

# Are fasting diets effective and safe for losing weight?

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Credit: Ingimage

Although traditional reduced-calorie diets are a science-based way to lose weight, intermittent fasting is a good alternative that studies suggest is just as beneficial.

With intermittent [fasting](#) diets, people aren't necessarily avoiding all food for days on end. More often, they're just significantly reducing their [calorie intake](#) or abstaining from eating for extended hours of the day or certain days of the week.

They might restrict their eating to between noon and 8 p.m., for example, or on alternate days eat only half of their typical daily calorie needs, or choose two days a week when they only eat five hundred calories. In between those times, people eat as they normally would.

I think one reason intermittent fasting is popular is that it gives people some structure to help them restrict calories, yet it doesn't carry the [mental strain](#) of having to be on a diet every day.

Although some proponents of fasting claim it is better than a typical calorie-restricted diet at preserving muscle mass and reducing [bad cholesterol](#) and blood sugar, there isn't enough data to confirm these claims.

Some [people](#) are better able to manage hunger with periods of fasting than others. So if the fasting regimen is still making your hunger worse after a couple weeks of adapting, it's not right for you.

Total calories still matter, so don't take non-fasting days as an excuse to eat with abandon or double-up on desserts. And be sure to let your physician know if you start a fasting diet, particularly if you are pre-diabetic or diabetic, as fasting can affect blood glucose.

Provided by Tufts University

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