

# HELEN TO THE RESCUE

## What is intermittent fasting (IF)?

With the holidays in the rearview mirror, many of us want to get our eating back on track and lose some of the holiday weight. “Fasting” doesn’t bring up delicious thoughts or positive vibes. For plenty of people, it probably conjures up images of starvation and deprivation and possibly makes their stomach start growling.

IF is an eating pattern that cycles between periods of fasting and eating. It doesn’t specify which foods you should eat, but rather when you should eat them. It’s not a diet in the conventional sense but more accurately described as an eating pattern.

The longer the fasting period, the greater the depletion of glycogen stores, “carbohydrates stored in skeletal muscle,” which can trigger higher levels of fat burning. Some research suggests this may have benefits beyond weight loss, such as improved brain and heart health.

While IF has promise, it’s not suitable for everyone. Much of the research has been done on animals, so it’s unclear if people would get all the same benefits. Researchers are still exploring how helpful it is to restrict eating. The internet is full of so-called health claims made by experts. Solid evidence in support of IF as



an approach to weight loss just isn’t there yet. There also remains debate about whether fasting is responsible for the health benefits or simply the calorie reduction.

### 5 OF THE MOST POPULAR IF EATING PATTERNS:

- Time-restricted eating: fasting every day for 12 hours or longer and eating in the remaining hours.
- 5:2 diet: eating as usual 5 days a week and restricting your calorie intake to 500–600 on the remaining 2 days.
- Eat, Stop, Eat: 24-hour fast once or twice per week.
- Alternate day fasting: Fast every other day.
- The Warrior Diet: Eating small amounts of raw fruits and vegetables during the day and eating one large meal at night.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to nutrition. The best diet for you is the one you can stick to in the long run. IF is great for some people, not others. Try it out. If you feel good when fasting and find it a sustainable way of eating, it can be a powerful tool to lose weight and improve your health. However, remember that the main reason for its success is that intermittent fasting helps you eat fewer calories overall. If you binge and eat massive amounts during your eating periods, you may not lose any weight at all.

Remember! Always check with your doctor.

*Life is short; Fasting makes it seem longer!*

Yours in Fitness,

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Helen’s love of fitness began at an early age.

She practiced dance and gymnastics as well as track and field. She’s an Exercise Physiologist with over 35 years of experience. She is also a certified personal trainer, corrective exercise specialist, nutrition consultant and Senior fitness specialist.



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