

Intermittent fasting (IF) is an eating pattern that alternates between periods of fasting and eating. It helps the body burn excess fat by using stored energy. IF does not specify which foods you eat but rather when you should eat them.



## How does it work?

When we eat, the body produces insulin to convert carbohydrates into glucose for energy or store it as glycogen in the liver and muscles. Once glycogen storage is full, excess glucose is turned into fat. During fasting, insulin levels drop, prompting the body to use liver glycogen first, then fat for energy once glycogen is used up.

### Intermittent Fasting Plans



#### 5:2 method

With this method, you consume only 500–600 kcals on two nonconsecutive days of the week but eat as usual, following healthy eating guidelines, the other 5 days.



#### 16:8 method

This involves a 16-hour fasting period and a 8-hour eating period where you follow healthy eating guidelines.

### BE AWARE!

**If you use insulin or sulphonylurea tablets (like gliclazide) you may be at risk of a low sugar event (hypo) during periods of fasting. You should speak to your healthcare team about how to safely adjust your medication for fasting periods.**



Intermittent fasting can help you lose body fat and inches as it works out to an approximately a 25% total calorie deficit for the week. However, you do need to be mindful of the foods you are eating, if you overeat or are eating high calorie foods then you won't see the weight reduction you are looking for.



## What can I eat?

**On fasting days:** Planning is essential to get the most out of your calorie limit. Base foods around:



**Fluids:** Drink about 3 litres of fluids, including water, no-sugar squash, tea, and coffee, to help reduce side effects.



**Protein:** Choose low-calorie, lean proteins like chicken, turkey, fish, beans, and pulses to help you feel fuller.



**Vegetables:** Have vegetables with every meal and for snacks. They are low in calories and high in fibre and will help you to feel full and aid digestion.

**Non fasting days/times:** Keep your diet in line with general healthy eating guidelines:



### Wholegrain foods

Oats, wholegrain bread, pasta and rice.



### Fish

White fish - haddock, cod.  
Oily fish - salmon, mackerel & sardines.



### Fruit & vegetables

Increase intake of vegetables with meals and snacks.



### Lean meats

Skinless chicken, turkey. Pork & beef with visible fat removed.



### Lentils, beans & pulses

Source of lean protein, low fat & high fibre.



### Dairy

Opt for low fat - skimmed milk, reduced fat yoghurts & cheese.

## What food should I avoid?



### Animal fats

Foods containing animal fats - butter, cheese, cream, dripping and lard.



### Red & processed meats

High in saturated fats - beef, sausages & bacon etc.



### Processed foods

Pies, crisps, cakes, pastries, hot dogs, fast foods & convenience foods.



### Sugar

Honey, table sugar. Foods containing added sugar - sweets, chocolates, ice cream, biscuits.



### Refined carbohydrates

Carbs that are highly processed - white flour, white bread, white rice, white pasta and many breakfast cereals etc.



- Add lean proteins like chicken, turkey, eggs, or fish to every meal.
- Avoid alcohol, as it's high in calories with no nutritional value.
- Space out fast days for easier management.
- Cooking from scratch optimises calorie control.
- Stay active, especially on non-fasting days.
- Add flavour with garlic, herbs, spices, lemon juice, or balsamic vinegar.
- Use low-calorie cooking methods like steaming, poaching, baking, or grilling.
- Bulk up meals with beans, pulses, and legumes.
- Include plenty of vegetables in meals and snacks for fullness with fewer calories.
- Snack on olives, nuts, seeds, and cheese.