

Intermittent fasting and diabetes

The intermittent fasting (IF) eating pattern involves not eating or drinking anything that has calories for a selected time. It is also called time-restricted eating because you are restricted to eating only during a specific 'eating window'. Otherwise, the IF eating pattern follows general healthy eating principles for those living with diabetes.



Principles of IF:

Focus is on when to eat rather than what to eat



Not eating or drinking anything that has calories for a specific period of time

Variety of patterns could be done:

daily

16 hour fast:
8 hour eating window



or weekly

2 day fast:
5 day eating window

Healthy choices and portion sizes still matter



Potential benefits of IF

More research needs to be done on IF and diabetes, but potential benefits include:

Loss or maintenance of weight: This depends on the portion sizes and types of food you are eating.

Improved blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels: This depends on the quality of food choices.

Improved blood sugar management: After fasting your insulin sensitivity may increase and your body may respond better to the insulin it produces.



Things to consider

Before starting the IF eating pattern, it is important to discuss IF with your healthcare provider before trying it. There are a few risks that should be considered:

Blood sugar variability: Depending on the size and number of meals, this eating pattern can result in hypoglycemia and/or hyperglycemia. Speak to your health care team for changes to medication or insulin and your blood sugar monitoring routine.

Nutrient deficiencies: Fitting food into a small eating window may mean not enough food is consumed to meet your nutrient needs. Speak to your health care provider about the need for supplements.

Delayed eating may cause overeating: Going long periods without eating can cause overeating when you are allowed to eat. Healthy choices and portions still matter.

References:
www.nih.gov, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

A day in the life:

Meal 1:

- 2 slices whole wheat toast + 2 scrambled eggs + 1 cup sauteed mushrooms and spinach + 1/2 avocado + 1 orange

Meal 2:

- 1-3/4 cups Overnight Oats (1/2 cup oats + 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt + 1/2 cup milk + 1 cup strawberries + 3 Tbsp walnuts)

Meal 3:

- 1 serving chicken curry + 1 cup brown rice + 2 cups sauteed vegetables + 1 cup milk + 1 apple

