, but not for everyone. If you have kidney stones, gastroesophageal reflux, diabetes, or other chronic medical diagnoses that may be impacted by diet routine, talk with a doctor before starting intermittent fasting.

Benefits of intermittent fasting:

1. **Changes the function of hormones, cells, and genes.**
2. **Short-term fasting increases your metabolic rate, while also reducing the amount of food that you eat.** As a result, it may lead to weight loss.
3. **It can reduce insulin resistance and lower blood sugar levels.**
4. **Can reduce oxidative stress and inflammation in the body.**
5. **It can improve numerous risk factors for heart disease,** such as blood pressure, cholesterol levels, triglycerides, and inflammatory markers.
6. Studies in animals suggest that intermittent fasting may be **protective against neurodegenerative diseases** such as Alzheimer's disease.

Additional Resources:

- John Hopkins Medicine: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/intermittent-fasting-what-is-it-and-how-does-it-work>
- Mayo Clinic: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/expert-answers/intermittent-fasting/faq-20441303>
- Health Line: <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/intermittent-fasting-guide>

