

Is fasting a diet solution?

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(HealthDay)—Research shows that fasting on alternate days has health benefits, including lowering the amount of inflammation in the body.

That's important because inflammation has been linked to many chronic diseases and keeping it under control can increase longevity.

And now there's growing evidence that fasting can be an answer to weight loss, too.

New approaches to fasting are far from the water-only or liquid-diet images you may have of it. What many researchers have been testing are variations on what's called intermittent fasting—typically one day on, one day off.

For a pilot study done at the University of Illinois at Chicago, participants alternated fasting days with regular eating days and lost about a pound a week over the course of a 12-week study.

It's important to note that on the fasting days, they still ate one meal, which consisted of about 25 percent of their normal [daily calorie intake](#). These 400-to-600 calorie meals followed American Heart Association guidelines with 30 percent of calories coming from fat, 15 percent from protein and 55 percent from carbohydrates.

This way of fasting didn't leave the dieters feeling hungry, which can happen with stricter fasting, with medical fasts that consist of liquid meals and with traditional diets that restrict calories every day.

Alternate-day fasting has since been studied at a number of research centers. In some situations, the fast day is a zero-calorie day and the off-days have their own set of guidelines.

But the bottom line is that these types of eating plans do work.

A review published in the journal *Obesity Science and Practice* compared alternate-day fasting to day in/day out, very low-calorie diets and found

that alternate-day [fasting](#) is easier for some people to stick to, plus it often results in losing more fat and preserving more muscle.

Because research studies typically include medical supervision, before you try such a regimen, talk to your health-care provider to see if you're a good candidate for it, and if there are any steps you need to take, unique to your situation.

More information: Learn more about the alternate-day fasting plan and the researcher who developed it from the [University of Illinois](#).

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