

# HSC HEALTH METABOLIC & LONGEVITY CENTER

## INTERMITTENT FASTING AND ITS ROLE IN THE TREATMENT OF METABOLIC SYNDROME

### **What is intermittent fasting (IF)?**

- Intermittent fasting is not a diet, but rather a pattern of eating. It involves cycling between periods of eating and fasting. Unlike traditional diets that focus on what to eat, IF emphasizes when to eat.

### **Why does fasting matter for insulin resistance/metabolic syndrome?**

- Insulin resistance is a condition where the body's cells become resistant to the effects of insulin, a hormone that regulates blood sugar. Over time, this can lead to higher blood sugar levels and increased risk of type 2 diabetes and other metabolic disorders such as hypertension, dyslipidemia, obesity, and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease.

### **Fasting can play a pivotal role in addressing insulin resistance:**

- Improved insulin sensitivity
  - Fasting periods allow the body to take a break from producing insulin, which can help improve insulin sensitivity over time.
- Cellular repair
  - Fasting triggers autophagy, a process where cells remove damaged components, potentially improving cellular function and metabolism.
- Hormonal balance
  - Fasting can lead to beneficial changes in several key hormones related to metabolism, including reductions in insulin levels.

## Common intermittent fasting regimens

- 16:8 Method - This involves fasting for 16 hours each day and restricting your eating to an 8-hour window. For example, eating between 12 pm and 8 pm.
- 5:2 Diet - With this method, you consume your usual diet for five days of the week and restrict your calorie intake to 500-600 calories on the other two days.

## What to Do/Eat When It's Time to Break Your Fast:

- Start Small: Begin with a small, balanced meal or snack.
- Prioritize Protein: Consider lean meats, fish, eggs, legumes, and dairy products.
- Incorporate Healthy Fats: Avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil.
- Choose Low-Glycemic Carbohydrates: Vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.
- Stay Hydrated: Continue drinking water and consider adding bone broth or a homemade vegetable broth.
- Limit Sugary and Processed Foods: Avoid foods high in added sugars and processed ingredients.
- Listen to Your Body: Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### What about my medications during a fast?

- Depending on your current medication needs a specific plan for you should have been discussed with your provider. Please consult the patient plan. If an adequate solution is not present then contact our office for further guidance.

### I'm experiencing headaches and fatigue. Is this normal?

- Yes, it's not uncommon to experience headaches and fatigue, especially when you first start intermittent fasting. These symptoms can be attributed to a combination of factors:
  - Dehydration: Fasting can lead to reduced water intake, leading to dehydration, which is a common cause of headaches.
  - Electrolyte Imbalance: As you fast, your body may excrete more water and with it essential electrolytes like sodium. An imbalance in these electrolytes can lead to headaches and fatigue.

- Glycogen Depletion: As your body depletes its primary energy source, glycogen, you might experience fatigue until your body becomes more efficient at using fat for energy.
- To alleviate these symptoms, it's essential to stay hydrated. Drinking water can address dehydration, and adding a pinch of salt can help replenish lost sodium and balance electrolytes.

### **Can I drink liquids during the fast?**

- Yes, non-caloric beverages like water, black coffee, and tea are generally acceptable during fasting periods. They can help curb hunger and maintain hydration.

### **I'm feeling very hungry. What should I do?**

- It's natural to feel hungry initially. Your body will adjust over time. Stay hydrated, and if you're following the 5:2 method, ensure you spread out your calorie intake throughout the fasting day to help manage hunger.