

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #224: Intermittent Fasting

Hi! How's it goin'? I'm doing great, things are great, and I'm gearing up for the next round of The Stop Binge Eating Group Coaching Program. It's coming soon, and the one that is in progress now that started in August has been so amazing, people in there are killin' it, it has been so awesome watching them progress, and change their eating, change themselves, change their minds, change so many things I can't even tell you. People who were very doubtful of themselves at first have proven to themselves that they can do this and are making it happen. I couldn't love it more!

I love these groups so much, I love the work we do in there and as we're going into this final month of their program, registration for the next one will be opening up in just a few weeks, on December 15th of 2022.

So if you want to get in on it, go to coachkir.com/group to get all the info and sign up for the waitlist so you can get notified in your inbox as soon as it opens.

I have no doubt you can stop binge eating. Let's make it happen together, as a team. Get ready, it's gonna be awesome.

And now, let's talk about intermittent fasting.

By now I think we've all heard about it but in case you haven't, it's basically alternating between eating and fasting on a regular schedule.

Fasting is a period of time when you're not eating and it's typically considered fasting when you're not eating for 8 or more hours.

When you research intermittent fasting, you're going to find suggestions for how to time your eating and your fasting but not what or how much to eat during your eating window.

Now, fasting is something we all already do every night while we're sleeping.

But with intermittent fasting, it will usually extend your nightly fast so you're spending more time fasting and less time eating.

There's been studies done that show it *may* help with diet-related diseases and *may* have health benefits, but they're not conclusive in saying that it does, and some say there isn't sufficient evidence to prove that it provides the benefits that it's been said to have.

So when it comes to health and weight benefits, in a nutshell, the jury is out.

But, I've heard from lots of people that say they really like how they feel when they do it.

They also like having that kind of structure with the fasting window and eating window.

But, there are also a lot of people who binge eat that go to intermittent fasting because they think it will be a useful way to control their eating and it backfires.

Now, I'm not going to tell you that should or shouldn't intermittent fast or that it is absolutely bad or good for people who binge eat because everyone is different.

And also because intermittent fasting is just a way a person decides to time their eating and that in itself isn't going to create a good or bad outcome with bingeing.

What really matters here, if it's something you choose to do, is your mindset behind intermittent fasting, why you're doing it, and how your body responds to how you choose to do it.

When intermittent fasting becomes a problem for people who binge eat, it's because the decisions they're making and how they're thinking cause urges to binge and sets them up to binge.

So I'm going to go through some ways that happens.

One is that they're making themselves get excessively hungry for the sake of the fasting window.

They set a window of time for when they're going to fast and even if they're really hungry, they don't allow themselves to eat.

Now, there are two main reasons why this can be a problem. One is mental and the other is physical.

The physical problem is that if you're not giving your body what it's asking for, it's going to stop asking and start urging.

You're going to create physical deprivation urges which is one of the reasons why so many people start bingeing in the first place.

They're under eating so their brain compensates by urging them to overeat, which can snowball into a binge.

So if you're deciding to eat according to a certain eating schedule and it doesn't align with your body's needs, you may experience urges and the intensity of those urges to eat will depend on how long you do this for or how intense the hunger gets.

Then there's the mental reason.

You're telling yourself you can't eat.

As soon as you start telling yourself you can't do something you want to do, or that your body wants you to do, it's not going to feel good.

That's when you're going to feel deprived and restricted, maybe other feelings too like frustrated or panicked.

If you want to be relaxed with your eating and have freedom with food, those are not the kinds of feelings to be feeling.

Those are feelings that will most likely drive you toward overeating or bingeing when you're in this situation of feeling very hungry but telling yourself you can't eat.

So with intermittent fasting, and with eating in general, even if you're not doing any kind of fasting protocol, it's important that if you struggle with binge eating, that you're not creating deprivation urges for yourself by telling yourself you can't eat when you actually can eat, you're just not allowing yourself to eat, and by repeatedly not giving your body what it's asking for.

So that's why having those set eating windows with intermittent fasting can be a problem for people who binge eat.

When you're working on stopping binge eating it's so important to allow yourself to eat when your body is asking for food so whether you're doing intermittent fasting or you just have rules about when you do and don't allow yourself to eat, it's probably best if you give yourself some wiggle room to make exceptions when your body is asking for them.

Next, on a kind of similar note as what I just talked about, there's another way that intermittent fasting can be setting people up for a binge as it pertains to deprivation.

What happens if you are invited to a social event that falls outside of your eating window and that social event has food that you want to eat?

Again, you might start telling yourself you can't eat it, which will cause you to feel deprived, or you may start feeling resentful or jealous or self-pity as everyone else is eating what you want to be eating.

Like I said before, these are not going to be useful feelings for you to be feelings.

They might drive you to not just eat what you want and move on but, to eat it and then decide that since you've already eaten outside of your eating window that you're going to screw the whole idea of intermittent fasting today and go to town on all that food.

It's an example of creating rules for yourself that are hard to follow 100% of the time and when you break your rule, you just give up for the rest of the day.

Now, this isn't how it has to be. You can make exceptions for certain occasions, just like I talked about a moment ago with making exceptions for hunger. You can make these exceptions and be okay with them.

And I think that's such important work for us all to do, to learn to be okay with the times that our plans change or when things don't go how we expected them to and not use them as excuses to throw all our good intentions and true wants out the window.

So again, intermittent fasting or not, it's okay to make exceptions if it's what you truly want to do.

You're the one making the rules, make rules you want to follow and allow yourself to be flexible if you want to be flexible.

Next, there's the freak out.

I talked about telling yourself you can't eat and feeling deprived or restricted once your eating window is complete but there's also the worry about not being able to eat.

Sometimes people get so worried about getting hungry outside of their eating window that they end up overeating or bingeing to prevent hunger during their fasting window.

They don't even know if they'll get hungry again, they're just assuming and taking precautions that they might not even have to take.

And if they just allowed themselves to eat if they were hungry, this wouldn't even be an issue.

If they did, they wouldn't have to worry and wouldn't end up bingeing to avoid feeling hungry later.

One of the things that makes intermittent fasting easy for people it's easy for is that they're not afraid of hunger. They don't worry about it. If it happens, they're okay with it and they feel it.

But so many of you are for sure afraid of it. I coach people on their fears about hunger a lot. So if you're someone who is afraid of hunger, intermittent fasting is probably not going to be the best option for you because it is very likely that you will feel hungry during your fasting window sometimes.

It's not going to be useful to keep setting yourself up for a freak out whenever your eating window is coming to an end.

And to tack one more thing on to that, there's the pleasure factor as well where you gotta get as much eating pleasure in as you can now because your window of eating for pleasure is closing.

All of this that I'm talking about here, the worry about hunger and the worry about the pleasure ending can lead to overeating and bingeing if you want to get in as much pleasure and fuel as you can while, in your mind, it's still okay to do it...because you only have so much time to eat within your eating window.

If there was no eating window, if your eating window was endless because there is no time limit, then you wouldn't have to freak out about this kind of restriction.

Now, people do freak out even if there is no time limit, people will still want to get in as much eating pleasure as they can and will worry about getting hungry later but, having a set eating window can just give you one more reason to freak out about it.

Next, I want to talk about using intermittent fasting as a way to justify bingeing.

When some people have this large fasting window and a smaller eating window, they tell themselves it's okay to eat a lot, even though they're not hungry because they have to get all their eating in for the day during this time.

So instead of spreading out the eating, they might have one small or regular sized meal and then one large meal that could be considered a binge-sized meal or they just graze throughout their eating window and the grazing snowballs into binge behaviors.

But in their mind, it's okay because they're going to stop when it's time to stop eating at the end of their eating window or it's okay because they have to get in all their food during their eating window or it's okay because they're then going to fast for however many hours.

Now, I do want to say that eating in these ways, having a small and a large meal or grazing all day, are not inherently bad. But you gotta watch your mindset behind it.

Do you like eating this way, do you feel good when you do it, does your body respond well to it, do you feel in control when you're eating, do you feel relaxed about your eating most of the time?

And the big question, are you doing this so you can plan binges and justify binges?

If you want to stop binge eating, you gotta stop justifying it and finding sneaky ways to make it seem okay if it's not really okay with you.

If it is okay with you, then great, do it. But if it's not, make sure that you're not creating eating rules, along with fasting rules, that are going keep you doing it.

So those are some things for you to think about if you do intermittent fast or have toyed with the idea of trying it out.

But also know that if you're considering doing it as a way to control your binges, it isn't going to be the magical solution for making that happen and you don't need it.

If you think about it, all that intermittent fasting is doing for you, which it isn't actually doing it, you're doing it, is making a decision about when you will and won't eat.

You can, and you do already make that decision without having the structure of eating and fasting windows.

With intermittent fasting, you're making that decision and you have a reason behind it that you like. Whatever your reason is, it's compelling you to stop and start eating when you decided.

You can have compelling reasons to eat and not eat, and again, you already do, and you don't have to have a set time to do it.

For me, I personally don't do intermittent fasting. I did years ago when I first learned about it but honestly, I didn't like having to wait to eat my first meal since I'm a person who does get hungry not long after I wake up, I didn't like not allowing myself to eat if I was hungry, and I didn't like having to put thought into how I was going to manipulate my eating window if I was going to breakfast with people or was going to a party in the evening.

So now, I eat breakfast when I'm hungry for it, and in the evening if I'm hungry after dinner, I'll eat a little something. I personally choose to eat according to my body instead of according to the clock. Most of the time of course.

There are of course situations where I'll wait to eat until a certain time so I can eat with someone else or I'll eat when I'm not hungry if I think I'll get hungry while I'm at someplace that won't have food and I won't have a chance to eat for while.

But on a typical day, if I'm hungry, I eat.

And that's just me. You get to choose for you and what you think works best for you.

Maybe you love having those time limits and it helps you. Awesome.

But maybe it's actually causing you to feel more urges and have more binges or feel ways you don't like to feel and if so, maybe it's not the best option for you.

You get to decide and I just wanted to point out some things to look for and for you to think about in this episode here.

So, I hope this helps you decide if intermittent fasting is right for you or not and if it's not, try coming up with a way of eating that you think will work well for you.

Consider what would work best for you and your body and try some things out.

It's all your decision to make, you have the freedom to choose.

Choose what you like best and what helps you the most.

Alright, have a wonderful day and I'll talk to you soon.

Bye bye.