

FASTING AND ITS IMPACT ON FERTILITY & PREGNANCY

Key insights on fertility, pregnancy, festival fasts & safe choices



Fasting can affect fertility in both men and women. Here's what science and medical experts recommend—plus practical tips to stay safe.

Medically Approved by **Dr Anupama Santosh, Ayurvedic Fertility Expert at Shreshtha Ayurvedic Center, Bengaluru**

WHAT IS FASTING?

Fasting involves abstaining from food and drink for a specified period, which may vary in duration and intensity

WHY PEOPLE FAST

Health, Spiritual, Weight

TYPES OF FASTING

- ⌚ Time-restricted eating (**e.g. 12-16 h window**)
- ⌚ Intermittent longer fasts (**24 h or more**)
- ⌚ Religious / festival fasts
(with partial or full food abstinence)



IMPORTANT CAVEAT

Fasting is not a one-size-fits-all approach, especially when fertility or pregnancy is involved.

HOW FASTING IMPACTS FERTILITY

IN FEMALES

BIOLOGICAL CHANGE

Lower insulin, reduced body fat, increased stress hormones

Reduced calorie and nutrient intake

Disruption in menstrual hormone balance (LH, FSH, estrogen)

POSSIBLE EFFECT

Irregular menstrual cycles due to altered ovarian function

Deficiencies in iron, folate, and B12 can affect ovulation

May lead to anovulation or a shortened luteal phase



IN MALES

BIOLOGICAL CHANGE

Hormonal changes

Inadequate energy and nutrients

Oxidative stress from fasting

POSSIBLE EFFECT

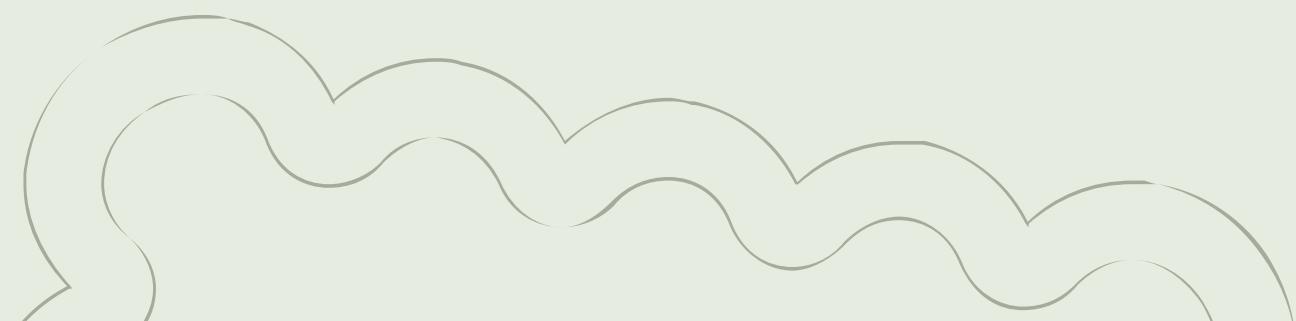
Lower testosterone and higher cortisol levels

May reduce sperm production and quality over time

Can increase sperm cell damage



Sustained fasting can disrupt women's hormonal balance required for regular ovulation and affect men's sperm health by reducing essential energy and nutrients.



CUTTING OUT FOOD GROUPS & RISKS



DAIRY

It can quietly reduce your calcium and protein, which is essential for strong bones and your baby's growth.



CARBS

Cutting out grains can leave you feeling tired, low on stamina, and missing key nutrients like B vitamins.



PROTEINS

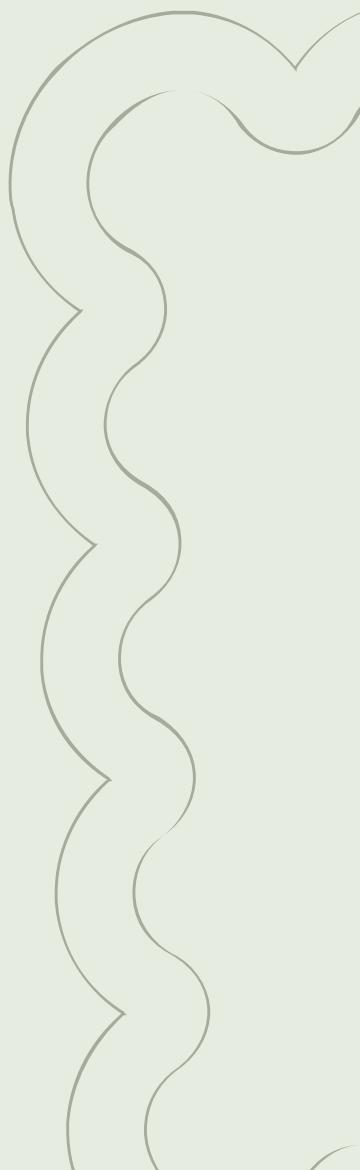
Proteins keep your hormones balanced and support your baby's development, making it harder for your body to function.



FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Without these colourful heroes, constipation, low immunity, and nutrient gaps can sneak in fast.

When your diet becomes unbalanced, it can interfere with fertility and pregnancy health.



FASTING DURING PREGNANCY – IS IT SAFE?

WHEN TO STOP FASTING IMMEDIATELY

- Dizziness or fainting – Your blood sugar may have dropped too low.
- Unusual fatigue or palpitations – A sign your body is under stress.
- Dehydration signs (dry mouth, headache, dark urine).
- Cramping or contractions – Stop fasting and consult your doctor.
- Reduced baby movements – Seek immediate medical help.

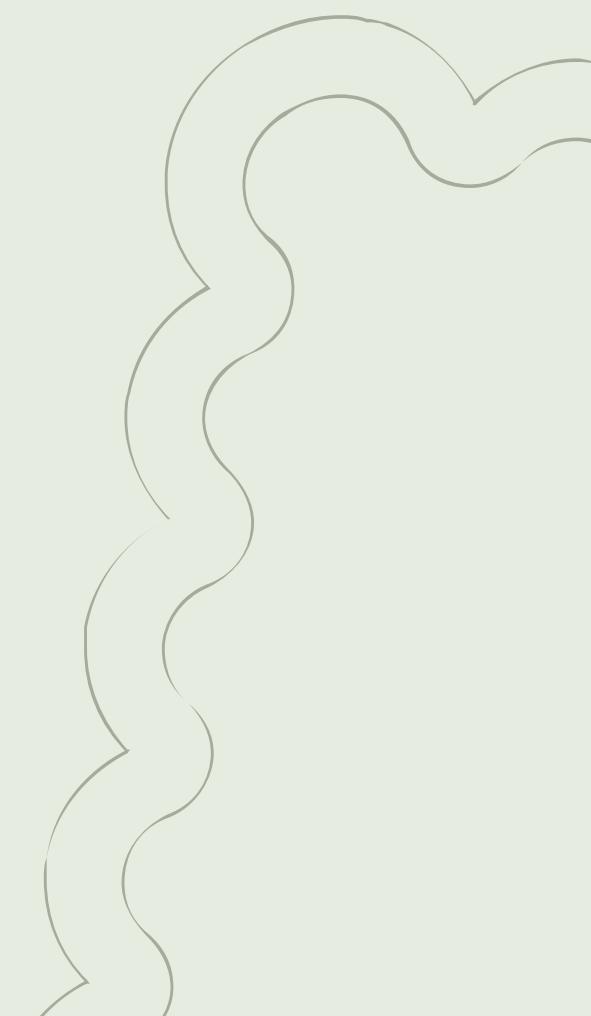


POSSIBLE “SAFE ZONES” (WITH CAUTION)

- If low-risk, healthy pregnancy (no gestational diabetes, no hypertension)
- Under direct medical supervision
- Short fasting or partial fasts, not full fasts



Medical bodies generally advise against prolonged fasting in pregnancy. Fasting during pregnancy should never push your body into distress.

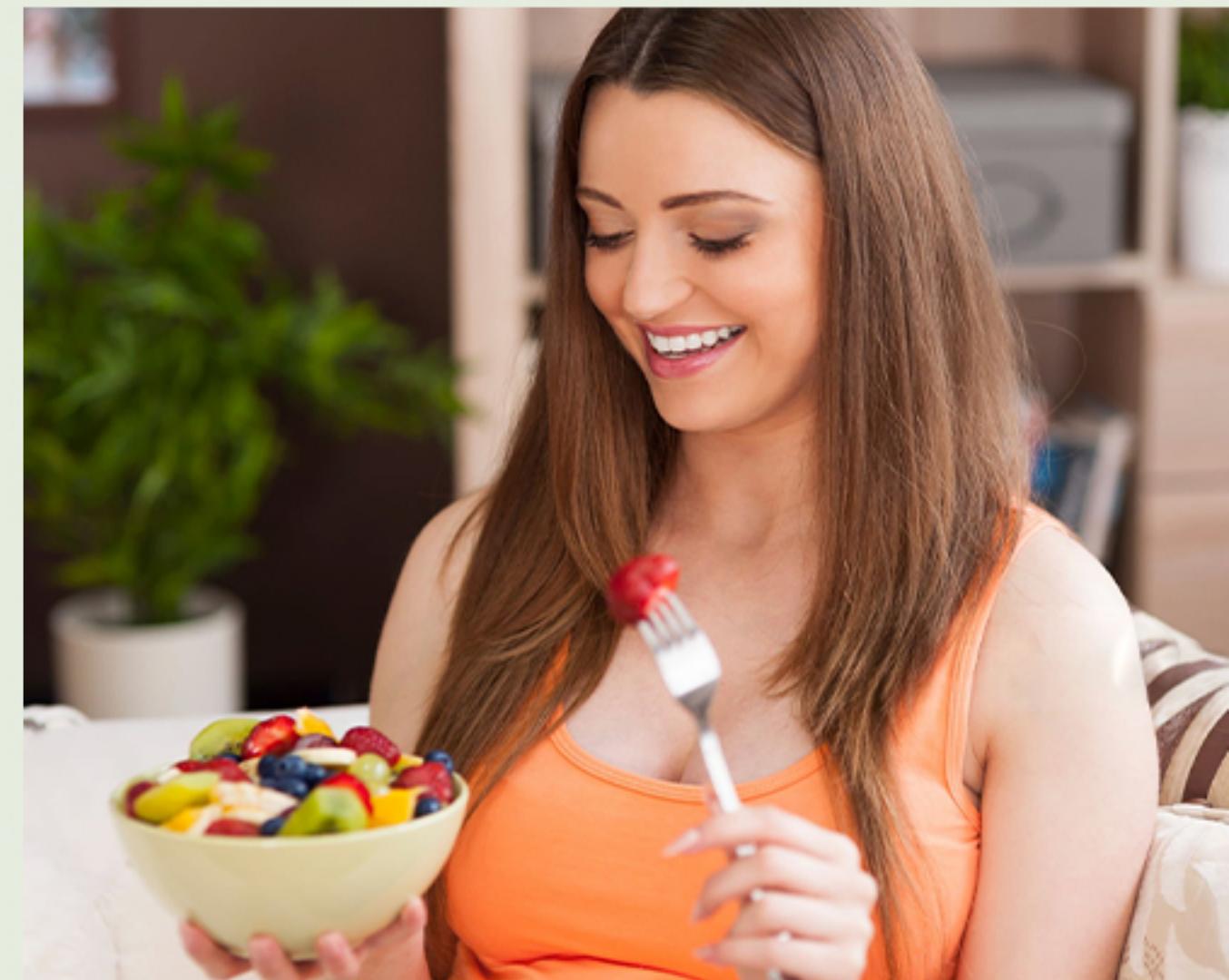


FESTIVAL FASTING & PREGNANCY

For each festival & fast type:

NAVRATRI:

- Partial fasts, no grains, onion, or garlic
- Safe alternatives: broken fasts,
"Upvas-friendly" meals

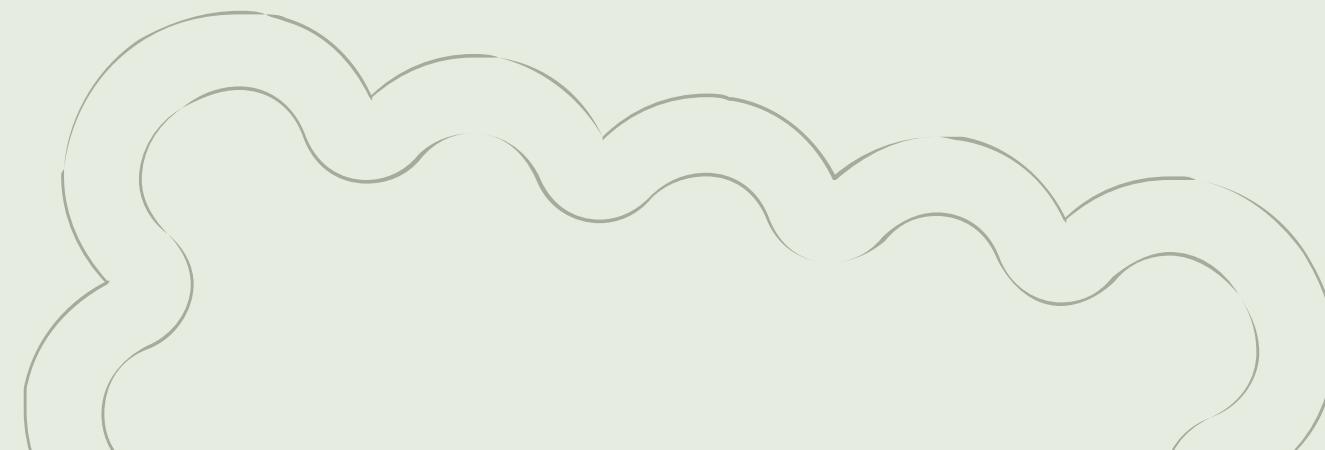


CHHATH POOJA & OTHER RITUCHARYA FASTS:

- Water-only fasts
- Medical caution: avoid in pregnancy, consider alternate rituals

OTHER RELIGIOUS FASTS (E.G. EKADASHI, RAMADAN, ETC.)

- Modify: allow some food, shift timing (pre-dawn, post-sunset)





GUIDELINES & PRECAUTIONS

- ▲ Talk with your obstetrician/fertility specialist first
- ▲ Screen for anaemia, thyroid, and blood sugar before attempting a fast
- ▲ Avoid long fasts (**>16–18 h**) during pregnancy
- ▲ Listen to your body – dizziness, fatigue, palpitations = stop
- ▲ Hydrate well during non-fasting hours
- ▲ Break your fast gradually – small meals rich in protein, fibre



SAFE MEAL & SNACK IDEAS

- ▲ Yogurt + fruit + nuts
- ▲ Nut & seed porridge
- ▲ Smoothie (milk + banana + spinach)
- ▲ Soaked dals/khichdi
- ▲ Coconut water, chia pudding

