

Intermittent Fasting

Intermittent fasting (IF) means cycling between periods of restricting calories and periods of not restricting calories. While fasting, you may avoid all caloric foods and beverages or greatly limit intake. Complete fasting or significant restriction is generally between 12 to 48 hours.

TYPES OF INTERMITTENT FASTING

Time-restricted eating (TRE) means you only eat during a set window, ranging from 4 to 12 hours. Also called prolonged nightly fasting, it extends your typical overnight fast. For example, eating only between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. is often called a 16:8 plan (16 hours fasting, 8-hour eating window). The amount of food and number of meals during the window are generally not restricted.

Alternate-day fasting (ADF), also called fasting intervals, means a cycle of fasting one day and normal intake the next. You only consume water and electrolytes on fasting days. It can also mean fasting every third day or on a personalized schedule.

Intermittent energy restriction (IER) or modified fasting means switching between days of a very low-calorie diet and normal intake. Two examples:

- **Modified alternate-day fasting.** Like ADF, except you can eat up to 600 calories or 25% of your daily needs on fasting days. If you need 2,000 calories daily, you'd eat about 500 on fasting days.
- **5:2 method.** On two days per week you have a very low-calorie intake (no more than 25% of daily needs); on the other five days, normal intake.

WHO BENEFITS FROM INTERMITTENT FASTING?

Work with your healthcare practitioner to find out if fasting is right for you and which type best fits your needs. Studies suggest fasting may improve insulin resistance, blood sugar, blood pressure, inflammation, short-term weight loss, and brain health. Longer-term studies are needed to confirm benefits over time.

WHO SHOULD NOT FAST (OR FAST WITH EXTRA CAUTION)?

Fasting is **not advised** for children or if you are frail, underweight, pregnant, trying to become pregnant, or breastfeeding. Those with an eating disorder or disordered eating pattern should not fast, nor should those with an irregular heartbeat, low blood pressure, or extreme fatigue.

If you have a health condition, first discuss the risks versus benefits with your practitioner. Special caution is needed with diabetes, metabolic syndrome, or blood-sugar symptoms—these require a practitioner experienced in fasting and medication adjustment.

GENERAL ADVICE FOR INTERMITTENT FASTING

- Drink plenty of filtered water on fasting days. Electrolytes or other supplements may be recommended.
- Avoid high-intensity exercise while fasting. Walking, yoga, or light-to-moderate activity is fine.
- Be aware of your movement and balance—you may feel dizzy or lightheaded, especially at first.
- Eat mostly whole, unprocessed, nutrient-rich foods, since you won't be eating much on fasting days.
- Stop fasting if you feel unwell, and call your provider.

FASTING MAY IMPROVE

- Blood pressure
- Antioxidant activity
- Insulin effectiveness
- Brain function

FASTING MAY DECREASE

- Blood sugar
- Free radicals
- Inflammation
- Triglycerides

PERSONALIZED PLAN FOR INTERMITTENT FASTING

Intermittent Fasting Options:

- Time-restricted eating: Fast _____ hours per day, between _____ and _____.
- One-day fast (24 hours), weekly
- Alternate-day fasting
- Modified alternate-day fasting*
- 5:2 method*

**Up to 600 calories on fasting days.*

How often you'll fast: _____ times per week for _____ weeks.

SUPPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Multivitamin
- Multimineral
- Electrolytes (calcium, magnesium, sodium, potassium, chloride)

This plan should be followed under the supervision and guidance of a qualified healthcare professional.

SAMPLE 600-CALORIE FOOD PLAN (FASTING DAYS)

- **Breakfast:** One scrambled egg with a cup of spinach sautéed in a small amount of chicken broth. Top with a quarter of a fresh avocado and a pinch of sea salt and pepper.
- **Lunch:** 2–3 oz cooked turkey or chicken on 2 cups of mixed baby greens. Drizzle with the juice of half a lemon and 1 tsp olive oil. Sprinkle with sea salt and cracked pepper.
- **Dinner:** 2–3 oz poached or broiled salmon with a cup of steamed broccoli, drizzled with ½ tsp olive oil and the juice of half a lemon or lime. Sprinkle with sea salt and fresh herbs.