

# Daniel Fast Guidelines

## Why the Daniel Fast?

In the beginning of each year thousands of believers are going on a Daniel Fast. While some fully understand what it is and how to do it, others are new to the idea of fasting and need more help than others. In the next few paragraphs we will talk about the What, Why and the How of the Daniel Fast.

## What is Fasting?

**Fasting ALWAYS involves FOOD!** You might have heard some say: “I am fasting my friends,” or “I am fasting television,” etc. However these people misunderstand what fasting is and isn't. The Hebrew word for fast means “**to cover the mouth.**” The Greek word for fast means “**to abstain from food.**” While we do need to get away from every day distractions of our lives and spend time alone with God, away from people, **fasting is always about restricting food!** Everything else is self-discipline and dying to our flesh. So, to truly benefit from the fast **one would have to restrict/change their normal food intake.**

**Fasting is a spiritual discipline. It is done not so we can change God's mind, but rather to get quiet before Him, so we can hear what He is speaking.** When we satisfy our flesh with everything that it demands we tend to drown out God's voice because we become very preoccupied with self-gratification. During fasting **we take charge of our flesh**, making it a servant to our spirit, and thus we are able to get in tune with what the Holy Spirit is speaking to us.

Fasting is not a diet! Fasting is not done for weight loss! **Fasting is ALWAYS done for spiritual purposes. Fasting should be done with a PURPOSE!** Before you begin the fast you should decide on the purpose of your fast. Without a purpose, you will be simply dieting. Take the time to **prayerfully consider the reason of your fast.**

## Fast with a Purpose

Before you begin, decide on the purpose of your fast. Otherwise, without a purpose, you will be merely dieting. So prayerfully consider the focus of your fast.

For example, what is your greatest need at this time in your life? Do you want to learn to trust God in a deeper and more consistent manner? Could your marriage be stronger? Do you have financial pressures? Do you have family members who don't yet know the Lord or have walked away from the Christian life?

Invest some quality prayer time and decide on a purpose for your fast. Then make a plan for your prayer and study time. Gather books and study materials to help feed your spirit and guide your quiet time.

Most men and women on the Daniel Fast find it helpful to journal during their consecrated time of prayer and fasting. Write expecting the Holy Spirit to partner with you as you seek a greater level of intimacy with your Father.

When you are fasting, set time aside for prayer, worship, meditation and Bible study. **Keep a journal of your revelations**, of what God is speaking to you. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide you and to reveal areas in your life that need purification.

## What Happens During the Fast?

### In the Body

Our bodies are most definitely going to be effected as we change our diet for 21 days. For some the change is going to be very dramatic. **You might experience detuning from food addictions**, such as: caffeine, processed or unnatural foods, chemicals and sugar.

The symptoms that accompany detox process might be light or more pronounced: headaches, leg cramps, fatigue, nausea and even light depression. As the body will detox, the symptoms will alleviate and you will experience more energy, better sleep, clearer and sharper mind, and many other benefits. So, take the time to ride it out. If you need support, ask others for prayer, and, if you have access to online help a suggested site is [daniel.fast.com](http://daniel.fast.com) created for this very purpose.

Most people will lose weight during the fast. Many experience healings from various maladies, such as: diabetes, allergies, arthritis, high cholesterol and even cancer.

### Soul

The soul is the central place of our emotions, intellect and will. It is the place where we make decisions, experience anger, fear, love, frustration and cravings. The soul is frequently referred to as “the flesh” in the Bible.

During the fast your soul may rebel against the change in your diet. You will get an opportunity to **experience and win** this battle over the flesh, which might prove to be one of the most powerful lessons of the fast.

### Spirit

Our spirit is the part of us that has been born again when we gave our lives over to Christ. It should be the part that surrenders to God. **When we are fully surrendered we can truly abide with the Father and the Son. Our spirit is filled with the Holy Spirit if we yield to Him.**

The purpose of the fast is to place our spirit in control of the other two parts of us: soul and body. When our flesh is acting out with a craving, we take control of it with our spirit (just imagine as parents would take control of a rebellious child).

## How to Prepare for the Daniel Fast

You will experience a more successful fast if you spend some time preparing for your time of focused prayer and fasting.

**Quiet Time:** If you don't already have an established daily quiet time with the Lord, then this is an excellent opportunity to do so. Starting your day with the God is a habit that will support your faith and growing intimacy with the Lord. During your Daniel Fast, be sure to set a daily time to come before the Lord, to study His Word and His ways.

**Prepare Your Body:** It's a wise move to prepare your body for the fast by easing off sugar, caffeine and chemicals before your first day of fasting. Otherwise, you may experience physical detox symptoms of headaches, cramping and fatigue. Start to drink at least 1/2 gallon of filtered water each day.

**How to Conclude Your Daniel Fast** Just as you prepared to start your Daniel Fast, you will want to plan for the conclusion of your fast.

**Changing the way you eat:** If you have been on an extended fast of 10 or more days, your physical body has enjoyed healthy and easily digestible foods. Most people realize increased energy and better health during their fast.

Reintroduce caffeine, sugar, dairy products, deep fried foods and meat slowly to keep your body from rebelling and bring you discomfort. Small portions are better and adding no more than one type of food each day will give your body a chance to get used to the change.

**Keep the gems of the fast:** Most likely, you have gained many powerful lessons about your health and spiritual life. Carry these positive changes into your everyday life. If you have created a habit of meeting with the Lord each morning, then continue that practice.

If you have gained understanding about healthy eating habits or broken addictions to specific foods, then continue with those good practices.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What if you have health issues?** Fasting should never bring harm to the body. And if you have concerns, be sure to consult your health professional before going on the Daniel Fast or making any major dietary change.

The Daniel Fast is a very healthy way to eat! So health professionals will support this eating plan, but might suggest a few modifications if you have health issues that need special attention. For example, pregnant and nursing mothers might get instructions to add fish, chicken and cheese into the Daniel Fast, but otherwise stay the course. Diabetics may need to add more carbohydrates or include chicken and fish. Also, those who are especially active either through sports, bodybuilding or vocation may need to slightly alter the eating plan.

**What is the Daniel Fast?** It's a biblically based partial fast based on two accounts of the Prophet Daniel's fasting experiences (see Daniel 1 and 10) and typical Jewish fasting principles. The Daniel Fast eating plan is similar to a vegan diet with additional restrictions. See the Daniel Fast Food List for a more complete outline of foods to include and foods to avoid.

**Why are fruits and grains allowed when the Bible says Daniel ate only vegetables and drank water?** The early translations (including KJV) use the word **pulse** instead of vegetables. That word is rightly translated as "foods grown from seed." Therefore, the Daniel Fast includes fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

**Can I take medications during the Daniel Fast?** If you have health issues, you should always talk with your health professional before starting the Daniel Fast or any other major change in your diet. Fasting should never bring harm to the body, so medications should be continued.

**Are supplements okay to take during the Daniel Fast?** Yes, but read the label to make sure they are of good quality and that the ingredients comply with the Daniel Fast Guidelines.

**Why can't I have herbal tea on the Daniel Fast?** This is a common question! The reason that no tea is allowed is because the only beverage on the Daniel Fast is water (see Daniel 1). This is based on the prophet's fasting practice in Daniel 1 where he and his companions ate only pulse (food grown from seed) and drank only water. Tea is not water neither is coffee or juices from concentrate therefore they are not allowed on the Daniel Fast.

**Can I have honey on the Daniel Fast? It's natural with no preservatives.** No sweeteners are allowed on the Daniel Fast. This is based on Daniel's fast recorded in Daniel 10 where he ate no meat and consumed no precious foods. So even though honey is natural and free of chemicals, it would be considered a "precious food" and therefore not allowed during the Daniel Fast.

**I am pregnant. Can I still engage in the Daniel Fast?** First, you will want to contact your doctor and explain that the Daniel Fast is a vegan diet with additional restrictions (leavened breads, caffeine, alcohol, sweeteners and chemicals). Generally, pregnant and nursing mothers follow the Daniel Fast guidelines, but add enough chicken or fish to meet the additional protein demands.

**What about marital relations during the Daniel Fast?** The Bible does speak of husbands and wives abstaining from sexual relations during fasts. However, this is to be a mutual agreement by both the husband and wife. Many couples do refrain from sex while fasting and find their relationship strengthened as they intentionally express love for one another in other ways.

So, abstaining from sex during the Daniel Fast is not required, however it is an opportunity to experience growth in your marriage and in your relationship with the Lord.

**How much food can I have on the Daniel Fast?** The Scriptures don't really state an amount of food that can be consumed. However, I do encourage people to keep in mind that this is a fast (restricting food for a spiritual purpose). With that in mind, eating no more than three moderate meals and two small snacks would be appropriate.

**Can I eat food during the daylight hours?** Many fasts begin at sunrise and end at sunset. However, the Daniel Fast does not require this modification to our eating patterns. If you choose to add this step to your fast, then that would still be okay, but it is not a required step for the Daniel Fast.

**How do you know what Daniel really ate?** I don't! That's why the fast is based on the fasting experiences recorded in Daniel 1 and Daniel 10. If you want to "eat as Daniel ate," then I encourage to research what that could have been. But my guess is that you will soon realize that you can't be sure. That's why the fast is only based and modeled after Daniel 1, Daniel 10 and typical Jewish fasting principles.

**Can I have (fill in the blank)?** You can have all foods that include ingredients that comply with the Daniel Fast approved food lists. READ THE LABEL on any prepared or packaged foods to make sure all of the ingredients comply. Even foods marked as "natural" may still contain sweetener or other foods that are not allowed on the fast.

**What foods can I eat straight from the grocery store?** You will quickly learn that most of the prepared foods found in grocery stores include sweeteners, chemicals or other ingredients that are not allowed on Daniel Fast.

**What about gum and breath mints?** I have yet to find either gum or breath mints that don't have sweeteners or chemicals included in the ingredients. So alternatives like mint leaves, parsley, whole cloves and cinnamon sticks can be used.

Also, adding lemon slices to your water will freshen your mouth. You will also find that eating a plant-based diet produces a "sweeter" breath than eating meats and animal products.

#### **Can I exercise during the Daniel Fast?**

Exercise is encouraged during a Daniel Fast. If a person is used to working out, he may continue as long as he remains properly hydrated and well nourished with approved foods and beverages. This is not the time to begin a program that requires intense training or strenuous activity. If you are sedentary prior to the Daniel Fast, you can begin walking or biking a 20-minute mile, 3 to 4 times a week. Continue to observe three meals per day with snacks or six smaller meals. Again, we do suggest prior to starting any diet or workout program you should consult with your doctor.

#### **Website Referrals: Menus and Recipes**

daniel-fast.com  
jentezenfranklin.org  
livestrong.com

## The Daniel Fast Guidelines

Try not to get too hung up on what you should and shouldn't eat.

Remember, **the most important part of the fast is that you deny yourself physically so that you may seek the Lord in prayer** and grow closer to Him. Your particular fast may look a little different than someone else's, but that's ok. Some people may need to be stricter than others in their food choices so that their fast is a sacrifice for them. **These food guidelines are meant to be just that – a guide.** They are given to **help you create boundaries for your fast.**

## The Daniel Fast Food List

- **All fruit** – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned.
- **All vegetables** – fresh, frozen, dried, juiced, or canned.
- **All whole grains** – amaranth, barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa, millet, and whole wheat.
- **All nuts & seeds** – almonds, cashews, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and sunflower seeds; unsweetened almond milk. Nut butters are also included.
- **All legumes** – canned or dried; black beans, black eyed peas, cannellini beans, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), great northern beans, kidney beans, lentils, pinto beans, and split peas.
- **All quality oils** – canola, coconut, grape seed, olive, peanut, and sesame.
- **Beverages** - distilled water, filtered water, and spring water.
- **Other** – unsweetened almond milk, coconut milk, rice milk, or soy milk; herbs, spices, salt, pepper, unsweetened coconut flakes, seasonings, Bragg's Liquid Aminos, soy products, and tofu.

## Foods to Avoid on the Daniel Fast

- **All meat & animal products** – beef, buffalo, fish, lamb, poultry, and pork.
- **All dairy products** – butter, cheese, cream, eggs, and milk.
- **All sweeteners** – agave nectar, artificial sweeteners, cane juice, honey, molasses, raw sugar, syrups, stevia, and sugar.
- **All leavened bread & yeast** – baked goods and Ezekiel bread (if it contains yeast and honey).
- **All refined & processed food products** – artificial flavorings, chemicals, food additives, preservatives, white flour, and white rice.
- **All deep-fried foods** – corn chips, French fries, and potato chips.
- **All solid fats** – lard, margarine, and shortening.
- **Beverages** – alcohol, carbonated drinks, coffee, energy drinks, herbal tea, and tea.