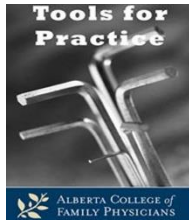


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(en français)



Fact or Fad: Intermittent fasting for sustained weight loss

Clinical Question: Does intermittent fasting result in greater sustained (>6 month) weight loss than continuous dieting in adults?



Bottom Line: Although inconsistently defined, intermittent fasting (example 500 kcal/day for 2 days/week) and continuous dieting (~25% reduction in caloric intake daily) result in similar weight loss, usually ~5-9kg at 6 months-1 year. Discontinuation rates with both diets is up to ~60%.

Evidence:

- “Fasting” generally refers to reducing caloric intake by ~75% of caloric needs/day; “continuous dieting” generally refers to reducing caloric intake by ~25%/day.
- Systematic review of 9 randomized, controlled trials (RCTs) at least 6 months in duration, 981 patients.¹ Example regimen: fasting 2 days/week interspersed with 5 days/week regular intake. After 6 months-2 years:
 - No difference in mean weight loss.
 - Mean weight loss range in both groups: 2.1-26.6 kg.
- 6 RCTs published since above review, 24 to 332 patients, randomized to intermittent fasting (alternate day fasting, 2 days fasting with 5 non-fasting days/week, or weekly fasting) versus continuous dieting and/or no intervention control:
 - 5/6 RCTs: mean weight loss ranged ~5-9 kg in both arms, not statistically different.²⁻⁶
 - Best quality RCT, 100 patients, randomized to alternate-day fasting, continuous dieting, or no intervention control for 6 months.² After additional 6-month follow-up:
 - Weight loss between fasting and continuous dieting: no difference.
 - Both diets lost ~6% more than no intervention.
 - 1 RCT, 51 men, both groups decreased calories by 33%. Intermittent fasting (alternating 2-week blocks of fasting with regular diet) or continuous diet for 16 weeks.⁷ After 6-month follow-up:
 - Statistically significant difference in weight loss: 11 kg versus 3 kg (continuous).

- Only patients who completed the study were included in the analysis.

Context:

- Discontinuation rates 30-60%.^{1,3,4}
- Weight loss for most diets peaks ~ 6 months,¹ then slow regain.^{3,6,7}
- No weight loss diet appears superior to another across populations, however individual results vary widely.⁸
- Mediterranean diet is the only diet that reduces cardiovascular disease.⁹

Authors:

Natalie Holden BSc BScPharm, Jessica Kirkwood MD CCFP, Adrienne J Lindblad BSP ACPR PharmD

Disclosures:

Authors do not have any conflicts of interest to declare.

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