



Seminar:
Fasting for Health
(Physical and Spiritual)
www.lrhartley.com/fasting

Some of the Dangers of Fasting

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Fasting is the act of abstaining from all or some food and drink or other activity for a designated period of time. While some individuals may fast for religious reasons, others do it for health reasons or to test their self-control. Talk with a health professional before starting a food or drink fast to ensure that you are healthy enough to go without food and drink for an extended period of time. Whatever the reason for fasting, it is important to understand the consequences so you know what to expect.



Dehydration

The human body constantly loses water, salt and a number of other important electrolytes through various bodily processes. It should come as no surprise, then, that individuals who fast and do not replenish their supply of water and electrolytes can be at risk for moderate to severe dehydration. The risk of dehydration is especially high in the elderly, and those who do not maximize their fluid and electrolyte intake before starting a fast. Individuals who develop dehydration may notice dizziness, weakness, disorientation, constipation, and headaches.

Ignoring Serious Symptoms

On any fast, headaches may occur at the beginning; fever and/or colds may appear; the skin may break out, there may be a short interval of bowel sluggishness, occasional diarrhoea, feelings of tiredness and weakness, disinclination to exercise, nervousness, irritability, negativity or mental depression, frequent urination, etc. However, the notion that adverse symptoms should be disregarded, or even rejoiced about, has been fatal for some. So consider the seriousness of side-effects and act responsibly.

Painful Pyrosis

Pyrosis or heartburn is a serious consequence of fasting. Although individuals who are fasting may not have food in their stomachs, it can still be on their brain — and, in many cases, the sight, smell, and even thought of food can cause the brain to increase the production of certain digestive acids. While these acids may not have caused problems in the past, in the absence of food they can lead to significant amounts of heartburn and acid reflux. People who have used medications for heartburn should continue taking these products even while fasting to avoid the development of painful indigestion.

The Management of Blood Sugar Levels

It can become difficult to manage blood sugar levels when fasting. All

persons with diabetes are usually cautioned to avoid fasting, and it is especially crucial for those who use injectable insulin. Individuals who fast and inject insulin may be at risk for the development of hypoglycemia. Dizziness, sweating and confusion are all signs of hypoglycemia, and require immediate medical attention by a trained healthcare provider.

Diabetes.co.uk suggests the 5:2 intermittent fasting diet. Under medical supervision, for five days a week you stick to meeting the daily calorie intake advised for people of a healthy weight. For the other two days each week, the diet stipulates that you have only around 25% of the daily calorie intake.

Caffeine Withdrawal

If you drink caffeinated products, several days before your fast begins you should start weaning yourself off caffeine. Some people experience unbearable headaches two or three days after ceasing the consumption of caffeinated products. During your fast you will already be acutely aware of your stomach, so why add a more discomfort?

Emotional Imbalance

Hormones can make it harder for women to follow a fasting régime than for men. However, irrespective of gender, some people experience vast mood swings during a fast. One moment they are totally focused on the purpose for their fast and the next they are wallowing in pity. Knowing that this is likely to happen will help you react properly. Learning to refocus during this tough emotional time will also help when your fast is over and when you experience similar emotions.

Rest Vs Activity

Laziness is a problem for some of us, but most of us actually suffer from being too busy and not getting the rest we need. If you disconnect from the media and other people during the fast you will have extra time allowing you to get a full night's sleep. During your fast you will

be forced to change your routine. Even without long meal breaks, a fast may reveal to you that you have too many activities and busyness in your day-to-day routine. You should take time to rest but this does not mean you should do nothing. Stay physically active. Enjoy a walk in God's creation.

Fasting for the Wrong Reasons

Some fasting régimes are counter-productive, For example when discussing *Liver Detox*, William T. Jarvis, Ph.D. writes, “Contrary to the teachings of proponents, fasting doesn't ‘cleanse’ or ‘rest’ the liver. If anything, fasting overworks the liver by saturating it with toxins produced by [the] fasting itself.”

Weight Fluctuations

Some individuals use fasts as a way to lose weight quickly, and while this may seem to be effective in some cases, it is not appropriate for those who are overweight. In fact, the American College of Sports Medicine reports that fasting can have a negative effect on weight loss by slowing down the body's metabolism. After fasting for several days, the body needs smaller calorie concentrations to fuel body processes. Returning to a normal diet after fasting, then, may actually result in some weight gain as the body readjusts to an increase in calorie intake.

Legal implications

It is possible that requiring children to fast may be regarded by legal authorities in some jurisdictions as a form of child abuse.

After-fast Activities

A long fasting period can make it more tempting to binge after a fast. This not only nullifies any beneficial effects of fasting, it can also be harmful to your health. Just as you can't replace a week of sleepless nights by sleeping solidly for a week, so also you can't replace ten days of fasting by sitting down to eat ten days worth of food.