

Intermittent Fasting & Hormones

A Clinical Guide to Metabolic Balance

Intermittent Fasting (IF) is more than just a tool for weight management; it is a metabolic intervention that triggers significant changes in the body's endocrine (hormonal) system. Understanding these shifts is key to a safe and effective practice.

How IF Affects Key Hormones

Hormone	Effect of Fasting	Benefit
Insulin	Levels drop significantly.	Facilitates fat burning and improves insulin sensitivity.
Growth Hormone (GH)	Levels can increase substantially.	Supports muscle preservation and tissue repair.
Norepinephrine	Increased secretion.	Boosts metabolic rate and focus.
Leptin & Ghrelin	Gradual stabilization.	Helps regulate hunger cues and satiety signals.

The "Window" Matters: Circadian Fasting

Aligning your eating window with your natural circadian rhythm—eating during daylight hours—often produces the best hormonal results. This approach helps regulate **Cortisol** (stress hormone) and **Melatonin** (sleep hormone), which are crucial for metabolic health.

Clinical Considerations for Women

Women's hormones (specifically **GnRH**, **LH**, and **FSH**) are highly sensitive to calorie restriction. If fasting is too aggressive, it may disrupt the menstrual cycle. It is often

recommended that women start with shorter windows (e.g., 12-14 hours) and monitor their cycle closely.

Patient Best Practices

- **Hydration is Vital:** Drink plenty of water, black coffee, or plain tea during fasting hours to support kidney function.
 - **Break the Fast Gently:** Choose protein and healthy fats for your first meal to avoid a massive insulin spike.
 - **Listen to Your Body:** If you experience persistent dizziness, severe fatigue, or mood disturbances, the protocol may need adjustment.
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This guide is for informational purposes. Intermittent fasting is not suitable for individuals who are pregnant, breastfeeding, have a history of eating disorders, or certain medical conditions like Type 1 Diabetes. Always consult your healthcare provider before starting.