

The Fasting Method - Episode #142: Fasting Q&A: Low Sodium, Struggling with 48-Hour Fasts, Fasting Without Keto/Low-Carb, Spring Break Fasting Tips, and More

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 to substitute for professional care by a doctor or other qualified medical professional. You should always speak with your physician or other health care 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, and welcome to another episode of The Fasting Method podcast. Today is one of my favorite episodes because it's where I answer your questions. And I'm also pleased to tell you that we are now open to take questions again. In order to better manage your questions, we have created a form for you to submit. Please note that we no longer accept questions via email. Now, there's a link to the form in the show description and we will select our favorite questions each month. We love answering them, so keep sending them in and we hope this will make it easier to manage. All right, now let's get started with today's episode.

[00:02:00] The first question says, "I'm taking salt, but still struggling with the effects of low sodium. What am I doing wrong?"

[00:02:07] I think the most important thing here is to go to your doctor and get your blood pressure checked. Your blood pressure might be running on the low side, so if you're taking any blood pressure medication or diuretic medications, they may need to be adjusted. So this is why you could be feeling those effects even while taking salt. It was not uncommon for Dr. Fung to have to reduce blood pressure medication and diuretic medication, even with people who were on hefty doses of it before their fasting journey. We need to remember that the sugar driving the insulin up and trapping the sodium, that's the problem. So the sodium ends up getting really blamed for what the sugar is causing - the sugar causing the insulin, causing the sodium retention, causing the water retention, causing elevated blood pressure. Salt is this very vilified nutritional item, but it should not be. It's wrongly convicted. It's really the sugar that needs to be convicted. So it's one of the most problematic understandings out there. We're hoping to do our best to help clarify for everyone, so I love this question coming in.

[00:03:19] So, first, monitor your blood pressure and make sure your medications don't need to be adjusted. Second, make sure your blood sugar levels are okay. The symptoms of low sodium levels and the symptoms of low blood sugar are the same. So if you're feeling tired, fatigued, a little dizzy, a little hand shaky, check your blood sugar levels. Now, it's not uncommon for people who are fat burners to have blood sugar levels that run a little bit on the lower side, but we still don't want them running too low. When blood sugar

levels are very low, it's usually a sign that we've got to take a look at something else - adrenal glands, thyroid glands, or something completely different. There's a lot of different factors here. You've got to take a look at all of them. So make sure you check your blood sugar levels and report to someone who is a knowledgeable healthcare provider what they are. Always go to your healthcare provider, and you can seek out assistance from a fasting coach or fasting-knowledgeable physician.

[00:04:23] On the most simple level, if your blood pressure is great and your blood sugars are great and you're still feeling kind of fatigued with your salt, it could be two things. One, it could just be not enough salt, or, number two, what I'm actually seeing a lot of these days, is that people are taking salt but they're not taking water with it. And we need to actually take quite a bit of water with salt. When I'm working with someone in coaching and they're able to take salt, if they're taking an eighth of a teaspoon of salt, we pair that with at least 500 mls of water, which is the equivalent of about eight ounces. If they're taking a quarter of a teaspoon of salt, we try to get in about a liter of water, which is equivalent to about 16oz. So you've got to have quite a bit of water with your salt. And then, of course, if you are taking more salt, which some people will do for various reasons, you need even more water with it. So water and salt are a duo and they need to be consumed together. You can't just have water without electrolytes. You can't just have salt without the water. They are a pair. So you need to take a look at how much water you're having with your sodium.

[00:05:42] The next question says, "I'm struggling to do two 48-hour fasts per week, which is my preferred protocol. The first fast is fine, but the second one is a real struggle. Any tips?"

[00:05:54] If you're the person that submitted this question or you're experience this, you are not alone. This is so common. 48-hour fasting protocol, I think, is by far the most popular therapeutic protocol because it's less disruptive of eating times in the evening. So if family meals or meals with friends or dinner meetings are a significant part of your social life, then you're only missing a couple of dinners a week, which is desirable for people who are social or have those household meals that are important to them. 48-hour fasts, too, allow for some really deep, therapeutic levels of ketosis (so fat burning) and they're often very efficient, even more so sometimes than doing three 42-hour fasts a week, although I love both protocols and, often, mixing up both protocols is really a fantastic recipe for success.

[00:06:50] But the two 48s - I get it. If I could go back in time, that's probably the protocol I would have leaned into, and it's the one that my husband largely would do because it fits just kind of into our lifestyle nicely. A lot of people feel nice and refreshed at the start of a week. They've had the weekend, they've had better sleep, they've had social engagement, they've had a chance to rest and recover, and their bodies are feeling like they can just tackle that first fast. So they go into their Monday feeling rested and restored. And Mondays are usually hectic, Mondays and Tuesdays are pretty hectic and there's a lot of chores, appointments, work projects. It is easy to be distracted. But then come the second 48-hour fasts, we're feeling tired and fatigued. The stress of the week, the chaos of the week, the lack of rest, you know, it all catches up with us and our bodies just end up being a little too fatigued sometimes to get in that second 48-hour fast. So what I encourage everyone is to have kind of a plan A, B and C strategy. So plan A can be your two 48-hour fasts, plan B can be a 48-hour fast plus two 24-hour fasts, and a plan C can be three 24-hour fasts. If all the stars are aligning, you're having a great week, you're feeling rested, and you can crash those two 48s, do plan A. If you start the week off strong but are feeling

really fatigued towards the end of the week, well, just divide your 48 into two 24s. So you would fast your first 48, say, from Sunday night to Tuesday night, and then you would do a 24 from Wednesday night to Thursday night, and then Thursday night to Friday night. So you're still being consistent, you're still doing therapeutic fasting.

[00:08:40] We can't always do two 48s. I can't, Dr. Fung can't, the most avid fasters can't always keep it up every week. Stress, jetlag, poor sleep - all these things, they all impact our ability to fast, so you need to be able to pivot. And people who really master the art of pivoting enable consistency, and that is what makes them successful. So when I'm always asked, you know, what are the characteristics that make someone successful? It's those who are willing to pivot in order to stay consistent every week. You know, you might get a lot of weeks of two 48s, and you might have a handful of weeks of a 48 plus two 24s, and that is totally okay, too. You're doing something every week. Some weeks you might take leaps forwards and some weeks you might take steps forwards, but the point is you're moving forwards. And I always think everyone should have a plan C where it's three 24-hour fasts a week.

[00:09:35] There are going to be weeks that really kick are butt. My husband just had one of those. He had to fly to Orlando, Florida from San Francisco for a family emergency. It was a really hectic week. And then he had to fly back here, and our baby was having sleep regression, and he was just feeling like he had his butt kicked to the curb. And those are not weeks to try to do two 48s. He was eager to sort of optimize some body composition markers after my pregnancy, the holidays, and becoming a new dad, so he wanted to get back on track. So, you know, getting in three 24s was doable. We all have these times where it really feels like life is pouring on us. So whatever those times might be for you. three 24s is great. And even doing three days of fat fasting is still a therapeutic and consistent strategy too. So you could have a plan A, a plan B, a plan C, and a plan D, where the plan D is fat fasting. So try that out, see how it goes, and just allow yourself the flexibility. It does not always have to be two 48s, but being consistent with something every week, even something as simple as fat fasting, you're going to crash your goals in no time. So don't be afraid. Sometimes we take baby steps, sometimes we take big steps, sometimes we take big leaps, sometimes we run. Each week is going to be different in terms of results. The whole point is to be moving forwards. Even if it sometimes feels at a snail's pace, you're still moving forwards, you're still doing a great job.

[00:11:16] The third question says, "I. Don't eat keto or low carb. Can fasting work for me? And the answer is absolutely yes.

[00:11:23] We work with individuals that follow a variety of diets. Someone say Alexander North American diet. Some of them eat real whole foods but are not watching carbs or sugar. But they're all from more natural sources. You know, things like berries and apples or sweet potatoes. They're including in their diet. Legumes, lentils and people have great success with this. There are some strategies that we implement, though, to help them have really killer success with this. So number one is absolutely no snacking. So all those time restricted eating podcasts that we've done go back, take a listen to those. Not snacking and sticking to meals is going to be really critical in this case. Well it's critical for everybody, but it's really critical in this particular case. Some of these individuals might have to do more therapeutic fasting at the start in order to reach their goals. So whereas a more low carb or keto individual might hit certain metabolic targets in six months and be able to turn down the fasting dial to more maintenance mode. An individual who has more carbs, real food, carbs in their diet. It might take eight months. So I'm not talking a crazy more amount of time, but a little bit more time where we would have to be in therapeutic

fasting. And that's totally okay. It's just a bit more time. Now, there are some individuals that still follow the real standard North American diet, which is pretty heavy and processed in refined foods. Not super ideal, but with these individuals, we might have to do a few more months of therapeutic fasting in order to make some significant headway with their biomarkers. But it is totally possible. We're completely dietary agnostic at the fast method. I do know low carb and keto get a lot of love.