

Fasting — The Supreme Medicine

Your Health is in Your Hands - VII

Dr. Manthena
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Your Health is in Your Hands - 7

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Rajarshi....!

Among the precious sons bestowed by Nature, he is the most blessed. A Rajarshi (A king elevated to the stature of a sage) who offers a daily oblation to the philosophy of Nature itself. Like a sage walking beside us, he is the fragrant jewel that spreads the perfume of human evolution, blossoming under Nature's grace. He is the gardener who tends to the way of natural living, sowing its seeds and nurturing it with care.

Under his guidance, the "Natural Way of Life" is growing as Nature's beloved child on the banks of the Krishna River. He is the chief architect of the Ashram, envisioned so that all people may follow Nature's laws and live in good health under the watchful gaze of Goddess Kanaka Durga of Vijayawada.

With affection and reverence, I dedicate this garland of books, *Your Health is in Your Hands*, to the virtuous couple — our spiritual companions, pure-hearted and gracious — Sri Gokaraju Gangaraju and Smt. Laila Gangaraju.

Your loving well-wisher

Manthena Satyanarayana Raju

What You Will Learn in This Book

1. [The Big Mistake We Make](#)
2. [Who Discovered Fasting?](#)
3. [How Does Fasting the Stomach Reduce Disease?](#)
4. [Why Is Fasting Called the Supreme Medicine?](#)
5. [What Is the Body's Duty?](#)
6. [What Is Fasting?](#)
7. [What Should Be Taken During Fasting?](#)
8. [How Should Fasting Be Done?](#)
9. [Who Should Fast, and When?](#)
10. [What Should Be Done When Fever Occurs?](#)
11. [How to Get Rid of a Cold Quickly?](#)
12. [How to Reduce Cough?](#)
13. [How I Practice Fasting](#)
14. [Benefits of Fasting](#)
15. [Shall We Listen to What the Body Says?](#)

1. The Big Mistake We Make

If we think with clarity, we realize that we are one thing, and our body is another. When we are born, we arrive on this earth carrying a body. When we die, we leave, discarding the body. Yet the strange truth is that from birth to death, we and our body live as if we are one and the same.

Without the body, there is no life at all. Birth and death are not in our hands, but the life that exists between them is entirely in our hands. Whether that life is lived in health and happiness, or in illness and suffering, we alone are responsible — not the body.

If this body faces any difficulty, the fault is ours. The body is the vehicle in which we are traveling. Just as a vehicle must move according to the driver's instructions, we must also listen to the body and act according to its needs if we want the journey of life to be smooth until its destination. Only then does life progress comfortably.

But the great mistake all of us make is this — we do not listen to the body. We ignore its needs. That is why we suffer from countless diseases. We impose our likes and dislikes on it instead of listening to its cries.

Every living body is like an automatic machine. From birth itself, the body is endowed with the power to heal and repair itself. For that power to function, we must listen to the body and live in harmony with it.

In this creation, there are 8.4 million species of life. To which doctor do they go to protect their health? What blood tests or X-rays do they undergo? What is the secret of their health?

The answer is one hundred percent clear — they listen to their bodies.

Human beings too followed this very principle for thousands of years and lived without doctors and without disease.

Then why is it that today, despite having so many doctors and so many systems of medicine, human beings are unable to attain complete health? We instinctively feel that we should give a chance to the doctor — but we do not realize that before the doctor, we must give a chance to the body.

Many people do not even know that the body itself possesses the power to cure diseases. A machine made by humans cannot repair itself; since humans made it, humans must fix it. But did we make this body ourselves?

Because we did not create it, this body contains a system so wondrous, so intelligent, and so complex that it lies beyond our imagination and beyond our intellectual capacity. Human beings have not yet been able to invent a fully automatic car — but the body in which we travel runs automatically. Not only that, it also possesses the power to repair itself automatically.

If only we stop interfering with that power, the body will continue to do its work.

Without realizing it, we constantly trouble the body in many ways. When the body needs water, we do not drink. We drink only when we feel like it. When the body feels hungry, we do not feed it. Even when it tells us, “This is the time to rest — I can no longer digest,” we ignore it and eat late at night.

Even after the body has digested our food and prepared waste for elimination, we suppress the urge and do not allow it to expel it.

When harmful substances enter the body and it tries to expel them through fever or bitterness in the mouth, giving us clear signals, we ignore them. Instead of allowing the body to heal itself, we immediately rush to the doctor.

The doctor prescribes some medicine. That medicine suppresses the body's effort. By continuously depending on medicines, the body's natural disease-fighting ability gradually weakens.

If we first give the body the opportunity to heal, immunity strengthens. We must realize that our body itself is a great doctor.

There is nothing wrong with taking medicine when the body truly cannot heal on its own. But before that, let us learn to change ourselves according to what the body asks, and learn to live in harmony with it.

2. Who Discovered Fasting?

When we feel thirsty, we instinctively know that we must drink water. When the body needs water, it asks — and we drink. All animals behave in exactly the same way. No one needs to tell us that thirst should be quenched with water. We do not have to ask anyone. We do not have to study for it. We do not need a doctor's advice.

When hunger arises, the body tells us that it needs food. When we eat, its need is satisfied and it becomes calm. Every animal understands that when hunger arises, food must be provided to the body — and they do so. Likewise, when the body becomes tired, it informs us of its fatigue. We then take rest and cooperate with it. All animals know that when tired, rest is necessary, and they take it naturally. In these three matters — thirst, hunger, and fatigue — animals and human beings behave in exactly the same way. From this we understand that the laws of the body are the same for all living beings.

Now let us think about the fourth matter.

When the body is unwell, when there is no appetite, when the stomach feels heavy, or when fever sets in, the body communicates clearly: "I am not well today. Do not eat. Do not move around. Lie down and rest." At that moment, our first impulse is to listen to the body.

But we are said to be intelligent, knowledgeable beings. After a short while, our thoughts change. What do we then do? We explain our condition to our mother, father, or elders at home. They advise us: "It is already late for the meal. If you don't eat, you will feel weak. Eat this meal, and in the evening we will go to the doctor." Whether it is because food will go to waste, or because we fear weakness, or because others insist, we eat even when we do not feel like it.

Here, instead of acting according to the body's request, we act against it — and finally hand over the body to the doctor.

Now let us observe what the 8.4 million species of life do in such a situation. When their body says, "I am not well. Do not eat. Do not move," they immediately stop eating from that very moment. When there is no need to eat, there is no need to move either. Therefore, they give the body complete rest and lie down peacefully.

To stop eating and to rest, they do not need to consult their parents or friends. Here, they simply honor the law of the body and remain still. As the saying goes, "Dharma protects those who protect it." That very law protects them.

They continue resting for as many days as the body asks. When the body again signals that it needs food, they resume eating. From ancient times until today, they have followed this practice — stopping food and giving rest when the body demands it — and have thereby protected their health.

This law does not need to be taught by parents to children or grandparents to grandchildren. This knowledge is inborn — passed naturally from generation to generation to every living being. Just as animals possess this wisdom, human beings too have had it since time immemorial. Humans also once followed this bodily law without deviation.

Except for giving it a name, human beings did not discover fasting. Fasting existed long before humans were born. It has existed since life first donned a body on this earth. Just as water for thirst, food for hunger, and rest for fatigue are natural laws, fasting for illness is also a natural law.

Fasting does not belong to any religion, caste, country, race, or even to any particular system of natural medicine. It belongs to every living being that has a body. It is not a superstition. It was not invented by uneducated ancestors unfamiliar with medical science. It is an innate law that comes with the body at birth.

Whoever designed the countless varieties of bodily structures has also given this blessing — fasting for health. If human beings, like animals, honor this law, it becomes a boon of health. If not, it becomes a gateway to disease.

3. How Does Fasting the Stomach Reduce Disease?

Whenever the body faces any problem, it naturally tries to correct it on its own. This ability is inborn — it comes with the body at birth. That itself is our great fortune. If the body did not possess this capacity, we would have perished long ago (in truth, it is not we who die, but the body).

To protect itself from any disturbance, the body requires additional energy. A major portion of the energy within us is normally spent on digesting food and on physical activity. Roughly speaking, about 75 percent of our daily energy is consumed by these two activities alone.

When a problem arises, the body plans intelligently. It decides to save this 75 percent of energy that is otherwise spent every day, and redirect it toward the work of healing and protection. But if a person continues eating and moving around as usual, no energy can be conserved. Therefore, the body designs a master plan to stop both eating and unnecessary movement.

When the mouth tastes pleasant and saliva flows freely, we feel like eating. To prevent this, the body coats the tongue, makes the mouth bitter, and stops the flow of saliva — thus removing the desire for food. This is the first protective step, ensuring that food does not enter the stomach.

When we feel energetic, we tend to move about and remain active. To prevent movement, the body creates body aches, stiffness, heaviness, and weakness, making us feel that it would be better to lie down and rest. This is the second protective step.

In these two ways, the body conserves energy and uses it for the task of healing. Until this protective work is completed, we do not feel like eating, nor do we feel like moving. This is the natural law of the body.

Has anyone among us never experienced these symptoms since birth? No one can honestly say they have not. Yes, we can eat if we force ourselves. Yes, we can move if we insist. But pause for a moment and think — for whose benefit is the body undergoing all this effort? Is it not entirely for our own well-being?

The body is not asking us to borrow energy from some distant source. It is not asking us to jump into wells or pits. It simply says, “I already have all the energy I need within me. If you do not waste it, that itself is my good fortune.” Is that too much to ask?

It is making only one small request: “All these years I have enabled you to eat, work, and move freely. You have never once thanked me — yet I have continued to do my duty without complaint. Today, when I am unwell and ask you for a little rest, will you not listen to me?”

Even if we ignore the body every day, if we support it at least during times of crisis, our journey through life can continue smoothly and comfortably.

To hear the body’s plea, we do not need education, intelligence, or medical science. In fact, these very things often become obstacles that prevent us from listening. Some doctors dismiss the idea that fasting the stomach can cure disease, calling it superstition or unscientific.

But consider this: pests in a field reduce only after the land is ploughed and left to dry. Long before the words medicine and science were coined — even before human beings existed — the science that fasting cures disease had already come into being. That is Nature’s science.

No one can change this science. As long as life exists, this law will continue to protect it. Ultimately, the same applies to us as well.

Those who believe in it recover like animals.

Those who do not believe suffer like humans.

4. Why Is Fasting Called the Supreme Medicine?

When the body experiences any difficulty — illness — and we respond by not eating, not moving around, and by taking complete rest as the body desires, nearly 75 percent of the body's daily energy is conserved. The body then uses this saved energy to protect itself and fight the disease.

The body knows precisely where the illness is, which microbes are responsible, how many of them are present, and where they are hiding. Even after conducting multiple blood tests, the cause of a fever may sometimes remain undetected. Diagnostic instruments may occasionally fail to capture what is happening, but the body always knows everything that is going on within it.

Whatever type of infection exists inside, the body initiates a counter-response to defeat the activity of harmful microorganisms. During fasting, because energy is conserved and the body is free from other responsibilities, it becomes far more alert and powerful, deploying its army — antibodies — against disease-causing microbes.

Depending on the number and strength of invading pathogens, the body can produce new antibodies on demand. These antibodies destroy only harmful microorganisms and disease-causing germs, without harming beneficial bacteria that are essential for the body. Antibiotic medicines, on the other hand, kill not only harmful germs but also beneficial bacteria and even some healthy cells.

For example, during the recent war between the United States and Iraq, the destructive weapons used by the Americans killed not only Iraqi soldiers but also countless innocent civilians. In contrast, the battle fought within our body during fasting — through the antibodies produced by our immune system — is like a righteous war.

Just as Mahatma Gandhi's struggle for India's independence was a moral and principled battle, the body's fight during fasting is a righteous struggle. The antibodies produced during fasting remain stored within the body. If the same microbes or pathogens attempt to enter again in the future, these antibodies are immediately ready to destroy them. The body continues its vigil, ensuring that the same illness does not recur anytime soon.

Fasting strengthens immunity. It is well known that excessive use of antibiotics weakens immune power. When the body signals that it is unable to produce sufficient antibodies to overcome an illness, using antibiotics is not wrong. But rushing to medication without giving the body even a small opportunity to heal itself is the real mistake.

In this world, every medicine is called just that — medicine. No medicine has ever been called the “supreme medicine.” Why, then, is fasting alone given this title?

Every medicine is made from some substance. But the medicine produced by the body during fasting is a substance-less medicine — a medicine that is not a drug. That is why it is called the Supreme Medicine.

There is no living being on this earth that does not fast when necessary. All creatures instinctively use fasting — a natural antibiotic — according to the situation. From now on, let us too fast when needed and live wisely and gracefully.

5. What Is the Body's Duty?

During the day, we eat and move about; at night, we sleep. Just as we have a routine, the body too has a daytime duty and a nighttime duty.

Daytime Duty

Since we eat food during the day, the body's first responsibility is to digest that food, convert the digested food into energy, and supply that energy so we can function and work.

The second responsibility is this — every single day, millions of cells in our body reach the end of their lifespan and die. In their place, the body continuously creates new cells, day after day.

Nighttime Duty

The first nighttime responsibility of the body is to cleanse itself — to remove pollution that enters through the food we eat, the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the cellular waste released during metabolism.

The second responsibility is repair — millions of cells become damaged every day, and the body repairs those diseased or injured cells at night.

If the body is able to perform these two duties properly every day, health does not deteriorate.

If we observe animals, we can understand the secret of why their bodies rarely fall ill. Most animals eat and move about for roughly 12 hours during the day. After darkness falls, they rest completely — they neither eat nor roam — allowing the body to perform its nighttime duties.

Animals that are active at night rest fully during the day for about 12 hours, again supporting the body's natural rhythm. In both cases, they cooperate with the body's duty cycle.

In our case, this balance does not exist.

The body does not begin its nighttime duty unless the daytime duty is completed. Just as in our homes — women do not begin cleaning until cooking is finished — the body too follows the same logic.

But what do we do?

We not only eat and move during the day — we eat even at 10 or 11 at night and continue to stay active. And what do we eat late at night? Not fruits or raw vegetables, but heavily cooked food — spiced, oily, transformed into pulao and rich dishes.

As a result, digestion itself continues until 4 or 5 in the early morning. Only after that does the body begin its nighttime duties — cleaning and repair. Before these processes can even run for two or three hours, we wake up and start eating again, restarting the daytime duty.

Thus, cleaning and repair are interrupted.

The pollution introduced through daily food intake keeps accumulating because the nighttime duty is never properly completed. Gradually, the body turns into a garbage dump.

If a house is not cleaned and repaired regularly, dust accumulates, mold forms, cockroaches, mosquitoes, and flies gather, and a foul smell develops. The same thing happens inside the body.

When this accumulated waste reaches a critical level, the body tries to protect itself. To stop new waste from entering, it suppresses appetite, makes the mouth taste bitter, and removes the desire to eat.

The body then attempts to keep us without food for one or two days, using all 24 hours solely for cleaning, so it can restore itself to normal.

If, during those one or two days, we do not listen to the body and refuse to stop eating, the body eventually gives up.

"It's your fate," it says. "Everyone is responsible for their own actions. Now experience the consequences."

6. What Is Fasting?

When the body develops acute illnesses such as fever, cough, cold, indigestion, and we stop eating and let the stomach rest, that is called lankhanam (therapeutic fasting / abstinence from food). If the stomach is rested for as many days as needed, those days are called lankhanams.

Upavaasam (fasting), on the other hand, means consciously and intentionally giving up food as a preventive measure, while the body is otherwise functioning well — before waste accumulates and before diseases arise — in order to cooperate with the body.

In simple terms, upavaasam means not eating both day and night, giving complete rest to the digestive system.

On normal days, if we eat during the day and do not eat at night, the body gets about 12 hours at night to carry out cleaning and repair.

During fasting, even the 12 hours of daytime eating are absent. Therefore, the body becomes ready to perform cleaning and repair during the day as well.

So, fasting means the body gets a full 24 hours exclusively for cleaning and repair.

We clean our homes every day for half an hour or an hour. Even after daily cleaning, some dirt still accumulates. That is why, during festivals, houses are thoroughly scrubbed, washed, and deep-cleaned. Thus, homes get cleaned periodically in the name of festivals.

Unfortunately, the body does not have this kind of fortune. It does not get proper daily cleaning (only about 12 hours at night), and it does not get festival-level cleaning either. On the contrary, during festivals, the body actually accumulates even more waste in the name of celebration.

After guests leave, we clean the house thoroughly — but even after festivals, we do not clean the stomach. Instead, we continue stuffing it further, even when remnants remain inside.

This shows how casually humans treat the body.

We work six days a week and take Sunday as a holiday for rest. In the same way, if the stomach is also given one full day of rest, it is beneficial.

Just as the saying goes — “Repair the house while the lamp is still burning” — fasting before disease appears is wise. That is why the practice of fasting was introduced.

When fasting was recommended purely for health, people did not listen. So our elders cleverly said that fasting earns merit (punyam). They knew that people would obey when God and merit were involved.

They understood that when concepts like God, merit, and virtue are invoked, people are more likely to follow.

Thus, fasting on:

- Saturdays
- Ekadashi
- Mukkoti Ekadashi
- Shivaratri
- Kartika and Dhanurmasa
- Wedding rituals
- Yagnas and Yagas (sacred rituals)

brings two benefits.

Fasting means drawing closer to God, making an effort to turn inward. When the stomach is full, the mind does not move toward the divine. Instead, sleepiness arises.

Therefore, fasting was linked to spiritual practices, serving both spiritual contemplation, and physical health.

Even if fasting is done only for health, the body benefits greatly.

In any case, rest is essential for the body. Hence, whenever possible — or by consciously creating the opportunity — declaring a full holiday for the stomach once a week, or at least once every Ekadashi, is beneficial in every way.

7. What Should Be Taken During Fasting?

Fasting means giving complete rest to the digestive system, conserving all the energy that is otherwise spent every day on digestion, and offering that saved energy to the body. Similarly, if we also reduce physical activity as much as possible, the energy that would normally be spent on work is conserved and made available to the body. Using this energy saved in both ways, the body carries out deep cleaning, removal of accumulated waste, correction of imbalances, and repair.

Unfortunately, fasting is often practiced without understanding its true meaning, which gives it a bad reputation and yields no benefit. Some people starve themselves all day and then eat a very heavy meal at night — sometimes equal to two or three meals — and call that fasting. Others drink coffee or tea throughout the day while avoiding solid food and assume that is fasting. Some continue eating snacks or light meals; others eat fruits or drink juices. Some people eat normally on Saturday morning and skip dinner, calling that fasting.

Skipping just one meal is traditionally called a single-meal fast. It is better than eating two meals a day, but it is not true fasting. It is like the saying, “Better than blindness is at least one eye.” It is an improvement, but it is not fasting in the real sense.

I am explaining this in such detail because many people practice fasting incorrectly and later conclude, “I tried fasting and it did not benefit me.” The reason is simple. Any food taken during fasting has to be digested. Digestion requires energy. If the energy meant for cleaning and repair is diverted back to digestion, fasting loses its purpose.

This raises a natural question — If we do not eat anything at all, won’t weakness occur? Unlike animals, humans generally cannot take complete

physical rest. Therefore, to avoid weakness, something is needed that provides energy without activating digestion.

There is only one such natural substance: honey. Honey enters the bloodstream directly without burdening the digestive system. Within 10 to 15 minutes, it mixes with the blood and produces energy. Hence, during fasting, honey may be used to prevent weakness. Up to 150–200 grams of honey per day can be taken during a one-day fast.

For effective cleaning and repair — and for efficient removal of waste — adequate water intake is essential. Therefore, drinking plenty of water during fasting is very important. Fasts done without water do not promote health. When the body is given rest along with water and honey, repair and cleansing happen smoothly. At the same time, there is no weakness, and the body actually feels lighter and more energetic.

This is the correct way to support the body during fasting — conserving energy, protecting strength, and allowing the body to heal itself naturally.

8. How Should Fasting Be Done?

As soon as you wake up, drink plain water and try to have a smooth bowel movement. On the day of fasting, avoid all exercise and remain as relaxed as possible. Drink water again and see if a second bowel movement happens. It is ideal if the intestines are completely emptied. Those who usually have difficulty with incomplete evacuation may use an enema; for those whose bowels clear easily, an enema is not necessary.

After giving a gap of about one and a half hours, you may drink half a litre to one litre of water, if you are comfortable. In this way, water can be taken during the morning hours until about 8 or 9 a.m. On fasting days, people who feel weak or those who are elderly may limit this to drinking water just twice in the morning.

Around 9 or 10 a.m., begin drinking honey water. Take one large glass of water and mix four teaspoons of honey with the juice of one lemon (for a large lemon, half is sufficient), and drink it. Lemon juice reduces craving for food due to its sour taste. Since it is rich in vitamin C, it also enhances immunity and supports effective cleansing.

After one and a half hours, drink one or two glasses of plain water. One hour later, again take honey with lemon in one glass of water. After another one and a half hours, drink plain water again, and after one more hour, return to honey water. Continue alternating plain water and honey water in this manner throughout the day.

Plain water may be stopped by 6 or 7 p.m. to avoid disturbance of sleep due to frequent urination. Honey water, however, may be continued until bedtime, taken once every two and a half hours. If hunger arises, honey water may be taken earlier or even seven to eight times a day. It is acceptable if up to 250 grams of honey is consumed on that day.

Honey water should always be prepared fresh. Mixing it once and storing it in a bottle causes spoilage. If you need to be outside during fasting, carry honey, water, and lemons with you. If, at any time, you are unable to mix honey water, you may lick honey directly and then drink water.

Those who have the opportunity may massage the body and take a steam bath, either at home or outside. This helps cleanse the skin as well during fasting. On fasting days, a cool-water head bath should be taken in the morning; if possible, men may do this twice a day.

If, by evening, weakness becomes pronounced and honey water is not sufficient or tolerable, coconut water may be taken.

The more rest you can take on a fasting day, the better. Some people find it difficult and keep chewing or tasting something. Doing so immediately shifts the body back into digestion mode, stopping the cleansing process and wasting the benefit of fasting. Continuous cleansing is what brings true benefit, so do not consume anything at all, not even offerings or small bites.

If possible, spend the fasting day reading good books, practicing meditation, or engaging in spiritual contemplation. Try to go to bed early that night.

This is how fasting should be practiced — gently, consciously, and in cooperation with the body — so that cleansing, repair, and renewal can occur effectively.

9. Who Should Fast, and When?

Doing a one-day fast occasionally keeps the body clean, much like servicing a scooter keeps it running smoothly. Longer fasts cleanse the body more deeply, similar to a complete engine overhaul. While basic servicing can be done by anyone, a full overhaul requires an experienced mechanic and proper facilities. In the same way, extended fasting should not be attempted at home without proper knowledge and medical supervision. Nature-cure centers are ideal for such longer fasts.

Please do not begin with a one-day fast and then casually extend it to two or three days at home. This can create serious problems. At home, fasting for one or two days may be attempted carefully, but nothing beyond that without guidance.

Below are general guidelines on who should fast and how often.

Who Should Fast Once a Week

- People who are significantly overweight
- Those with sedentary jobs (office workers, businesspeople)
- People with strong body odour
- Those who have been eating late dinners (10–11 p.m.) for years
- Those who regularly consume rich, spicy foods or meat

For such individuals, fasting once a week is beneficial. If you ask me, Sunday is the best day for fasting. A Sunday fast often gives double the benefit because household work, expenses, and cooking are naturally reduced, and the body also gets more rest.

However, do not stay awake late on Saturday night and eat heavily just because you plan to fast on Sunday. Instead:

- Finish eating fruits by 5 or 6 p.m. on Saturday evening
- Do not eat anything after that

- By 7 or 8 p.m., digestion is complete
- From 8 p.m. onward, the body begins internal cleansing

This gives a strong advantage. If you complete the fast on Sunday, you may resume your normal healthy routine (juices, sprouts, light foods) from Monday morning.

If possible, overweight individuals may extend this by having only fruits and fruit juices on Monday as well, depending on their circumstances.

Who Should Fast Once Every 15 Days

- People who do hard physical work
- Those who feel weak or fatigued
- Very thin individuals
- Children
- Elderly people above 60–70 years

Such people may fast once every fifteen days, for example on Ekadashi, or twice a month when convenient.

After Festivals and Weddings

Festivals often involve several days of heavy eating. After such periods, many people fall sick. To prevent this and to cleanse the damage caused by rich foods:

- Observe a one-day fast with honey water after the festival
- If needed, fast for two days
- On the third day, take fruit juices and fruits
- On the fourth day, return to normal food

Just as homes are cleaned after festivals, the body also gets fully cleansed, reducing the risk of illness.

After weddings, if you have eaten heavily at night, it is best to skip breakfast and morning snacks the next day, fast until noon, and then eat a light lunch.

Whenever you experience loss of appetite, indigestion, lack of taste, or heaviness, immediately give your stomach a day off.

Who Should NOT Fast

The following people should avoid fasting:

- Those with diabetes
- Those addicted to coffee or tea (until withdrawal headaches settle)
- People taking multiple painkillers daily
- Those on many medications each day
- People with severe weakness
- Those with very low haemoglobin (anaemia)
- Breastfeeding mothers
- People who experience frequent dizziness

Such individuals should first follow proper dietary discipline. Once health improves, fasting may be attempted cautiously, if needed.

10. What Should Be Done When Fever Occurs?

Before rain arrives, clouds gather. When we see clouds, we instinctively bring things indoors to protect them from getting wet. Unfortunately, we do not show the same awareness when fever is about to develop. We fail to recognise the early signs and do not act in time to prevent the body from breaking down.

The early signs before fever usually include: a thick white coating on the tongue, saliva becoming foul-smelling or bitter, lack of appetite even at mealtime, food tasting bland even if eaten, body stiffness, heaviness, or generalized discomfort. If even a few of these signs appear, stop taking food immediately and begin fasting with honey water. If this is done promptly, the body cleanses itself within one or two days, the symptoms disappear, appetite returns, and fever often does not develop at all.

If fever has already begun, stop eating from that day onward and start fasting. During fever, drink honey mixed with lemon water every two to three hours to prevent weakness, and sip plain water in between. If the body feels excessively hot, wipe the entire body with a damp cloth. If body aches are severe, take a warm water bath.

Do not focus only on reducing temperature. Focus on correcting the internal imbalance. Medicines usually suppress fever quickly, but fasting works at the root level, cleansing the cause of the fever. As the root cause reduces, body temperature naturally comes down.

The signs to watch for during recovery are: reduction of bitterness in the mouth, return of taste, and a clear, strong feeling of hunger. If fever does not subside, continue fasting on the second day as well. If weakness becomes significant, coconut water may be taken, though remaining primarily on honey water is preferable.

If fever is accompanied by severe chills, intense body pain, unbearable joint or muscle pain, medical advice should be taken. Use medicines if necessary. Do not insist on avoiding medicines at all costs. Using medication when required is not wrong.

Once the fever has clearly reduced and discomfort is subsiding, do not rush back to solid food. Spend one full day on coconut water and fruit juices. When genuine hunger returns without any rise in temperature, normal food may be resumed.

Common fevers usually resolve completely within three to four days with fasting alone. If fever does not subside within this period, it is advisable to consult a doctor and undergo blood tests. In cases of typhoid or malaria, fasting should only be done under medical supervision. Since this is not practical for most people, using prescribed medicines in such cases is the safer approach.

11. How to Get Rid of a Cold Quickly?

Once a cold (runny nose / nasal congestion) begins, it usually takes 10–15 days to subside completely. Those who rely on medicines often experience repeated infections that bring the cold back again very quickly. A cold should be allowed to resolve naturally.

Some people suffer from colds 10–15 times a year. Others get them mainly during winter or the rainy season. For some, the nose keeps running almost throughout the year. There is even a saying: “If you take medicine, a cold goes away in a week; if you don’t, it goes away in seven days.” When colds do not subside, some people even undergo surgery to “clean” the nasal passages. But no matter how many times this is done, what gets reduced is money — not the cold.

Let us understand what actually helps a cold subside quickly.

Plain water is the best medicine, but very few people use it correctly. When the nose is already running, people wrongly assume that drinking more water will worsen it, and they deliberately reduce their intake. In reality, drinking sufficient water helps infections clear faster.

Before a cold fully develops, there is usually a tickling or irritation in the nose or throat, with an urge to sniff or clear the throat. From the moment this sensation appears, stop eating completely and begin drinking lukewarm water (or at least room-temperature water). Drink 2–3 glasses every hour, slowly, and avoid all food so that the stomach can rest. If weakness is felt, honey water may be taken. If you do this for that day, the infection often clears without the cold fully developing.

What to Do When a Cold Has Already Started

- Drink the entire 5 liters of daily water intake as lukewarm water.

- If the nose is blocked and breathing becomes difficult, apply a small amount of honey inside the nostrils using a fingertip. This helps thin the mucus, allows it to drain, and clears airflow.
- Apply a little coconut oil to the face and take steam inhalation in the morning or evening. Steam helps reduce congestion quickly.
- Take only hot-water baths.
- If symptoms are severe, observe a full-day fast. If symptoms are mild, fasting from morning until afternoon is sufficient. Avoiding food in the morning significantly helps the infection subside.
- Clear mucus whenever possible by blowing the nose or expelling it from the throat. Suppressing it or repeatedly sniffing it back worsens the condition.
- Most importantly, to prevent recurrent colds, completely avoid Cold drinks, Ice creams, Sweets and Refrigerated foods.

12. How to Reduce Cough?

Those who regularly consume sweets, cold drinks, ice creams, artificially prepared foods, and stored or preserved foods tend to suffer from frequent cough. For those who smoke cigarettes, cough can be considered almost inevitable.

When we eat the above foods for the sake of taste, the harmful bacteria, chemicals, and toxins present in them enter the lungs through the throat. To expel these harmful substances, the lungs produce mucus and push it outward, allowing the toxins to travel through the throat in the form of phlegm. This is why the body makes us cough.

If we suppress the cough by taking cough syrups, we are actually preventing the body from expelling phlegm. Coughing itself is the body's natural effort to remove mucus.

To Reduce Cough Quickly

1. Drink the full five liters of daily water intake as lukewarm water.
2. In the morning, keep a neem twig (neem stick) in the mouth, chew it, allow the bitterness to stimulate mucus release, and spit out the phlegm.
3. After cleaning the tongue, place the fingers gently over the tongue and help bring out the phlegm.
4. Take hot-water baths twice a day.
5. Apply coconut oil to the chest. If there is pain, apply a hot-water compress to the chest; this helps loosen phlegm effectively.
6. Until phlegm and cough reduce:
 - Avoid morning juices and sprouts.
 - Remain on honey water and plain water until afternoon.
 - Eat lunch normally.
 - By 5 or 6 p.m., eat only fruits and stop eating thereafter.
7. Eating late at night worsens coughing during sleep.

8. If the cough is severe or phlegm does not loosen easily, observing a full-day fast for one or two days brings quick relief.

The more foods we consume that should not be eaten, the more we end up suffering from cough. Being cautious in advance is therefore far better.

13. How I Practice Fasting

From childhood, I used to suffer from frequent fevers. Even after taking many medicines each time, the fevers would recur again and again. In 1985, I learned about fasting, and from then on, whenever a fever appeared, I began practicing fasting instead of immediately taking medicines. Without spending a single rupee, the fever would subside in much less time than before.

After I started eating proper, disciplined food, fevers stopped occurring altogether — not even once a year.

From 1992, for about five years, I observed fasting every Saturday. From 1994 onward, I began following a diet without salt and oils — eating only about 25% cooked food and about 75% uncooked food daily. From 1997, I completely stopped eating after sunset. Because of this, the body cleanses itself of that day's waste every night. As a result, the need for weekly fasting reduced. Moreover, since my evening food consisted only of fruits, the body was not burdened every day.

In 1998, once, even after clearly recognizing the early symptoms of fever, I deliberately ate food. The fever developed, and after two days of fasting, it subsided. In 2001, when I noticed the symptoms of fever beginning, I immediately started fasting. The condition improved without turning into fever at all.

For nearly the last ten years, I have not taken even a single tablet. If someone like me — who had many problems and difficulties since childhood — could build such strong immunity, imagine how much better it can be for others.

For the past ten years, by recognizing problems at their very onset and responding with fasting, I have not had to lie down sick even for a single day. Even when working up to 20 hours a day, even with changes in

weather or travel to different places, the body has been protecting itself — without colds, coughs, or fevers returning as they once did.

We only need to change ourselves. The body is already ready to change and function well. The delay is ours alone.

14. Benefits of Fasting

Over the past ten years, I have guided many thousands of people to practice fasting. When I observe the results they have experienced, they are truly astonishing. It is unfortunate that such a profound natural principle is still not widely understood — and, on top of that, people are afraid of it. To remove this fear and to create clear understanding so that everyone can practice the discipline of fasting, I wrote a detailed book of about 420 pages in 1998 titled “The Discipline of Fasting.” When one understands these principles fully, an eagerness naturally arises — when shall I next give this body a complete overhaul?

Scientific studies have shown that fasting increases lifespan and that, during fasting, even the usual cycle of cellular birth and death slows down. Because of this, fasting has been found to be especially beneficial for cancer patients. A major central government research institution in Hyderabad — the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) — conducted experiments on fasting and published their findings. In today’s world, people tend to listen only when scientists speak. But before listening to anyone else, we should first listen to our own body. When we respond to what the body asks for, it stands ready to reward us with many benefits — like bonuses and increments.

The benefits of fasting include:

- When fasting is practiced at the very first signs of illness, the disease is stopped from progressing.
- The body’s immune strength increases.
- By giving rest to the digestive system during fasting, digestion improves overall.
- Beneficial microorganisms in the intestines increase.
- The body produces antibodies more effectively to fight disease-causing organisms.

- Stored fat in the body is broken down during fasting.
- Long-term and chronic diseases are prevented from developing.
- Whatever food is eaten later gets properly digested and assimilated.
- Mental discipline and self-control increase.
- A deep confidence develops — the assurance that it is possible to live without falling into illness.

These are not imagined benefits; they are the natural rewards the body offers when its laws are respected.

15. Shall We Listen to What the Body Says?

To progress in spiritual life, one usually has to seek out a guru. But when it comes to health, you do not need to search for a guide — the best teacher is already with you. That teacher is your own body. No guru and no physician greater than the body itself can ever be found, no matter how much you search.

If you regard the body as your guru, and treat every signal it gives as a principle of health, and then move forward by putting those principles into practice, health will naturally follow you. All these years, even when the body clearly said “no,” we ignored it and kept burdening it in countless ways. From now on, when the body asks for something, let us change ourselves accordingly, refine our habits, and protect the body.

When we do this, health will settle within us in a stable and lasting way. Instead of you running after health, diseases themselves will begin to run away from you. Then, with this body, we can live our life’s journey peacefully, joyfully, and with ease.

Let us all strive toward such a way of living.