

Importance of fasting on Physical & mental health in modern era

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Abstract

In the past good health has been thought of as free from diseases, however today it is thought of more as the state of physical and mental wellbeing. Factors can work together to affect physical and mental health. A disease is a disorder that influence health by affecting an organism's body, organs, tissues or cells. Fasting has been promoted and practiced from antiquity worldwide by physicians, by the founders and followers of many religions. Fasting has been used therapeutically, since at least the 5th century BC, when Greek physician Hippocrates recommended abstinence from food or drink for patients who exhibited certain symptoms of illness. Fasting is a practice that has been associated with a wide array of potential health benefits, including weight loss, as well as improved blood sugar control, heart health, brain function and cancer prevention. Fasting may provide several health benefits. Including weight loss, improved blood sugar control, and decreased inflammation. It might also offer protection against certain conditions like cancer and neurodegenerative disorders. During fasting all the vital force is engaged in curing the disease. It should be understood that fast by itself does not give vital force is engaged in curing the disease. Many people make the mistake of regarding fast as something similar to starvation.

Keyword: *Starvation, Symptoms, Abstinence, antiquity, array*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of fast is to give complete rest to the digestive system. In fact, it is only during the period of fasting that the digestive system gets rest, as ordinarily we eat two or three times daily because of which it has to work constantly. In 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined health with a phrase that is still used today.

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” WHO, 1948. In 1986, the WHO further clarified that health is:

“A resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities.”

This means that health is a resource to support an individual's function in wider society. A healthful lifestyle provides the means to lead a full life. The best way to maintain health is to preserve it through a healthful lifestyle, rather than waiting until we are sick to put things right. It may not be possible to avoid disease completely, but doing as much as we can to develop resilience and prepare the body and mind to deal with problems as they arise is a step we can all take.

Fasting may improve the way your body metabolizes sugar. This can reduce your risk of gaining weight and developing diabetes, which are both risk factors for heart disease. People who follow a fasting diet may have better heart health than people who don't. This may be because people who routinely fast show self-control over how many calories they eat and drink, and this behavior may translate into weight control and better eating choices when they aren't fasting.

In general, most types of fasts are performed over 24–72 hours. Intermittent fasting, on the other hand, involves cycling between periods of eating and fasting, ranging from a few hours to a few days at a time.

Fasting has been shown to have many health benefits, from increased weight loss to better brain function. According to Dr. Michael Mosley – author of The Fast Diet books – this eating plan can not only help people lose weight, but it offers an array of other health benefits.

Another study, conducted by Dr. Valter Longo and colleagues from the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles, found longer periods of fasting – 2-4 days – may even “reboot” the immune system, clearing out old immune cells and regenerating new ones – a process they say could protect against cell damage caused by factors such as aging and chemotherapy. In June 2014, Medical News Today reported on a study suggesting periodic fasting – defined in the study as 1 day of water-only fasting a week – may reduce the risk of diabetes among people at high risk for the condition.

What happens during fasting:

The first hours of fasting are pretty normal for most people since your body is going through the regular process of breaking down glycogen and storing glucose as fuel for energy. Usually, about 25% of that goes right to your brain while the rest supports red blood cells and muscles.

After 5-6 hours depending on the sugar levels in your blood, you will reach the stage of ketosis — metabolic state, during which your energy levels are supported by ketone bodies in your blood. This is a process of fat breakdown since broken down fat results in ketone bodies.

This is the moment when the actual fasting starts, so it is a desirable state to be in for people who are fasting for weight loss.

How does fasting remove toxins from the body:

When you go without eating for more than a day or two, the body enters into ketosis. Ketosis occurs when the body runs out of carbohydrates to burn for energy, so it burns fat. And the fat is where the body stores many of the toxins it absorbs from the environment.

Our nutritional status affects the body's ability to manufacture antibodies and enzymes, and the liver's ability to detoxify. Fasting restores good digestion and elimination, and peristaltic action is quickened. Fasting allows a deep, physiological rest of the digestive organs, and the energy saved goes into self-healing and self-repairing. By eliminating obstructions, by cleansing, detoxification, and purifying the intestines, the blood, and the cells, we can overcome many of our physical ills or handicaps as well as getting a boost in energy. Fasting not only removes obstructions and helps the body to heal itself, it is also rejuvenating and life-extending. These resulting benefits can have lasting effects in your mental and emotional health.

Benefits of Fasting:**1. Helps weight loss**

Fasting can be a safe way to lose weight as many studies have shown that intermittent fasting – fasting that is controlled within a set number of hours – allows the body to burn through fat cells more effectively than just regular dieting. A new research published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* shows implementing the “5:2 diet” leads to significant weight loss. Dr. Razeen Mahroof, of the University of Oxford in the UK, explains that the use of fat for energy can help preserve muscle and reduce cholesterol levels.

2. Leads to Longer Living

The fountain of youth may lie in not exactly what you eat, but when you eat it. Scientists from the National Institute on Aging (NIA) added to the body of what is already known about fasting, in which they found health and longevity improved with increased fasting time.

3. Protects from Alzheimer’s Disease

Alzheimer’s disease (AD) is a common neurodegenerative disorder in the elderly and characterized by progressive cognitive dysfunction and behavioral impairment. According to a study published in *Frontiers in Molecular Neuroscience*, intermittent fasting protects against Alzheimer’s disease.

4. Augments Mood

Summarized in the *Current Neuropsychopharmacology*, fasting shows to augment mood and sleep quality. Fasting reduces negative emotions, including tension, stress, and depressive feelings.

5. Limits Cravings

Food cravings are more of a mental desire than a physiological need like hunger. Fasting can help limit cravings by encouraging individuals to tune into hunger and satiety cues, along with reminding the reality we do need to rely on food as much as we think, especially in a Westernized diet.

6. Manages Diabetes

Fasting reversed insulin resistance, which resulted to cessation of insulin therapy while maintaining control of blood sugars. The patients also lost significant amounts of body weight, along with reductions in their waistlines and glycated hemoglobin levels.

Conclusion:

Fasting is currently gaining a buzz in the media, but this ancient therapy has been used for thousands of years to reverse health conditions and reset the body and mind. We already know that fasting has some unbelievable benefits for the human body, especially for a body that is in disease. Fasting allow us to grow personally and strengthen the spirit. It is well known that in humans, even a single fasting interval (e.g., overnight) can reduce basal concentrations of metabolic biomarkers associated with chronic disease such as insulin and glucose. Fasting is easy to fit into your busy modern schedule and it promotes healthy and sustainable body composition by stabilizing blood sugars and burning fat while improving energy levels, mental clarity, muscle and skin tone and helping people reach their health goals much quicker. It is our hope that the information provided within this review will initiate the design and performance of future investigations focused on the health benefits of religious fasting.

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