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Megan [00:00:06] Before we get started with today's episode, I would like to quickly read you our podcast disclaimer.

[00:00:13] This podcast is for educational purposes only, and it is not a substitute for professional care by a doctor or other qualified medical professional. You should always speak with your physician or other healthcare professionals before doing any fasting, changing your diet in any way, taking or adjusting any medications or supplements, or adopting any treatment plan for a health problem.

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[00:01:13] All right. And now we'll get started with today's episode. Hi, everyone. It's Megan Ramos here with another episode of the Fasting Method podcast. Today, I'm going to answer your questions in a Q&A episode. Now, I want to thank everyone for your patience as we work through the Q&A backlog. At this time, we are not accepting new questions, but hopefully we will be this fall. All right, let's get things started.

[00:01:49] The first question asks, "How much weight regain is expected after a five-day fast?"

[00:01:58] This is a fantastic question. All the questions are fantastic, but this one is a very popular one and one that I see often misunderstood. Now, for every day that you fast, you should expect to lose half a pound of body fat. So for a five-day fast, that equates to two and a half pounds. Some people might lose a little bit more, some people might lose a little bit less, but that two to three pounds of body fat range is to be expected.

[00:02:31] Now, sometimes during these long fasts, people really drive their insulin levels down substantially. When our insulin levels come down, we also retain less water on a regular basis, so it's not uncommon for people to see more than two or three pounds of loss when they step on the scale. Anything extra is usually a sign of the water loss that occurs during a fast. As your insulin goes down, your levels are going to be lower and your body's not going to hold on to as much water on a regular basis, so there's some water loss that you are not going to regain. But then sometimes there can be some water loss that you *do* regain just from simply being a bit too dehydrated, having too low sodium, or too little water, or both during your fasts. So most people lose, again, about two to three pounds of body fat. Most people also drop one or two pounds of water weight. Anything more will likely be regained once you resume eating.

[00:03:47] Now, sometimes people will see a bigger increase after they break their fast, for a few days. That's normal. What happens is the body does hold on to excess water, especially if you did get a bit dehydrated during your fasts. It's quite nervous. It doesn't know if you are going to do another fast or not. But after a few days of getting back into routine, the body says, "Okay, we are not at risk of dehydration, so let's lose this water that we've retained." So people might experience a whoosh. So they might lose five pounds, feel like they've regained like four of that five pounds and then a few days after re feeding and getting back into intermittent fasting, they see a big whoosh and their body lets go of

those four pounds of regain and they're back down to five pounds. So that is very common.

[00:04:48] I usually encourage people, you know, weigh yourself the morning that you intend to break your fast and then wait a week or five days before you do another weigh check-in. That way, you're not getting psyched out by any ebbs and flows in water retention that could occur. So give yourself some breathing room. If you do notice the weight goes up, it will likely come back down.

[00:05:17] If the weight doesn't come back down, you really have got to look at the hydration. Are you properly hydrated? Hydration is not, again, just water. It's water and salt and magnesium and sometimes other electrolytes in certain circumstances. So this is where booking a session with a coach can help you navigate some of the nuances of that.

[00:05:39] The next question states, "Since your thyroid episode, I've been very nervous to fast. Can I fast with hypothyroidism if I'm not symptomatic?"

[00:05:50] The answer is yes. Now, of course, you always have to check with your registered healthcare provider to see if fasting is safe for you, but so much of hypothyroidism is related to cellular inflammation. Fasting will help reduce that cellular inflammation and the thyroid function does improve because more of the thyroid hormone will be able to get into the cell when it's less inflamed. So the bottom line is, if you are functioning, if you are not bedridden, if you can stand to make a cup of tea or coffee without feeling like you're going to fall over from low blood pressure, you can fast with hypothyroidism. Hashimoto's or hypothyroidism - totally fine. If you are bedridden, if you are on disability, if you are struggling to stand up to pour yourself a glass of water, then you should work on good TRE and get the thyroid levels adjusted.

[00:06:51] Now, it's very rare to be that sick from hypothyroidism. I, myself, have been that sick from cellular inflammation, living in a house full of mycotoxins and other chemicals without knowing it. And I couldn't stand to pour myself a cup of water without falling over. I certainly couldn't wait for the kettle to boil to make myself a cup of tea either. I was bedridden. It's very rare to be in those set of circumstances. So if you're living your day to day life but wish you could just feel better, but otherwise you're able to function, then you should be able to fast and fasting should help.

[00:07:33] Fasting, since it does reduce the cellular inflammation, can make you hyperthyroid over time. So you do need to be mindful of the symptoms of hyperthyroidism: heart racing, body temperature increase, feeling agitated and irritable. These are some of the common signs of hyperthyroidism. If you start to experience those symptoms, you should stop fasting, focus on good time-restricted eating, great food quality, get some blood work done, and talk to your doctor. The doctor likely has to readjust the medications downwards (which is great - less medication) and then you're able to resume your fasting again once you feel like you're no longer symptomatic of hyperthyroid symptoms. So that is the only caveat.

[00:08:27] I think I shared on the thyroid episode that, at one point, my cellular inflammation was so bad I was taking 160 micrograms of T3. Now, I take 5 micrograms of T3. I have a genetic disorder which prevents my inactive thyroid hormone from converting to active thyroid hormone efficiently so I'm always going to need some thyroid medication, but that is a huge reduction. We're talking reducing it by 155 micrograms. So, of course, I did a lot of fasting, once I started to feel better, to reverse the cellular inflammation, but I

had to stop, adjust my medications to make sure I wasn't symptomatic of hyperthyroidism, and then pick up the fasting again. So I had these increments where I had to stop, sometimes working-- I actually worked with a provider who is very savvy with thyroid. We could get ahead of it by doing more frequent blood work and reducing the medications ahead of me noticing any symptoms. So I had a very unremarkable reduction, for the most part, in my thyroid medication.

[00:09:41] But be mindful of symptoms. Go for regular blood work. The only other thing too, is if you do have Hashis and you are in a flare up, you should focus on TRE and good eating. Fat fasting's awesome. Get that flare-up under control and then you can get back into your fast. So there are very few circumstances where you can't fast. You can't fast if you're bedridden, you can't fast if you're symptomatic of hyperthyroid, and you can't fast if you are in a Hashis flare-up. In all of those instances, you can do TRE. You can also do fat fasting. And the best thing is to get your blood work done, get with a doctor, and get medications adjusted.

[00:10:25] Question number three: "How many meals do I need to have in between fasts?"

[00:10:31] I love this question. The answer is always, "It depends." It depends on how well you feel. So if you are someone who does a longer fast, say three days of fasting, and you maybe want to do a 48 afterwards, if you feel good after that one meal, you should absolutely do the 48, but if you feel run down after that meal, maybe you should take a day of eating, have a few meals, and then do something like a 24 to cap off the week, or do the 48 then later in the week. So it really depends. If you feel good, sure, get into another fast. If you don't feel so good, then you should wait. You know, you can take it day by day even. There's no magical number of meals that you need to have.

[00:11:23] So, you know, in the clinic we had people who did seven days, had one meal and then did another seven days. They felt really great. They maybe had that one meal to appease a spouse for a certain holiday or event, something that popped up, but they would just get back into another fast. At the time of recording this particular episode, we are going into a long weekend here in the United States, and I know a lot of our Community members and my coaching clients actually are doing two 48s back-to-back earlier this week. So they fasted from Sunday to Tuesday, ate Tuesday, fasted Tuesday to Thursday, broke their fast at home on Thursday in case they had any digestive issues, and then they had their long weekend. Now Monday's the particular holiday this long weekend so most people will take a four day weekend or a half day on Friday so that way they don't have to worry about getting in therapeutic fasting while traveling or being on vacation. Same when they get back on the other side. Monday is the holiday. Maybe they have dinner, they start their 48 till Wednesday, they have their one meal on Wednesday, they start the 48 to Friday. So they do two 48s back-to-back. It's super common around long weekends to do this strategy and, again, totally okay to do so long as you feel good. So if you don't feel good, take a day or two, see how you feel. If you feel fine, then you can absolutely roll with what works best for your routine.

[00:13:06] The next question asks, "Is it okay for me to fast after eating poorly over a long weekend?"

[00:13:16] The answer, again, is, "It depends." If you really went wild with sugar and you stand on the scale and the scale is up like seven or nine pounds in water weight (you know it's water weight, even though you might have eaten a lot of sugar, a lot of that is just water weight) then you might want to fat fast for a few days just to lose that water weight safely.

When you are fat fasting, your insulin levels are going to come down dramatically, so you're going to lose that water that's been retained and you'll be replenishing electrolytes and fluid through food as well. Sometimes, no matter how hard we try, we just can't get in enough salt or magnesium through supplementation during a fast, so it's just better to fat fast. So if you see that the scale is up, significantly lots of water, then fat fast for a few days. If the scale's up a few pounds, there's a few pounds of water, totally wasn't in a wild week. You know better than maybe you've done past certain holiday weekends, but a lot more sugar or starch than you usually consume, but you're not seeing that much water regain (like under five pounds of water weight), then it's totally fine to get into a fast.

[00:14:42] Sometimes with people who are at low body fat percentages that still need to fast for various reasons (say autoimmune conditions), we'll strategically have them take real, whole-food carbs before they do a longer fast just to help them retain a little bit more electrolytes and feel better throughout the fast. So that is a strategy we actually implement. So in this case, it's more like sweet potatoes or some legumes, for example, like kidney beans or chickpeas. So we're not talking, you know, other starchy foods like refined and processed breads and rice, pasta, sweets of any kind. But if you see it less than about five pounds, it's probably okay to get into a fast so long as you feel good. If you see it's over five pounds, then it's probably best to do a fat fast.

[00:15:35] So these are some of the things that run through my mind when I'm working with coaching clients in assessing the advice that I give them, and just looking at the amount of water regain helps give that advice. But it's a huge, huge misconception that you need to be eating perfectly to go into fast. And like I said, having a bit of carb, a bit of starch can actually make the fast go more easily, especially if you're on the low body fat percentage side of things. Even in my insulin sensitive days, I will sometimes have some starch likes and sweet potato before I do some of my periodic extended fasting, like five-day fasts or seven-day fasts, just to help with some salt and sodium retention during the first leg of the fast. It makes a big difference. So this is the advice that we often give out when people are in maintenance or people that do need to do longer fasts that are struggling with them.

[00:16:35] So it's a total, total myth that you need to be in, like, deep ketosis or already in a fat-burning state to make your fast easier. I'll tell you, honestly, the majority of our patients did not follow a ketogenic diet. They mostly followed a liberal, low-carb diet. They were much more willing to fast than to change their foods. Now, obviously, in our online demographic, everyone we work with is very conscientious and is looking to optimize all angles of their health so we spend a ton of time at The Fasting Method talking about various nutritional strategies and personalized nutritional approaches in our coaching program. But back in the clinic, when Jason and I had the clinic in Toronto, people really weren't into changing their diet too much. They would make an effort to eat less junk food, less refined and processed food, cook more meals at home, but they would fast consistently. We had so much success with fasting, reversing diabetes, improving all kinds of health markers without barely mentioning the word 'ketogenic' or 'ketosis' in the clinic at all in many, many years. So it is a big myth. You know, there's always this, "Do you need to be in ketosis and fat burning first?" No, you don't. So just keep that in mind, everyone.

[00:18:01] Question number five: "Does Crio Bru break a fast?"

[00:18:05] Crio Bru is a coffee alternative that's pretty much based in pure cacao. It does taste really good. I'll tell you, this pregnant lady likes it very much. It does have a bit of carbs in it. A cup of it (250 milliliters/eight ounces) does have about three grams of

carbohydrates in it but, overall, it is fairly benign. When I talk to Community members or coaching clients, I tell them they can have one a day during like a 24 or 36-hour fast. They can have one. Not to have multiple, you know-- like you could have a few cups of coffee if you tolerate coffee and caffeine well. You can have plentiful herbal teas during your fasts. But with the Crio Bru, you do want to cap it at one. I have a ton of clients who use it on their eating days at the end of dinner to help satisfy any dessert cravings or sugar cravings, and they find it to be an amazing substitute.

[00:19:08] Now, if you like that chocolatey flavor and you're looking for ways to add variety in on your fasting days, there is a company called Numi. Now we've got no affiliation with them whatsoever - myself, Jason, The Fasting Method - no affiliation. It's a brand though that I personally buy and they have a chocolate pu-erh tea. It's amazing. It maintains the integrity of your fasts and you can have a few cups of that on your fasting days, no problem. You can have it on your eating days in between meals. You can have it before bed. So it's a herbal tea with a little bit of pure cacao and much less concentrated than the Crio Bru. And yeah, it's a great way to add in that flavor. I used it in my journey so much throughout the fall and winter when I would lean into that rather than other chocolatey, sugary beverages that you could get, say, at Starbucks. I leaned into my chocolate pu-erh tea and lost a ton of weight and got great biomarkers. So I'm a big fan of it. It does have medium caffeine, kind of the same as green tea, so you're looking at around 35 to 40 milligrams of caffeine per cup. So that's just something to be mindful of. If you don't metabolize caffeine very quickly, you might want to avoid it later on in the day or just minimize how much you're having. Factor it into your total caffeine intake throughout the day.

[00:20:48] And the last question of the day asks, "Do I need salt while I fast?"

[00:20:54] Love, love, love this question because so many people hear us talk about salt, but it's not always for everybody. So there is a small percentage of the population that is truly salt sensitive. It's not very common, though, but some people just can't tolerate it. And if they can't tolerate it, then they don't need to take it because their bodies retain it. So these are individuals that can do whatever fasting, don't have headaches, don't have lethargy, have, you know, pretty good, stable energy levels. They don't struggle with sort of that day-three fatigue on extended fasts, their levels are pretty constant all the time. Again, this is rare.

[00:21:41] Now, when someone's just starting their journey and they're very insulin resistant, they don't really need salt. I rarely talk about salt in an initial coaching session unless I suspect the person has more mild insulin resistance. But most of the people start off their coaching journey with more severe insulin resistance, so we'll talk about the fasting training wheels and pickle juice and a pinch of salt in the morning, sure, so getting some of those bases covered, but not really like dosing salt and having a need to take salt when they fast. As a person becomes more insulin sensitive, they're more likely to experience headaches, fatigue, even extreme lethargy during their fasts, and this is when we know that they need more salt.

[00:22:34] Now, when you're working with a coach like me, we try to be preemptive, we try to get ahead of it. If you're someone who has got uric acid issues, gout issues, we also try to be more preventative and proactive with the salt earlier on. It can be a little tricky to navigate if someone is both insulin resistant and is struggling with high uric acid at the same time.

[00:22:56] So usually at the beginning of one's journey, salt is not a requirement. Having an occasional sip of pickle juice or having the occasional cup of broth can usually help, but as you become healthier and you continue to fast therapeutically to reach your goals, then you might need to lean more heavily into the salt. So again, there's a handful of conditions that we do try to get in front of at the start (the uric acid, for example, some adrenal concerns, some aldosterone issues) and then we'll talk a bit more about the salt at the beginning of one's journey. But no, not everybody needs salt or not everybody needs salt right away. Maybe about four to six weeks into the journey with consistent therapeutic fasting - that's when we find we need to be more conscientious and more regular with our sodium intake. So the more insulin we have in the body, the more salt we're going to retain. The less insulin we have in the body, the less salt we're going to retain and the more frequently we are going to have to replenish that salt. So I hope that helps clarify some of the salt talk.

[00:24:18] All right, everyone, thank you so much and we'll be back next week with another episode of the podcast. Bye for now, everyone, and happy fasting.