



Berkshire Health Group

Wellness Connection



Intermittent Fasting by Mark Pettus, MD

For most of recorded time, cultures around our planet and their wise traditions have recognized and honored the ritual of fasting. In addition, anthropologic study of modern ancestral cultures e.g. Hadza and Australian aborigines reveals periods of fasting and diminished caloric intake as a way of life given seasonal variability and availability of plants and animals to consume.

Research studies in many life forms from yeast to primates have shown that caloric restriction of approximately 30% from baseline is associated with greater longevity. In addition, many lines of evidence in humans suggest periods of fasting to be associated with a “turning-on” or upregulation of deeply built-in resiliency systems. These include improved efficiency of metabolism, more effective sensitivity of insulin, more

efficient cell recycling aka autophagy, more tolerant immune systems i.e., less inflammation, and a host of other health-promoting metabolic changes. The key concept of interest today is that of metabolic resiliency. This refers to our ability to efficiently burn our own fat when food is limited and to burn our fuel more cleanly e.g. more energy produced with less free radicals and oxygen reactive species known to accelerate inflammation and aging.

What is confusing is that fasting can mean many different things. And while they all seem to offer many health benefits, they are not necessarily the same. For example, here are some of the types of intermittent fasting (IF) that have (are being) been studied:

- The 5:2 IF – this is essentially ad lib intake 5 days/week with 2 days of caloric restriction in the 500-600 calorie/day range.

- The 16:8 - this is time-restricted eating (TRE) where an individual consumes all their food in an 8-hour window, fasting for 16 hours. It is not intended to caloric-restrict. One eats what they want, just narrowing the window within which they consume. The smaller the window the better. Many reported health benefits including reduced risk of recurrence of breast cancer have been reported up to a 10-hour consumption window. While it is currently unproven, there may be a further advantage if the eating window is more closely aligned with sun rising and sun setting circadian cycles for that time of year.

- 24-hour IF: This is essentially fasting (water only) for 24 hours at specific interval e.g. monthly or every other month.

⇒ Check out the HERO Coaching Program and earn \$\$ for taking care of YOU. [Click here.](#)

⇒ Eat Healthy! Check out the Nutrition Challenge on page 3.

⇒ Complete the Social Media Detox Challenge starting in March!

⇒ Stay connected and like us on Facebook! [Click here.](#)

⇒ Write down 2 health goals for March & April!

INSIDE...

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2. Intermittent Fasting Cont'd, Wellness Wednesdays, and Winners of the Plank and Wall-Sit Challenge
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To Do...

Intermittent Fasting cont...

- Fasting-Mimicking Diet: This has been researched and popularized by Valter Longo PhD. It involves predominantly plant-based foods with caloric restriction of 500-600 calories/day for 5-straight days from monthly to every 2-3 months depending on one's health goals.

I believe all of these strategies are substantial health-promoting upgrades compared to the "ad-lib" all day grazing most tend to do in modern life. Yes, this is a phenomenon of modern life! Some of the above strategies, in particular the 16:8 or the 24-hour IF will result in the liver's production of ketones. Ketones themselves appear to have many unique health benefits from improved cell signaling, metabolism, epigenetic (how our genes can be turned on and off) effects and is a super fuel for the brain and heart. There may be important risk reduction of many chronic diseases e.g. diabetes, neurologic diseases, cancer, heart disease, etc. While the jury is still out on long-term risks/benefits of nutritional ketosis, the early returns are quite favorable. Clinical trials of IF have been done in animals and humans. While most studies lump the above strategies, it is not clear if one has a great advantage over the other. I personally like the 16:8 and try to do it at least 2-3 days/week. Taking a whole-foods, minimally processed and nutrient-dense approach and then integrating it into one of the above strategies is a powerful 1-2 health promoting punch that will pay huge benefits!

These are some of the possible reported benefits from a review recently published in The New England Journal of Medicine (December 2019):

- Greater metabolic -stress resiliency at the level of cellular function in many different tissues.
- Improvements in longevity and health span (quality of life)
- Improvements in sleep quality
- Reductions in obesity and diabetes risks
- Reduced cardiovascular risks
- Reduced cancer risks and enhanced recovery/prognosis with cancer treatment
- Improvements in neurodegenerative disorders like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, ALS
- Improvements in inflammatory arthritis and asthma
- Improvements in wound healing and post-operative complications

As you can see, IF appears to have broad-based health promoting potential. While long-term clinical trials are limited, these strategies appear safe for most. While there will inevitably be a lot of pharmacological research to develop a drug that can "mimic" the effects of IF, they are likely to be inferior to the actual practice.


Resources:

Effects of Intermittent Fasting on Health, Aging, and Disease: NEJM 381;26 nejm.org December 26, 2019 The Longevity Diet: Slow Aging, Fight Disease, Optimize Weight by Valter Longo | Dec 31, 2019

The Circadian Code: Lose Weight, Supercharge Your Energy, and Transform Your Health from Morning to Midnight by Satchin Panda PhD

wellness WEDNESDAYS

For each **Wednesday** in the Month of **March**, we encourage you to bring a healthy lunch to work or start a healthy potluck and share a healthy meal with your coworkers. For those employees that share a picture of their healthy lunch, they will be entered into a raffle for a **New Lunch Cooler**. Please send your Picture to Beth Piantoni, epiantoni@bhs1.org



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!

Plank and Wall– Sit Challenge Winners!

Shirley Bailey - LES

Rachel Appell– CBRSD

Lindsay Van Holtz– MGRSD

Pierre Leger– SBRSD

Pam Caproni– WES

Nutrition Month Challenge

Draw an X on all the days you have completed the challenge.

1

Write Down a
Small Nutrition
Goal

2

Post
Intentions
Where You
Can See Them

3

Eat 3 Extra
Serving of
Vegetables

4

Practice Eating
Slower

YOU CAN'T CONTROL
EVERYTHING IN LIFE,
BUT YOU CAN CONTROL
WHAT FOOD YOU PUT
IN YOUR BODY.

6

Only Eat
Whole Foods

7

Try not Eating
After 6pm



9

Avoid all Sugar

10

Write Down
Everything You

11

Drink 6
Glasses of
Water

Our Food
Should be
our medicine
& Our Medicine
Should be
Our Food
-Hippocrates

Sometimes
the most productive
thing you can do
is relax.

14

Let Go of
"Perfect";
Enjoy "Good
Enough!"

15

Skip that Extra
Serving



17

Eat a Healthy
Snack Instead
of the Sweets

18

Try a New
Healthy Food

19

Include 2
Vegetables
with 2 Meals

20

Forgive
Yourself for
Over-Eating



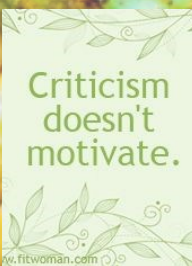
Whatever
your problem is,
the answer
is not in
the fridge.
The DC IT Program
notsalmon.com/DC-IT

22

Drink 1 Glass of
Water as Soon
as you Wake up

23

Cook a New
Recipe



*A little
progress each
day adds up
to big results*

27

Get a Good
Night's Sleep

28

Bring a Healthy
Lunch to Work

29

Eat All Your
Food within 8
Hours

30

Share a New
Healthy Food
with Someone

NAME _____

LOCATION: _____

Two Healthy Breakfast Recipes Whether You Have 5 Minutes or 30!

Aussie Breakfast Egg Mess

This is a quick and easy spin on scrambled eggs. Ingredients can be prepared the night before to save time in the morning. Ready in 33 minutes



Ingredients:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 tablespoon butter• 1/2 cup diced onion• 1/2 cup diced green bell pepper• 1/2 cup sliced fresh mushrooms | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 eggs, lightly beaten• salt and ground black pepper to taste• 1/2 cup diced ripe tomato• 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese• 1 tablespoon of ketchup (optional) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Directions: Melt the butter over medium heat in a large skillet. Add the onion and bell pepper; cook and stir until the onion is transparent, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the mushrooms and bacon, and cook 2 minutes more. Remove skillet from heat, and place the vegetable-bacon mixture in a bowl. Pour the eggs into the same skillet. Cook and stir gently just until the eggs are soft. Stir the vegetable-bacon mixture into the eggs. Season with salt and pepper. Cook the eggs until firm. Remove skillet from heat and stir in the tomato and cheese. If desired, stir in the ketchup. **Source:** AllRecipes.com

5-Minute Healthy Oatmeal Recipe

Ingredients

- 1 cup or rolled oats
- 2 cups of unsweetened almond milk
- 1 medium banana, mashed
- Handful of blueberries
- Handful of walnuts
- 1/2 teaspoon of vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- Pinch of salt

Directions

Combine all ingredients into a small saucepan and turn heat to medium/high.

Bring to a boil. Then, turn heat down to low/medium and continually stir for around 3-5 minutes as the oatmeal cooks and thickens.

Once oatmeal is at desired consistency, remove from heat and add blueberries and walnuts. Serve immediately.

Source: <https://fitfoodiefinds.com/the-50-best-oatmeal-recipes-on-the-planet/>



BHG Wellness Happenings

Celebrating Heart Health Month

Self Care-Reflexology



Susana Mapstone-SBRSD

Plank and Wall Sit Challenge Participants



The Gangster Plankers Team
Williamstown Elementary School



Barbara Proper and her grandchildren!
Town of Adams



Jennifer Drees,
Lenox Public Schools

Wellness Challenges

Social Media Detox Challenge

March– April

Social Media has become the go-to way to stay connected and informed in this constantly changing world. But, is it making you feel more connected or depressed? The Social Media Detox Challenge is a 30 day experiment consisting of easy to follow steps to take an intentional break from social media, notice the impact and make decisions to improve mental health.

Walk with Me in the Berkshires

April– May

The goal of the program is to increase your step count each week. Walking is a great form of exercise and this challenge is a great way to either get started or keep up your walking program regimen. For this challenge you will form teams ranging from 2-20 people and your team captain will register your team on the iBerkshire website.

Take Advantage of your Wellness Benefits!

- [Diabetes Care Program](#)
- [Colonoscopy Incentive Program](#)
- [BCBS Fitness Reimbursement](#)
- [BCBS Weight Loss Reimbursement](#)
- [BHG HERO Coaching Program](#)
- [BHG 2020 Wellness Program Menu](#)
- Visit Berkshirehg.com for more info

For more information regarding any BHG Wellness Programs, please contact:

Beth Piantoni, CPT, CHWC

BHG Wellness Coordinator

epiantoni@bhs1.org

413-445-9327



Healthy Together