

Fasting and its health benefits

FASTING AND ITS HEALTH BENEFITS

Blog > Fasting and its health benefits

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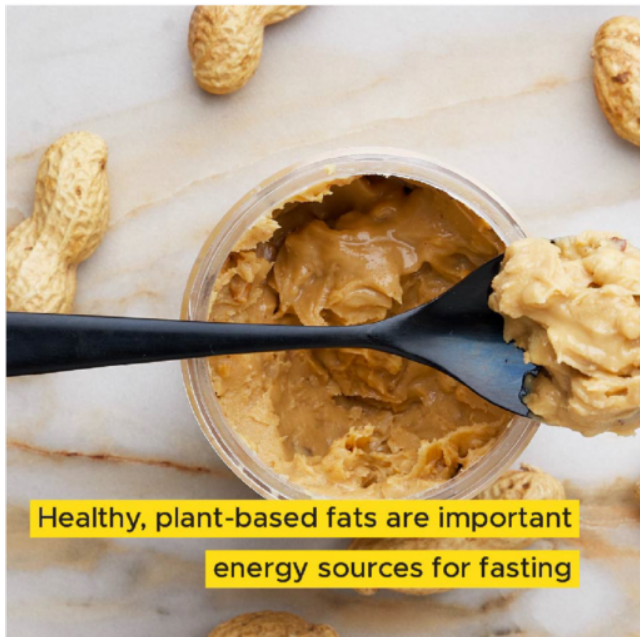


You've probably heard the hype; fasting is the new secret to weight loss. While there is credible science, it's not a quick fix nor guarantee. Neither is there one sure-fire method to doing it right. However, the benefits are plenty; delayed onset of Type II diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, enhanced memory function, weight loss and even greater mental clarity. Let's get into what makes it tick.

With deep roots in many cultures and religions, physicians and doctors have recognised its effects on our bodies for many years. Fasting triggers a switch in the body's metabolism – glucose levels in our bodies begin to drop. Our body now needs to find another source of fuel to burn and it switches over to burning fatty acids (a state of "ketosis"), a more efficient fuel. This energy production takes place in the liver and the resulting smorgasbord of compounds are known as "ketones". These ketones are responsible for many of the health benefits that fasting brings about.

But fasting has its fair share of downsides too; higher propensity to binge eat, low blood pressure, general irritability and discomfort, headaches etc. Furthermore, the thought of going hungry for hours at a stretch might be daunting.

After a period of fasting, it is good to break the fast with a balance of fats, carbohydrates and proteins. We look at some of these foods and nutrients that will help your body adapt better to fasting routines.



Healthy, plant-based fats are important
energy sources for fasting



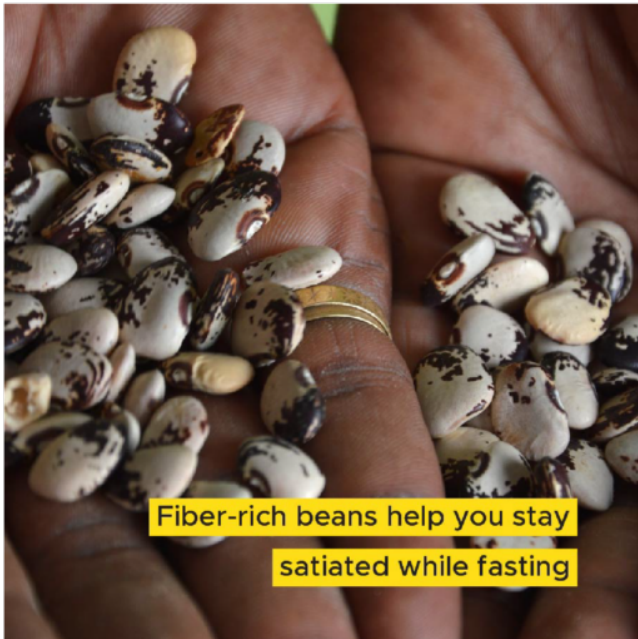
Don't avoid potatoes
when fasting!

Healthy, plant-based fats are important energy sources for fasting

Fat is stored in our tissues and released whenever energy is needed, so it's an important back-up resource during fasting. Fats also carry and aid absorption of vitamins A, D, E & K. In addition, healthy fatty acids (linoleic, alpha linoleic) support physical & psychological functions and are only available through food. However, selecting healthy fats while fasting is key, so choose nuts, seeds, nut butters, avocado, olives etc over animal fats.

Don't avoid potatoes when fasting!

With all this talk about ketosis, it is natural to consider removing carbohydrates from your diet all at once. Such sudden changes are rarely effective, and might be counter-productive in leading to binge eating instead. Don't overlook the simple potato; its carbohydrates are mostly healthy 'resistant starch' that are even more pronounced when cooled after cooking. Potatoes are also rich in Vitamin B6 that helps with new cell growth and formation, essential as the body replaces damaged cells during fasting. Eat boiled or roasted, preferably with the skin on.

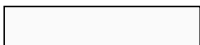


Fiber-rich beans help you stay satiated while fasting

Fiber is not absorbed or converted to energy like fats or carbohydrates, thus helping us stay sated through the long fasting hours. The average daily recommended fibre intake is 25g. If you are starting out on a fasting routine, there's no harm trying to eat more. Beans are a fantastic source of fiber; look for navy beans, lentils, pinto beans, black beans, lima beans... a 1 cup serving can give as much as 13g of fibre!

Don't overlook hydration while fasting

Almost 30% of the water we consume comes through our foods, so don't be shocked if you feel dehydrated when fasting. Additionally, carbohydrates hold water in our bodies; as your consumption shifts away from carbs, your body needs water from other sources. Be conscious of this fact, and ensure you drink more water while fasting.



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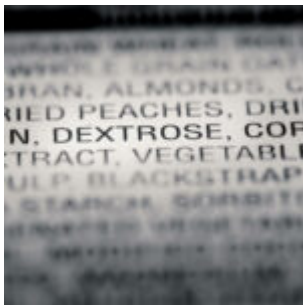


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