

Intermittent fasting could lead to heart problems

8th September 2025



The Internet abounds with all manner of diets and dietary advice. In recent years, much has been written about the benefits of intermittent fasting. This is confining daily eating to an 8-hour window, leaving a 16-hour gap without any food.

Proponents of this dietary regimen say it improves metabolism and assists in cellular repair. However, a new long-term study has cast doubt on its merits. Researchers at the Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine in China concluded that people who restricted their eating to fewer than eight hours a day faced a 91 per cent higher risk of dying from cardiovascular diseases than those who ate over 12 to 16 hours.

The researchers analyzed data from about 20,000 adults over a six-year period. Lead researcher Dr Victor Wenzhe Zhong said he was taken aback by his findings. He said: "We were surprised to find that people who followed an eight-hour, time-restricted eating schedule were more likely to die from cardiovascular disease." He added: "Our study's findings encourage a cautious, personalized approach to dietary recommendations, ensuring they are aligned with an individual's health status and the latest scientific evidence." The Mayo Clinic observed that fasting has been popular for over 1,500 years. It advised that "Intermittent fasting can be safer with supervision from your healthcare team."

Sources: [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com) / [harvard.edu](https://www.harvard.edu) / [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)

Writing

Fasting is good for us. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

diets / dietary advice / intermittent fasting / metabolism / doubt / cardiovascular / researcher / eating / surprised / health / scientific evidence / clinic / healthcare

True / False

- 1) The article says there is a dearth of information about diets online. T / F
- 2) A lot has been written about intermittent fasting in recent years. T / F
- 3) Supporters of intermittent fasting say it's good for the metabolism. T / F
- 4) People who do not eat for 16-hour periods are at risk of heart diseases. T / F
- 5) Data from than 20,000 adults were used in this study. T / F
- 6) The lead researcher was not at all surprised by his findings. T / F
- 7) Intermittent fasting started in the late 20th century. T / F
- 8) The Mayo Clinic suggested intermittent fasting wasn't safe. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. abounds | a. careful |
| 2. all manner of | b. chance |
| 3. confining | c. surprised |
| 4. doubt | d. noticed |
| 5. risk | e. restricting |
| 6. taken aback | f. is full of |
| 7. cautious | g. guidance |
| 8. approach | h. uncertainty |
| 9. observed | i. attitude |
| 10. supervision | j. various |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How healthy is the food you eat every day?
- c) What changes would you like to make to your diet?
- d) What do you think of the expression 'You are what you eat'?
- e) Do you ever worry about what you eat?
- f) How much do you know about nutrition?
- g) Why has fasting been popular for 1,500 years?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

1. The Internet abounds
 2. Proponents
 3. it improves
 4. a new long-term study has cast
 5. a 91 per cent
 6. he was taken
 7. encourage a cautious, personalized
 8. dietary
 9. the latest scientific
 10. supervision from
- a. metabolism
 - b. evidence
 - c. doubt on its merits
 - d. aback by his findings
 - e. of this dietary regimen
 - f. recommendations
 - g. with all manner of diets
 - h. your healthcare team
 - i. approach
 - j. higher risk of dying

Discussion – Student B

- a) What diets have you tried?
- b) What are the dangers of diets?
- c) What do you think of fasting?
- d) Is it easy for you to go without food for 16 hours?
- e) What dietary advice would you give to people?
- f) Which is best for health, a diet or exercise?
- g) What do you know about cardiovascular diseases?
- h) What advice do you have for someone wanting to lose weight?

Spelling

1. The Internet bnsouda with all manner of diets
2. This is cngnniofi daily eating
3. pnotospnr of this
4. it improves smiltmoeba
5. assists in elrlcula repair
6. people who ttiederrcs their eating
7. he was taken aabck
8. a caiusotu, personalized approach
9. dityrea recommendations
10. ingalde with an individual's health status
11. the latest scientific icenvede
12. safer with nssorpieviu

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. j	3. e	4. h	5. b
6. c	7. a	8. i	9. d	10. g

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What does the internet abound in?
2.	What do proponents of intermittent fasting say it improves?
3.	What do proponents of intermittent fasting say it repairs?
4.	What has cast doubt on the merits of intermittent fasting?
5.	How much greater risk of heart disease might intermittent fasters face?
6.	How long did researchers spend on the study?
7.	What were the lead researcher's feelings towards his research findings?
8.	What kind of approach did the researcher recommend towards fasting?
9.	For how long have people been fasting intermittently?
10.	Who did the Mayo Clinic say people should get supervision from?

Speaking – Cuisines

Rank these with your partner. Put the best cuisines at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Italian
- Thai
- Mexican
- Lebanese
- Indian
- French
- Chinese
- Japanese

Answers – True False

1 F	2 T	3 T	4 T	5 T	6 F	7 F	8 F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.