

Fasting improves chronic inflammatory disease, reduces inflammation: study



BY MATTHEW BERNAT

New research has shed light on the benefits - both for longevity and fighting disease - of intermittent fasting.

In a study that appeared in *Cell*, Mount Sinai researchers discovered that fasting reduces inflammation and improves chronic inflammatory conditions such as celiac disease without affecting the immune system's reaction to acute infections.

While acute inflammation is a normal immune process that helps fight off infections, chronic inflammation can have serious consequences for health, including heart disease, celiac disease, diabetes, cancer, multiple sclerosis, and inflammatory bowel diseases.

"Caloric restriction is known to improve inflammatory and autoimmune diseases, but the mechanisms by which reduced caloric intake controls inflammation have been poorly understood," said senior author Miriam Merad, MD, PhD, Director of the Precision Immunology Institute at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in a press release.

Working with human and mouse immune cells, Dr. Merad and her team demonstrated that intermittent fasting reduced the release of pro-inflammatory cells called "monocytes" in blood circulation. Further investigations revealed that during periods of fasting, these cells go into "sleep mode" and are less inflammatory than monocytes found in those who were fed.

"Monocytes are highly inflammatory immune cells that can cause serious tissue damage, and the population has seen an increasing amount in their blood circulation as a result of eating habits that humans have acquired in recent centuries," said Dr. Merad.

"Considering the broad spectrum of diseases that are caused by chronic inflammation and the increasing number of patients affected by these diseases, there is an enormous potential in investigating the anti-inflammatory effects of fasting," said first author Stefan Jordan, PhD, a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Oncological Sciences at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City.

Researchers plan to continue trying to decipher the molecular mechanisms by which fasting improves inflammatory diseases, which could lead to novel preventive therapeutic strategies for the treatment of many diseases.

How to relieve cultural stress

Happy new year. Here we are, once again vowing to live our best lives. It is just about time for that annual juice cleanse and researching the new "fad" diet that promises you will look younger and lose weight...yada, yada, yada.

We make resolutions to exercise more and sit less, but what good are all these changes if we aren't addressing stress and its impact on the mind and body? If we don't take the time to wind down from the holiday stress that comes with following a gluten-free diet and create a plan to handle the day-to-day stresses of life, what will we really accomplish? Won't we be just right back where we started, tired and unengaged?

I sat down with Dr. Howard Murad to learn more about his holistic approach to living a happier, healthier life at any age. Dr. Murad is recognized as The Father of Modern Wellness based on his years of expertise as a board-certified dermatologist and pharmacist. A practitioner not just of medicine but also of the philosophy of health, Dr. Murad

has been studying the effects of the environment, nutrition and lifestyle on skin and overall wellness since 1972.

According to Dr. Murad, "Too much of our lives are spent online versus making a one-on-one connection. We are left feeling isolated and stressed out. This stress is aging us prematurely." We have little if any downtime to reconnect with ourselves and give our bodies the necessary time to rest and repair. Dr. Murad calls this type of constant and pervasive form of stress "cultural stress" and his three-part approach to handling it is simple.

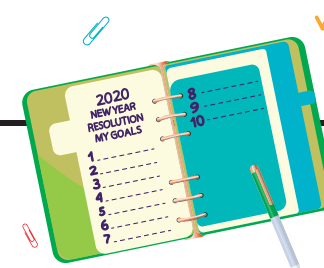
Step 1: Let go of your need to be perfect (who me?), and reconnect with what makes you happy. Like I said, simple. If you follow only one of these steps, this is the most important one, and it is confirmed by Dr. Murad's research. I would add that you should only speak positively to yourself with daily affirmations.

Step 2: Take care of your insides by hydrating and restoring cells. Raw

veggies and fruit are a great way to eat water and up your daily intake. Incorporate good fats, like hazelnut oil and sardines. Eat collagen-enhancing embryonic foods, like eggs, seeds, beans, legumes, nuts and seeds. Stick to clean sources of protein, and take supplements that enable your cells to retain the water you consume. Also, give your body the time it needs to repair itself by getting plenty of sleep.

Step 3: Move. Get up from your desk or couch, and get outside for a walk, work in the yard, or do some actual exercising. Working in the yard always puts me in an excellent mood. It clears out the cobwebs and gets my creative juices flowing.

Now it's time to get selfish, I mean really selfish, and put yourself up on a pedestal as the most important person that you are. Dig down deep for that strength that you know is lurking within, and put a whole-body plan into action.



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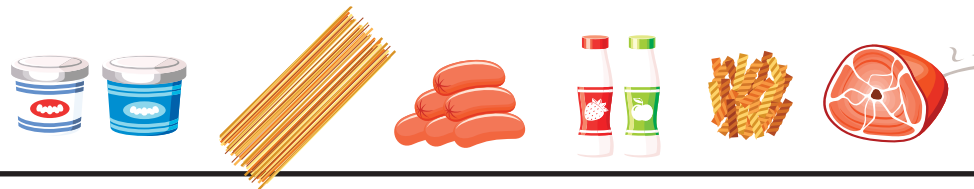
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Upgrade your pantry with these healthful and nutrition-forward products

As we roll into 2020, upgrading our health ought to be a top, if not the No. 1, priority. Joining a gym, eating at home more often, and taking the time to grocery shop are important steps toward achieving this goal, but why not start by giving your pantry the glow-up it deserves?

A pantry makeover doesn't have to be a daunting task. Start by making changes to the ingredients/products you use most often, and branch out from there. Following this step gives you a chance to try new products designed to transform the way we eat, and it helps you identify products that aren't as beneficial as you thought, so you can kick them to the curb.

We put together our top tips for product swaps with an emphasis on taste, texture and nutrition. Because if it doesn't taste good, who's going to make that change?

BAKING, COOKING AND GRILLING

Substituting shelf-stable ghee for butter elevates your efforts while loading your body up with fat-soluble vitamins such as A, D, E and K as well as CLA (which helps with weight loss and skin health). The line of better-for-you butter alternatives from **4th & Heart** blends grass-fed butter with herbs and seasonings, creating an array of flavor enhancers such as Original, Turmeric, California Garlic, Himalayan Pink Salt and Madagascar Vanilla Bean. They smell and taste amazing. And a little goes a long way, so we recommend experimenting with grilled vegetables or baking cookies as a great way to gauge usage.

CHICKEN

I can't be the only adult who eats chicken nuggets every week. Right? They are the ultimate comfort food, and now I can eat a whole bag for only 480 calories all thanks to **Caulipower's**

(formerly Caulipowered) latest creation — **Chicken Tenders**. They are baked, not fried, so there are fewer calories and less fat, but it's the veggie-forward coating packed with cauliflower that brings down that pesky carb count and ups the fiber. Available in Original and Spicy(ish), the tenders are made from premium chicken raised with no antibiotics and no artificial ingredients.

PASTA

Because giving up pasta is out of the question, why not swap out grain-based for a grain-free experience that allows you to enjoy your favorite pasta dishes guilt free? With double the protein, three times the fiber, and 30% fewer net carbs than traditional pasta, **Banza Pasta** uses chickpeas as its base, creating celebrity-adored pasta that tastes so good it is much easier for you to make the better-for-you choice. Available in a variety of shapes (with bowties being the newest addition), this pasta is also available as mac and cheese meals. Trust us. No one will be able to tell the difference between this and wheat-containing pasta.

RICE

Regenerative agriculture and sustainability aren't necessarily what come to mind when rice is the topic. But the Hunter family, owners of **Castor River Farms**, has been growing rice since 1954 without tilling, burning or flooding their soil or using fungicides or insecticides, which has created nutrient-rich soil that requires less water to grow rice and less gas to harvest. Implementing these farming methods allows the farm to lower carbon emissions, ensures the sustainability of its soil, and, most importantly, produces rice that tastes anything but ordinary. Seriously, this rice has renewed my love for rice. It cooks up fluffy with an almost sushi rice quality. Simply delicious.

SNACKING

Leave it to **Simple Mills** to hit it out of the park with its new line of better-for-you-snacking Soft-Baked Almond Flour Bars. As with all its products, the bars are made with simple whole-food ingredients free from grains, gums, cane sugar, and anything artificial. Available in Banana Nut, Peanut Butter, Carrot Cake and Dark Chocolate Almond flavors, the bars combine the texture of a soft-baked cookie with a nutrient-dense nut and seed blend. The bars, or should I say cookies, get their sweetness from honey and molasses, and boast chunks of almonds, coconut, flaxseeds, chia seeds, carrots, bananas and raisins. However you choose to crunch them (for breakfast, snack or dessert), they deliver a wholesome and delicious bite.

YOGURT

Looking for a no-sugar-added yogurt that tastes great and exceeds the health benefits of traditional yogurt? Enter **Lavva**, the rich and nutrient-dense yogurt made with pili nuts, coconut and plantains. This plant-based offering gets its sweetness from the plantains and its thickness from pili nuts and cassava root. It also contains prebiotics and an impressive number of probiotics (50 billion) per serving. With zero added sugar, it works for many lifestyles, including Paleo, Whole 30, Keto and vegan. It is the perfect snack or healthy way to start the day. Rumor has it, the brand is establishing its dominance in the dairy-free yogurt set by outperforming many well-known brands. And Lavva did it by re-inventing yogurt.

We seem to have forgotten that food was designed to nourish the body and leave us feeling our best. We need to raise our standards by feeding our bodies what they need not just to survive but also to thrive. What looks good to you?

Office Hours

Take health to heart this year

BY AMY KELLER



Amy Keller, MS, RDN, LD, is a dietitian and celiac support group leader from Bellefontaine, Ohio.

I've been eating gluten free for about five years and feel like I eat pretty healthy. However, at my last doctor's appointment, I was diagnosed with high blood pressure and was given medication. I don't like the idea of having to take this medicine forever—is there something I can do to improve my lifestyle that might improve it?

A High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, is very common; it affects about half of adults. It's more common in men and older adults, in those who have a family history of high blood pressure, and in people with other health conditions such as sleep apnea and chronic kidney disease. Because it typically has no symptoms, it often remains undiagnosed in many people. Untreated high blood pressure can increase your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Lifestyle changes that may help reduce your blood pressure include stopping smoking or reducing your exposure to secondhand smoke, increasing your physical activity, losing weight (if you need to), and improving your diet. The DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet can easily be modified to fit a gluten-free meal pattern. The DASH diet can help you decrease your intake of sodium and increase your intake of potassium, both of which have been shown to improve blood pressure. Learn more about the DASH diet at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at www.nhlbi.nih.gov.

Remove the saltshaker from the table, and flavor your food with spices, herbs, vinegar (except for malt vinegar, which contains gluten), lemon or lime. Increase your intake of fruits and vegetables by selecting fresh or frozen. If you choose canned vegetables, try



to find low-sodium or no-salt-added options. Rinse other canned items, such as beans. Reduce your intake of salty foods such as cheese, bacon, sausage and lunch meat.

Even with lifestyle changes, you may still need medication to control your blood pressure. As with any prescription medication, you should never stop taking it without talking to your doctor.

I got my results from a health screening at work, and it indicated I have high cholesterol and triglycerides. Both high cholesterol and heart disease run in my family, so I wasn't really surprised. I've had celiac disease since I was a kid, so I know the gluten-free diet well, but how can I make it more heart-healthy?

A There are several ways to improve the gluten-free diet to keep your heart health in check. Increase your intake of soluble fiber, which is found in many fruits and vegetables, such as berries, apples, peaches, pears, prunes, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and green beans. Choose more gluten-free whole grains, such as quinoa and oatmeal (be sure both are labeled gluten free). Eat beans, such as kidney, lima, black and pinto, as well as chickpeas. Increase your water or other fluids when you eat more fiber to minimize gastrointestinal discomfort.

Reducing saturated fat (which typically is found in animal foods such as meat and dairy) may help reduce your bad cholesterol, but it is important not to replace fat in the

diet with sugar or other highly processed forms of carbohydrates. Instead, use more unsaturated fats, such as olive oil, canola oil, safflower and sunflower oil. Healthy fats such as flaxseed, avocado and whole chia seeds also provide a good source of soluble fiber.

Eat fish a couple of times a week, especially heart-healthy choices such as salmon and tuna. If you do drink sugar-sweetened beverages, such as soda, sweet tea and lemonade, keep the portions small, or consider not drinking them at all. Finally, if you haven't already, share your cholesterol screening results with your doctor, especially with your family history of heart disease.

I know I should exercise, but it just seems like I never have time! Do you have any suggestions?

A A busy work and family schedule can definitely get in the way of your best intentions to get more active. Remember, doing something is always better than doing nothing! Instead of trying to find a free hour every day, work more activity into your daily lifestyle. For example, take a 10-minute walk on a work break, or get some steps in during kids' sports practices. Take the stairs whenever possible, and park your car as far from the front door as you can. If you are meeting with a co-worker, take a walk instead of sitting at a desk. Keep an extra pair of tennis shoes in your car or the office; you might be surprised that you have a spare few minutes here and there where you can be active.