



## Healthy Eating Initiative: Evidence-Based Health Benefits of Intermittent Fasting

Intermittent fasting is an eating pattern where you cycle between periods of eating and fasting, which allows the body to burn through the calories consumed during your last meal and begins 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 two days 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 a dinner no later than 6 p.m.

Numerous studies show that it can have powerful benefits for your body and brain. Intermittent fasting is safe for many people, but it's not for everyone. If you have kidney stones, gastroesophageal reflux, diabetes or other chronic medical diagnoses which may be impacted by diet routine, talk with a doctor before starting intermittent fasting.

### Here are just a few evidence-based benefits of intermittent fasting:

- 1. Changes the function of hormones, cells, and genes.**
  - Blood **levels of insulin drop** significantly.
  - Advanced **cellular repair processes**, such as removing waste material from cells.
- 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. 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>

