

Intermittent fasting and traditional calorie counting shown to be about equal for weight loss

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A small randomized controlled trial found that time-restricted eating, also known as intermittent fasting, produced similar weight loss results

to traditional calorie counting in a racially diverse population of adults with obesity. The study also showed that participants who engaged in 8-hour time restricted eating had improved insulin sensitivity compared to those in the control group who ate their calories any time over 10 or more hours a day. The study is published in *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Obesity is a major health issue. Many traditional weight loss diets involve counting calories, which can be cumbersome and difficult to do well. Time-restricted eating, without calorie counting, has become a popular weight loss strategy because it is simple to do. Whether it's effective in producing weight loss, especially beyond the short term, is unclear.

Researchers from the University of Illinois Chicago studied 90 adults with obesity from the Greater Chicago area to determine whether [intermittent fasting](#) or calorie restricted eating would be more effective for weight control and cardiometabolic risk reduction. Participants were randomly assigned to 1 of 3 groups: 8-hour time-restricted eating (eating from noon to 8:00 p.m. only, without calorie counting); calorie restriction (reduce 25% of their calories daily), or no change in calorie consumption, with eating taking place over 10 hours or more throughout the day.

Both the time-restricted eating and calorie restriction groups met regularly with a dietician. Participants were not blinded. The authors found that participants who engaged in time-restricted eating ate 425 fewer calories per day than the [control group](#) and lost about 10 more pounds than the control group after one year. The calorie-restricted group ate 405 fewer calories per day and lost about 12 more pounds after one year. Participants showed high adherence to both interventions.

The authors of an accompanying editorial from the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center and Division of General Internal Medicine, University

of Colorado School of Medicine say that access to dietitians likely helped participants in the restricted eating group make healthier food choices. They believe the results of this study can help guide clinical decision-making partially by taking individual preferences into consideration, rather than just choosing a diet that may be more effective. They emphasize that the results of this study highlight the substantial individual variability in weight loss using these interventions, and that further research is needed to determine who would most benefit from each of these interventions.

More information: Time-Restricted Eating Without Calorie Counting for Weight Loss in a Racially Diverse Population, *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2023). DOI: [10.7326/M23-0052](https://doi.org/10.7326/M23-0052)

Time-Restricted Eating for Treatment of Obesity? The Devil Is in the (Counseling) Details, *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2023). www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M23-1396

Summary for Patients: Time-Restricted Eating Without Calorie Counting for Weight Loss, *Annals of Internal Medicine* (2023). DOI: 10.7326/P23-0003 , www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/P23-0003

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