

# Intermittent Fasting

## What is intermittent fasting?

- Alternating periods of eating and fasting.
  - There are a number of different ways to practice intermittent fasting, including alternating one full day eating and one full day not eating, or simply decreasing the feeding window on any of number of days per week (i.e., restricting eating to a six- to 10-hour window).

## Who is a good candidate for intermittent fasting?

- Patients with some acute or chronic infections
- Patients with a weak immune system
- Patients trying to lose weight
- Patients with type 2 diabetes or other metabolic dysfunction
- Patients with neurologic issues (i.e., Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, dementia, etc.)
- Patients trying to maximize longevity

## Who is not a good candidate for intermittent fasting?

- Pregnant women
- Patients with HPA axis dysregulation
- Patients with hypothyroidism
- Patients with eating disorders
- Children and teenagers

## How to do intermittent fasting

- Consume only water, tea, or black coffee during fasting periods. If desired, a small amount of ghee or coconut oil in a hot beverage is permitted during the fasting periods.
- Start with a 14- to 16-hour fast three to four times a week. This means all food is consumed within an eight- to 10-hour window, i.e., 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. or 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. each day. (Women tend to do better with slightly shorter fasts when compared with men.)
- Progress to a 16-hour fast each day of the week. All food is consumed within an eight-hour window each day.
- If desired and tolerated, you may add a 40-hour fast once or twice a month. For example, if you eat between 12 and 8 p.m., you would finish your last meal on Friday night at 8 p.m. and not eat again until Sunday at 12 p.m. This is a more advanced strategy and should only be done by those who already have experience with fasting.

- It's important to listen to your body and only fast on days when you feel up to it. You must take other life stressors into account and recognize that intermittent fasting, while often beneficial, is another stress on the body. When background levels of stress are low to moderate, this can be beneficial, but when they are high, intermittent fasting can cause problems.
- It's also important to monitor sleep, energy levels, and cognitive function. If any of these start to decline, it may be time to reconsider how often to fast.