

Fasting's Impact on Health health

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Fasting is a practice that involves refraining from consuming food and sometimes beverages for a specific duration. There are different types of fasts, each with its distinct approach and purpose. Some of the more common types include:

1. **Water Fasting:** This involves consuming only water for a specified period, usually lasting one to three days.
2. **Intermittent Fasting:** Intermittent fasting restricts food intake to a specific daily time window, typically involving 16-20 hours of fasting and 4-8 hours of eating.
3. **Alternate Day Fasting:** In this approach, fasting occurs every other day, with some variations allowing limited calorie intake on fasting days.
4. **Religious Fasting:** Fasting is observed as a spiritual discipline in some religions, such as during Ramadan.
5. **Partial Fasting:** Certain foods are restricted during partial fasting.

Studies that investigated the impact on heart health of fasting showed that there were improvements in blood pressure, triglycerides, and cholesterol levels. In addition, some studies also found improved appetite regulation.

Here are some summaries of the current research:

1. **Does the Energy Restriction Intermittent Fasting Diet Alleviate Metabolic Syndrome Biomarkers? A Randomized Controlled Trial**
 In this study, 70 adults with metabolic syndrome (which includes high blood pressure, triglycerides, blood sugar, and

low HDL cholesterol) were split into two groups. The study compared the effects of a 12-week Intermittent Energy Restriction (IER) diet with a Continuous Energy Restriction (CER) diet. Both diets led to improvements in blood pressure, total cholesterol, triglyceride, LDL cholesterol, fasting glucose, and insulin levels by the end of the 12 weeks ($p < 0.05$). However, there were no significant differences in these metabolic syndrome markers between the IER and CER groups.

2. **Cardiometabolic Benefits of Intermittent Fasting.**

This research review looked at how intermittent fasting affects markers of heart and metabolic health in humans, including blood pressure, insulin resistance, and oxidative stress. Various forms of fasting, such as alternate-day fasting, the 5:2 diet (typically participants eat normally for 5 days and fast for the remaining two days), and time-restricted eating, were found to have positive effects on these parameters. While levels of LDL cholesterol and triglycerides were also reduced, the results were not consistent across all studies. This review also highlighted other health benefits, like improved appetite control and positive changes in the diversity of the gut microbiome.

Fasting can provide many benefits and it is important to check with your healthcare practitioner prior to initiating any new health care regime or practice.

Practitioners trained by the Metabolic Terrain Institute of Health take a scientific approach to working with patients who wish to implement fasting as a treatment option. It is essential to consult with a MATC Certified™ Practitioner to properly test, assess and address each patient before and during implementing therapeutic fasting interventions, or at the very least consult with a practitioner or health care provider familiar with your specific state of metabolic health. It is crucial to work with a certified practitioner and follow a proper fasting protocol, especially when implementing fasting alongside other treatments.

References:

1. Kunduraci YE, Ozbek H. Does the Energy Restriction Intermittent Fasting Diet Alleviate Metabolic Syndrome Biomarkers? A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Nutrients*. 2020 Oct 21;12(10):3213.
2. Varady KA, Cienfuegos S, Ezpeleta M, Gabel K. Cardiometabolic Benefits of Intermittent Fasting. *Annu Rev Nutr*. 2021 Oct 11;41:333-361.