

Intermittent Fasting

If you have been getting 12 hours between your last meal of the day and your first meal of the day you have been practicing one form of intermittent fasting. An interesting fact is that the only thing that has ever been proven to potentially reduce disease risk and increase life span, is reducing caloric consumption.

Religions worldwide have long maintained the benefits of fasting. Now there is science to back up those claims. Since the early 1900's doctors have been using fasting to deal with obesity, epilepsy, and diabetes and even the more recent research about its benefits date back to the mid 1940's when scientists from the University of Chicago expanded on research that began in the 1930's at Cornell University.

The decades following led to new developments in medicine such as pharmaceuticals and surgery. Now, many medical professionals are beginning to take another look at more holistic ways of dealing with aging and disease. Intermittent fasting is one of those ways.

Here are some health benefits of intermittent fasting (IF):

1. Cellular repair processes improve
2. Fat burning increases
3. Hormone function is enhanced
4. Metabolic rate increases
5. Insulin resistance is reduced
6. Oxidative stress is reduced
7. Inflammation is reduced
8. Blood pressure improves
9. Lipid profiles improve
10. Growth of new nerve cells increases
11. Alzheimer's disease can be delayed or prevented
12. Lifespan increases

Be smart when beginning intermittent fasting that is more than the 12 hour fast you have been doing on this program and consult your physician first. Below are 5 types of popular intermittent fasting methods:

1. The 16/8 Method: fast for 14-16 hours per day and eating during the other 8-10 hours per day. If you are already doing the 12 hour fast and wish to try this, work up to 14-16 hours from your last meal.
2. The 5:2 Method: restrict calories to 500-600 calories for two days out of five per week. For example, you may restrict your calories on Mondays and Thursdays of each week.
3. The Eat-Stop-Eat Method: this is a 24-hour fast that you can do once or twice a week.
4. The Alternate Day Method: staying under 500 calories every other day.
5. Spontaneous Meal Skipping: just listening to your body and choosing to skip a meal here and there from time to time.

Let me reiterate, *consult your physician* before following any of these five intermittent fasting plans. I also do not recommend intermittent fasting to anyone struggling with an eating disorder where food restriction may be a trigger to unhealthy habits. The methods that I feel are

the safest are the 12 hour overnight fast, the 16/8 method, the 5:2 method, and the spontaneous meal skipping method.