

The Great Fast



By Kara Lynch

Maybe you saw it on Instagram or overheard a discussion about it in the gym. It's one of the newest weight loss trends, that has surprisingly, existed for centuries before we named it, "Intermittent Fasting." Get ready to learn why breakfast is not the most important meal of the day as I lay down the deets about IMF.

Simply put, intermittent fasting is essentially abstaining from eating during a certain time and only eating during a certain time. Everyone fasts differently, but I feel the easiest way is beginning to eat later in the day and abstaining from eating before bed. Sounds miserable, but bear with me because the health benefits are incredible and go far beyond weight loss. Fasting kick starts the body's natural ability to burn fat. With IMF it's not about what you eat, but when you eat, so no major changes in diet are necessary. However, it is always recommended to eat a balanced, healthy diet to maintain weight and overall health.

Our ancestors were fasting before it became trendy. As a result of food scarcity, weather conditions, and their overall hunter gatherer lifestyle, our ancestors did not have constant access to food like we do. When food was unavailable, they were fasting. Why do I bring that up? Because historians predict that our ancestors were lean and muscular as a result of this fasting. Fasting contributed to humans' evolution to functioning well both physically and mentally. Fasting also plays a role in many major religions for holidays like Ramadan, implying that there are spiritual benefits in fasting. Let's discuss what the world of IMF opens up.

The Benefits:

Weight loss

Maintains heart health

Promotes the secretion of the human growth hormone (HGH)

Muscle growth

Stabilizes the hunger hormone

May slow down the aging process

Improves the body's ability to deal with stress

HGH is naturally produced by the body and has been known to treat obesity and help build muscle mass, both essential for burning fat. IMF jump starts the body's fat burning process known as ketosis. When you are not eating, the body has no food to burn for energy, therefore it uses up your fat stores for fuel. One study showed that fasting increased good cholesterol and decreased not only bad cholesterol, but also triglyceride levels.

Researchers at the University of Southern California found that fasting can trigger the body to create new white blood cells thus regenerating the immune system. This can lead to a longer life and long term positive health effects.

Possible **NEGATIVE EFFECTS**:

As with any lifestyle change relating to health, there are things we must be cautious of. Diabetics should be cautious about jumping into IMF because going an extended period without eating could lead to dangerous drops in blood sugar levels. People with a history of eating disorders should also be careful as IMF could trigger past emotions and lead to a possible relapse. Do not fast if you're sick because then you're depriving the body of nutrients it needs to heal. Pregnant women should not fast. Overall, always consult with your physician before making a major change to your lifestyle.

Lastly, if IMF sounds awesome for you, be sure to ease into it. It is recommended that you begin by abstaining from eating about 3 hours before bed. Then, skip breakfast the next morning. During this time you should not be eating or drinking anything but water and lots of it. It can take several weeks to several months for your

body to adjust so don't be hard on yourself if at first, it seems like an unattainable lifestyle. The reason there are so many benefits for intermittent fasting is because it heals your body at the cellular level. My take? If fasting makes you feel better and look better, go for it!

MY RESOURCES:

<https://theheartysoul.com/benefits-of-intermittent-fasting/>

<https://draxe.com/intermittent-fasting-benefits/>

<https://store.draxe.com/blogs/all/intermittent-fasting-secret>

<https://www.mercola.com/calendar/2018/fasting.htm>

<https://fitness.mercola.com/sites/fitness/archive/2013/11/08/beginners-guide-intermittent-fasting.aspx>