

Definition of fasting

- Complete or partial abstinence of any kind of food for a specific period of timings.

Types

1. Therapeutic fasting
2. Religious fasting
3. Political fasting

Therapeutic fasting

Commonly used for treating diseases and promoting health, this involves practices under supervision of Naturopathy doctor if you have medical ailment. If properly learned anybody can practice on their own.(Self reliance practices)

Types

1. Intermittent/ Calorie restriction fasting- 12hrs, 18hrs,24hrs, 48hrs
2. Short term fasting- 3 days
3. Prolonged fasting- > 7 days.
4. Dry fasting
5. Water fasting

Note: Above types of fasting can include fruits, vegetables and water. Cooked food can also be taken if needed.

Religious fasting

Fasting is taken up based on different religious rituals.
Like Hindus- ekadashi, Muslim- Ramdan etc..

Political fasting

Fasting observed for a specific social issue.

Modified practices fasting

1. Fasting with fruits
2. Fasting with juices

Benefits of fasting

Fasting stimulates adaptive cellular responses, reduces oxidative damage and inflammation, enhances energy metabolism inside the cell and reinforces cellular protection. Chronic fasting extends longevity in part by reprogramming metabolic and stress resistance pathways.

Religious fasting

Globally, religious fasts put emphasis on **Quality, Frequency of meals intake and its Timing**. Apart from these practices, few people practice water-only and dry fasting.

According to recent researched evidences, each religious fasting will promote health and may have significant impact on certain diseases listed below.

Hindus and Jainism fasting,

1. Improves Glycemic control over diabetes²
2. Reduce body weight.

Ramadan fasting,

1. May put forth immunomodulatory effects.
2. May reduce oxidative stress and improve lipid profiles in Cardiac patients.
3. May improve immunologic markers in psychiatric patients and Athletes.³
4. Reduces psoriasis⁴

Daniel Fast and the Greek Orthodox Christian,⁵

1. May lower blood pressure levels and Lipid levels.
2. Reduces oxidative stress

Therapeutic fasting

Buchinger (1878–1966) called therapeutic fasting ‘Heilfasten’ (healing fasting, fasting cure).

It is completely supervised by specialized doctors.

Fasting and Autophagy

Prof Yoshinori Ohsumi was awarded “Nobel Prize in Physiology” in 2016 for discovering of “Mechanisms for Autophagy.”

Autophagy is a lysosomal degradation process and protective housekeeping mechanism to eliminate damaged organelles, long-lived misfolded proteins and invading pathogens. It

functions to recycle building blocks and energy for cellular renovation and homeostasis, allowing cells to adapt to stress.

Fasting has beneficial effects on

- Metabolic syndrome (High blood pressure, High cholesterol level, high glucose level)
- Chronic inflammatory diseases
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Chronic pain syndromes
- Psychosomatic disorders.

Animal and fasting

Animals periodically undergo periods of food deprivation (fasting) such as during hibernation, mating, molting and migration. During this period of fasting, they become insulin resistant which helps to preserve glucose stores in the body for survival.

Mahatma Gandhi and Fasting

Mahatma Gandhi was a ardent follower of Nature cure. By self reliance Nature cure practices he treated his illness and family members, loved ones also. Wherein he has fasted form 1- 21 days when he was suffering with diseases he came across his lifetime.

Effect of fasting on cancer

Short-term fasting (STF) reduces the toxic effects of radiations and enhances the efficacy of chemotherapeutic agents while treating different tumors.

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