

One Year On, my experimentation continues with Intermittent Fasting

Food is the most profound drug that we have at our disposal today. The kind of food we consume, how much of it and its frequency has a lot to do with our health. For some time now, I have come to realize that listening to our body and eating only what we need, helps anyone and at any age. I have been following Intermittent Fasting (IF) for over a year now and like to use the term Time Restricted Eating (TRE) for it, as it is much more meaningful description of the concept. However, nothing changes with what one calls it, the concept remains the same.

As described in my earlier blogs (see www.surinderkaul.com under Home > Old Items > 2020 ...), I am now an ardent supporter of TRE. Many of my friends, who started at the same time, have similar feelings about this experience. At 78, my present state of health and experience, including all investigations that I have kept note of, prove that TRE is really beneficial and practical, hence the reason to share and disseminate this message.

Over a year, the manner in which I fast, 16-18 Hrs. of not eating anything and eating only in the window of 6-8 hours daily, has become much more practical and has given me a feeling of heightened wellbeing. I have got accustomed to this lifestyle and have none of the initial problems like hunger pangs or any difficulty in bowel habits. Let me say at the start, I enjoy eating and the temptation to eat is always there, even if I am not hungry.

The most important changes that I can relate are almost complete avoidance of processed foods, sweets and allowing myself very limited amount of rice or other carbs. My craving for rice and bread, restricting them has been the most difficult part of following this regimen. I have enthusiastically increased my vegetable intake and gone easy on consuming fats. Fortunately, I also love cooking and this allows me to strictly monitor what I eat. In addition, my semiretired lifestyle leaves me with ample of time for experimentation. According to Jacqueline Seiglie, food preparation and cooking skills, improve cognitive restraint and emotional eating behaviors among people with overweight and obesity.

Soon after getting out of bed in the morning, I have a glass of plain water and a little later a cup of black coffee. I go for morning brisk walk for an hour or so, followed by a 10-15 mins. of workout. On my return from exercise, a glass of water with lemon, half a teaspoon of turmeric and ginger along with a pinch of pepper and salt, refreshes me greatly. I indulge in spending some time on my computer and in cooking, until it is time for breakfast at 10.30-11.00. The breakfast consists of a bowl of healthy salads fortified with seeds, nuts and a boiled egg. The daily salad is never boring, as the variety of ingredients used, make my salad taste different every day. It provides me with most of the nourishment I need and keeps me satiate for the day. (*My suggestions for salad ingredients below*). I do take fish oil supplement in the morning and 81mg of aspirin.

Between brunch and dinner, I have some fruits and nibbles and a cup of coffee with milk. Around five in the evening the dinner consists of a couple of table spoons of rice and cooked vegetables, some time with chicken or pork and usually a cucumber to go with it. This is followed by a small helping of plain yogurt or with a banana. Of course, plenty of plain water is consumed as and when required.

So, what has TRE done to my body? To start with, as I have mentioned in my earlier blogs, within two weeks of starting the regimen, I had lost over 10kg and my BMI came down from 26-27 to 22-23. The weight has remained steady ever since. Surprisingly, during a month-long holiday in India in Dec-Jan, my

wife and I maintained the habit of taking breakfast at 11am, however due to the lifestyle of other members of the family, dinner was always delayed. We could not resist Indian food and most delicious sweets. Much to our surprise, we had only gained 2-3kg of extra weight. Back home, we got back to our routine but it has taken much longer to lose that extra weight, indicating that gaining weight is easy but shedding it is far more difficult.

Medically speaking, I stopped taking statins for high cholesterol several months back (started over 20Yrs ago). My total cholesterol level shot up from below 200mg/dl to 262mg/dl, but has remained around 234mg/100dl. I have been reading a lot about high cholesterol and the literature (*see links below*) points out that total cholesterol level may be less important than the levels of triglycerides, which needs to be lowered and HDL increased, so that the triglyceride and HDL ratio is around one. My TGL/HDL ratio has come down from 2 to 0.8. My blood uric acid level, which is a major factor in a number of chronic diseases, has come down from 8mg/dl to 4.5mg/dl (first time since 1995 that I have kept the records). No gout symptoms anymore. I have experienced complete healing of some of my small joints that used to hurt. All other parameters are normal. Fortunately, my blood pressure and fasting sugar has always been normal. My mild prostate enlargement symptoms have not deteriorated. If anything, it got a bit better.

I think TRE with the drastic reduction of sugars, carbs and processed foods have done the trick. I feel fitter in myself, sleep well and have purpose in life.

Some useful references:

<https://drwilliamli.com/> Eat to Beat your Diet

Seiglie, J. Relationship Between Food and Cooking Skills and Eating Behaviors in People with Overweight and Obesity. Obesity, Metabolic Syndrome, and Prediabetes Research. April 24, 2023.

Triglyceride/HDL Ratio - A Better CV Risk Predictor than LDL?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSCLeJUfofo>

The Big Secret - Full Medical Documentary. <https://youtu.be/QGPxlx0oOY>

Uric Acid: A KEY Cause of Weight Gain, Diabetes, Heart Disease & Dementia (Dr. David Perlmutter)

<https://youtu.be/QZ6jPCcFNa8>

Breakfast Salad Ideas, particularly for those who might be practicing Time Restricted Eating

My breakfast is restricted to salads only. Nonetheless, I have discovered a number of ways to make my salads delicious and wholesome. I suggest various combinations for salads, but no recipes here, as Y-tube is full of good ideas.

Almost anything can be added to make salads but main ingredients that can go into salads are:

- **Avocado**, Cucumber, Tomatoes, Onions, a Garlic clove, Carrots, Radish, Capsicum;
- Steamed vegetables: Cabbage, Kale, Spinach and other local greens;
- Steamed sweet potatoes, taro root, beetroot, Carrots, cabbage;
- Herbs: Basil, mint, coriander, dill etc.;
- Seeds and Nuts: Pumpkin and sunflower seeds, almond, cashew, walnut, peanuts, boiled or roasted, tender corn;

- Other seeds: boiled quinoa, chickpeas, barley or wheat and other grains, chia, perilla, sesame, flax seeds.

Adding a spoonful of fresh lemon juice enhances the flavor, including salt, pepper, chilies or *Chaat Masala (I make my own at home)* to suit one's taste. Adding a bit of leftover spicy gravy makes the salad even tastier. Avoid commercial salad dressings as they contain large quantities of sugar, unhealthy fats and preservatives. Homemade preparations of salad dressings without sugar, using olive oil, vinegars can make delicious dressings. Definitely avoid tomato ketchup and processed meats or cheese but home-made cheese or yogurt may add to the variety. In addition, cooked shredded meats can go well in salads. I usually add a boiled egg to my salads.