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Fasting the right way

The holiest time has come. And if you're considering a fast you must know what is right for you. Here are a few tips that will help you attain good food patterns during your fasting.

Fasting comes with spiritual rewards and offers tremendous health benefits provided you practice it the right way. Let's see what's good for you-

- The first and the foremost thing. Don't be on an empty stomach for long hours. Make sure you eat something, whether fruits or vegetables, at least every three hours. This will save you from acidity and heartburn.
- Milk or any dairy product makes a complete food. Fruits are enriched with tons of nutrients like potassium, magnesium, calcium and carbohydrates and help clean the toxins in the body. These supply your body with required amount of energy, as well as necessary vitamins and minerals at the same time.
- One can remain without carbs but not fluids. Take lots and lots of fluids, for example, milk, coconut water, lemon water and fruit juices and vegetable soups. Just water is not enough.
- Body does need salt as it is a good source of sodium. But once in a while it's ok to go without salt as body does have certain amount of salt stores.
- Fruit and vegetable juices give instant energy and are easily digested. But something that gives instant highs or lows is not good. Therefore it's better to take fruits and vegetables as a whole.
- Avoid taking too much of fried and heavy food. Rather opt for healthy cooking methods like boiling, steaming, roasting and grilling etc.

HOW TO BREAK A FAST
The golden rule is to break the fast slowly and carefully. Start with fruit and vegetable juices or

even tea. Gradually switch to cooked spicy foods. Oatmeal also makes a good start.

THE HEALTHFUL BENEFITS OF FASTING INCLUDE:

DETOX ADVANTAGE
Practicing fast helps give the digestive system a much-needed rest and detoxifies the body by eliminating the toxins that get stored in the body in the form of highly processed foods that make up the majority of our modern diets. Thus the process helps rejuvenate the internal organs, allowing

If you refrain from eating foods, but take lots of fluids in the form of water, coconut water, milk and natural juices that contain electrolytes, you will surely reap the benefits.

them to function more efficiently. Since the body's immune system is not busy combating toxins that enter the body through the foods we eat, the immune system can concentrate on healing diseases and sicknesses in the body.

A PRESCRIPTION FOR A VARIETY OF ILLNESSES

- Arthritis and the ones with irritable-bowel syndrome have reported immense benefits from fasting.
- Angina and other such conditions often respond rapidly to fasting
- It is not unusual to see cholesterol levels drop considerably with proper fasting.
- Disorders of the gastrointestinal system — including gastritis, colitis, constipation, bloating etc. — usually respond well to proper fasting.
- Various researches have confirmed

that fasting can help cure diseases such as cancer, lupus, arthritis, asthma, high blood pressure and allergies.

- Fasting also helps to overcome bad habits and addictions.

WAY TO WEIGHT LOSS

- Apart from teaching patience and self control, fasting also puts one on a fast lane to weight loss.
- Staying on a fast for a prolonged period so you can lose weight is not a good idea. When you fast for too long your metabolism slows down to conserve energy. In such a case it is even harder to lose weight in the future. The best way to lose weight by fasting is to go for flexible, 1 or 2 days of fasting followed by 3 days of healthy eating. This kind of eating routine also helps to control cravings and other eating disorders.

FASTING IS NOT RECOMMENDED TO-

- Anorexic and bulimic, or suffering from other behavioral disorders.
- Weak and anaemic.
- Persons who have tumours, cancer, blood diseases, or who have heart disease.
- Those who suffer chronic problems with kidneys, liver, lungs, heart, or other important organs.
- Diabetics or those suffering from any other blood sugar problem such as hyperglycaemia.
- Pregnant and lactating women.

(With inputs from-Ritika Samaddar, Chief Dietician, Max Hospital)

WATCH YOUR HEALTH