

FASTING FOR WEIGHT LOSS

1 in 7

Americans report using some sort of fasting as a means to **control body weight**.



This guide is to help you navigate some of the key facts to **help you** make your own choice or put the best evidence-based nutrition into practice.



To **learn more** beyond these highlighted takeaways on the research, consider donating for the digital downloads of our past webinars on this topic.



You can also watch our free videos on fasting on **NutritionFacts.org** and keep an eye out for more new ones to follow.

HOW FASTING WORKS:

at rest we burn around a **50 : 50** mix of carbs and fat

But we usually run out of our glycogen, our carbohydrate stores within 12 and 36 hours of stopping eating. At that point, our body has to shift to rely more on our fat stores.

DEFINITION	CALORIE RESTRICTION	FASTING	ALTERNATE-DAY FASTING	5:2 DIET	FASTING MIMICKING	TIME RESTRICTED FEEDING
				5:2	5 LOW KCAL	> 12 < 24
	Reducing average daily caloric intake below what is typical or habitual, without malnutrition or deprivation of essential nutrients.	Not eating at all or severely limiting intake during certain times of the day, week, or month.	A back-and-forth sequence of a fasting day (up to 100% calorie restriction) and a feeding day (ad libitum food consumption), resulting in roughly 36-h fasting periods every other day.	Eating five days of the week and fasting for the other two.	5 days a month eating a specially-designed low-calorie plant-based diet.	Fasting for periods of at least 12 hours but less than 24 hours.
ADVANTAGES	<p>Metabolic slowing and a reduction in free radical-induced oxidative stress (both of which may slow the rate of aging).</p> <p>Improved blood pressure, cholesterol, mood, libido, and sleep.</p> <p>May be able to lose as much, or even more, body fat than on a fast that only lasts a week or two.</p> <p>Drop in LDL cholesterol along with weight loss.</p>	<p>Hunger may start to dissipate within 36 hours.</p> <p>After the third week of fasting, fat loss starts to overtake the loss of lean body mass in obese individuals</p> <p>A few days in, many report feeling clear, elated, and alert—even euphoric. This may be in part due to the significant rise in endorphins that accompanies fasting.</p>	<p>After 2 weeks, hunger on slashed calorie days dissipates.</p> <p>Regular breaks from feeling constant hunger.</p> <p>Alternate-day fasting can lead to significant reductions in body fat: 4%-8% drop in body weight after 3 to 12 weeks.</p> <p>Same amount of weight loss as continuous calorie restriction.</p>	<p>Drop in LDL cholesterol along with weight loss.</p> <p>Similar weight loss results as alternate-day fasting.</p>	<p>6 pounds lost after 3 months.</p> <p>Drop in blood pressure, the cancer-promoting growth hormone IGF-1, and decreased markers of inflammation.</p>	<p>1 pound lost per week in first 2 weeks when eating is stopped between 7pm and 6am.</p> <p>Simple, easy to understand and implement.</p> <p>7 pounds lost in obese people after 12 weeks of eating from 10am-6pm.</p> <p>For even further benefits on early time-restricted eating, check out our videos on Chronobiology.</p>
DISADVANTAGES	<p>Can result in loss of lean body mass, but resistance training 3 times/week can prevent 90% of the loss.</p>	<p>Fasting for a week or two can cause more weight loss than calorie restriction, but it may actually lead to less loss of body fat. During fasting your body starts cannibalizing your protein for fuel. Just a few grams of carbs can cut protein loss up to 50%.</p> <p>Fasting for a day can make people irritable, moody, and distracted.</p> <p>Long-term water-only fasting is invariably fatal.</p>	<p>Longest trial of alternate-day fasting found that it may be less sustainable than more traditional approaches and may blunt the drop in LDL cholesterol one expects with weight loss.</p>	<p>Feelings of hunger may be more pronounced (but does not seem to lead to overeating on the non-fasting days).</p>	<p>Best not to drop below a thousand calories a day for more than twenty-four hours without medical supervision.</p>	<p>If the feeding window is late, as opposed to early, one can suffer the adverse chronobiological effects of breakfast skipping and/or night eating.</p>



CAUTIONS

Fasting longer than 24 hours, and particularly 3 or more days, should only be done under the supervision of a physician and preferably in a live-in clinic.

Prolonged water-only fasting is no longer recommended as a clinical treatment option for obesity due to the associated risks of complications.

Anyone with “negligible food intake for more than five days” may be at risk of developing refeeding which can result from resuming a regular diet too quickly.

Nutrients such as thiamine and phosphorus are used to metabolize food. If too much food is taken before these nutrients can be replenished, demand may exceed supply and whatever residual stores you still carry can be driven down even further, with potentially fatal consequences.



REASONS TO NEVER FAST:

- advanced liver or kidney failure
- porphyria
- uncontrolled hyperthyroidism
- pregnant and breastfeeding women
- an active infection
- already underweight

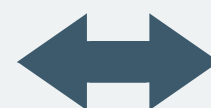
Consult your physician especially if you're diabetic, have a history of fainting and/or are on ANY kind of medication.



Fasting only works long-term if it can act as a jumpstart to a healthier diet.

In a retrospective long-term comparison of weight reduction after an inpatient stay at a naturopathic center, those who were fasted lost more weight at the time, but at around seven years were back to the same weight.

No surprise, since most reported returning to the same diet they were on before. Those who were instead placed on a healthier, more whole food plant-based diet were more likely to make persistent changes in their diet, and seven years later were lighter than when they started.



Why can't you have it both ways, though?

You could use intermittent fasting to kickstart a transition to a healthier diet.