

The SMA Choice Foods Fast

Why Fast? In Daniel 1, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego participated in a fast suggested by their friend Daniel. Rather than defiling themselves with the choice food provided for them as members of the Babylonian court, the men asked to be served only vegetables and water for ten days. At the end of that time, they were found to be healthier than those who had been eating the “choice foods.” And further, they had not compromised their faith by eating food that was, for a devout Jewish person, unclean.

This fast from “choice foods” provides us with one option for fasting today. There may be health benefits to this fast, but the primary emphasis and goal of this fast is to eliminate some of the good gifts God provides for us in order to refocus our thoughts on the Giver Himself. Our goals are spiritual and not physical.

The following are suggested ideas only—the key word is “plain” or the elimination of “choice” foods. Use your discretion as to whether it is a “choice” food or not. You could choose to eliminate one category or a combination of any or all categories. The number of days could vary considerably from one or two days to forty days (yes, forty days!). What matters is your attitude in fasting, not the particulars of a fast. By the way, gorging yourself with huge quantities of any food to make up for the lack of variety would defeat the purpose of fasting.

Important! Those with particular dietary needs related to health issues (eg. diabetes, hypoglycemia) should never fast without consulting their physician.

You Could Eliminate:

- Option 1** - All meat;
- Option 2** - All spices, sauces and seasonings including food with such seasonings;
- Option 3** - All dairy products;
- Option 4** - All grain products; or white flour products;
- Option 5** - All fruit and vegetables;
- Option 6** - All desserts and sweets; anything with sugar;
- Option 7** - All beverages but water;
- Option 8** - All food (liquid only).

Again, you could choose to eliminate one category or a combination of two or more categories.

Some Other Notes:

- If you are following a **liquid only fast**, there are some helpful things to know:
 - White grape juice and peach juice are particularly good during fasts. Citrus juices, apple and tomato juice are, for many people, too acidic for a stomach that has no food in it;
 - Vegetable juices and broths are good;
 - You can boil vegetables and drink the water;
 - Decaffeinated tea or coffee are fine, but avoid caffeine since it is a diuretic. Caffeine makes you feel hungrier than you actually are; you may want to begin cutting back on caffeine in the days prior to your fast;
 - Milk is considered “cheating” on a liquid fast since it is a food/protein.
- Drinking water—lots of water—helps with cravings; add a small shot of lemon or lime concentrate;
- When dealing with the craving for a choice food (like when you have to stop by Zehrs to pick up more rice and you pass by the roast chickens at the deli), it should be met with Scripture and a prayer that acknowledges, as Jesus did during His fast, that, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” Matthew 4:4 (ESV).
- Some fasts produce foul breath. Gum helps with this, but be warned: gum may also stimulate hunger.

Want to Learn More About Fasting:

- The Power of Prayer and Fasting by Ronnie Floyd
- A Hunger for God by John Piper
- Fasting Can Change Your Life by Jerry Falwell and Elmer Towns (eds.)
- Transforming Power of Fasting and Prayer by Bill Bright
- 5 Steps to Fasting and Prayer by Bill Bright