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[00:00:06] Before we get started with today's episode, I would like to quickly read you our podcast disclaimer.

[00:00:13] This podcast is for educational purposes only, and it is not a substitute for professional care by a doctor or other qualified medical professional. You should always speak with your physician or other healthcare professionals before doing any fasting, changing your diet in any way, taking or adjusting any medications or supplements, or adopting any treatment plan for a health problem.

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[00:01:13] All right. And now we'll get started with today's episode. Hi, everyone. It's Megan Ramos here with another Bitesize episode of The Fasting Method podcast. Today, I am going to discuss salt.

[00:01:30] We get a lot of questions asking why salt is so important. Well, when you first start fasting to treat insulin issues, it's important to understand that you have insulin issues because your levels of insulin in your body are very elevated. The higher insulin levels are, the more water our systems retain. And in that water we do retain excess electrolytes. When you start fasting, your insulin levels do fall quite rapidly. They typically can nosedive quite a bit after that 24-hour mark. So if you're starting off with a 36 or 42-hour fast, for example, you're going to see a dramatic drop in your internal insulin levels. When insulin falls that much, it sends a message to the kidneys saying, "All right, our insulin's down. We can get rid of that water burden that we're carrying." So then the kidneys will release water, and in that water we do lose electrolytes.

[00:02:41] So in a short period of time, say 36, 42 hours, you are experiencing quite a bit of water loss and you can become dehydrated. So it's important for people who are especially new to fasting to make sure that you are well hydrated. And so many people think that hydration is just water or fluid, but it's not water, fluid alone. It also contains electrolytes. You are going to lose those electrolytes. And our body really likes to tightly control or regulate our electrolyte levels. So when we lose so much so quickly, we see a really sudden shift in our levels and this can be very stressful for the body. It can make us not feel so good either. And this is what often leads to people feeling so tired, experiencing headaches, experiencing cramping, crazy cravings, ending their fast way earlier than planned. It's because we have become dehydrated and we are not refueling with full hydration factors. We're just sticking to water without adding anything to the water to fully hydrate us. So we've got to rebalance our electrolyte levels.

[00:04:10] The electrolyte market is a very hot market out there. You can go to any sports store, or Google 'electrolyte supplements', or go on to Amazon and you will definitely be overwhelmed with options. If you look at a lot of these options, they're very high in potassium, they're quite low in magnesium, and they're exceptionally low in sodium. And this doesn't make a whole lot of sense to someone like myself.

[00:04:39] Sodium is kind of like the gatekeeper electrolyte. If our sodium levels are good, our body does a better job at maintaining our other electrolyte levels, but if our sodium levels are low and inadequate, then our body is at risk for losing magnesium. And if our magnesium gets low, then we're at risk for losing potassium, calcium, etc.. So we really want to prioritize getting in sodium. As a backup plan, we like to get in magnesium. So if you think of these electrolytes like members of a hockey team, sodium is the captain and magnesium is the assistant captain. And if those two players are strong, the rest of the players are going to have great support and get through that period or game of hockey with a lot of ease from good leadership. When we're looking at a lot of these electrolyte supplements, there really isn't any sodium in them and there's very little magnesium, so you're running through the backup players over and over and over again. And if you're not adequately taking in sodium and potassium, you're constantly going to be needing this electrolyte supplement to try to feel a bit better. And you'll take it and you'll feel a bit better, but not for very long. This is why I don't necessarily understand. You know, it's an interesting marketing and business tool because it makes you become hyper dependent upon the hydration aid.

[00:06:17] So we've always just focused on salt and magnesium, getting in that captain and that assistant captain, getting in the strong leadership and having the other levels be maintained. And by doing that and focusing on those electrolytes, you become less required to take it more often throughout the day and higher volumes of it. It becomes a lot more time effective, cost effective. So we prioritize salt and magnesium for this reason.

[00:06:49] Salt intake can vary in the body depending on a few different things. How quickly your insulin levels do come down, the severity of your insulin resistance, or how metabolically healthy you are when you're fasting - these things all play a role into how much salt you should be having. Some people actually don't need any when they first start fasting, and for some people their insulin resistance is just so severe and their insulin so high that it's not coming down as dramatically. They don't need salt, and salt can actually make them feel a bit unwell. This is why we really recommend working with a fasting coach or connecting with a fasting community to learn more about this. And when you're working with a coach, you can really do sort of a personalized dive into it as well.

[00:07:43] Now, magnesium, in general, most of the population in North America, like over 80%, is magnesium deficient. We actually need a lot of magnesium to help promote insulin sensitivity in the body. Magnesium is something that can be taken once a day or twice a day. It can help you feel really great during your fasts. It can also help you counteract some of the negative side effects of fasting as well, like constipation can be treated with a magnesium citrate or insomnia can be aided by magnesium bisglycinate. So it can help with some of these other conditions as well. So you noticed I said magnesium citrate, I've said magnesium bisglycinate. There are different types of magnesium. They serve different functions within the body, so you do need to be specific about what type of magnesium that you take. And again, this is something that your fasting coach can go over with you and help you customize and personalize based on your needs. Pre-pregnancy I was actually taking four different types of magnesium for four different things, but I felt fabulous. During pregnancy, I'm taking one type of magnesium to help alleviate some of the symptoms I'm experiencing from pregnancy, but also to help support the pregnancy in general. So there's different times and places for different magnesiums, but bottom line is we do want to avoid magnesium oxide. Magnesium oxide doesn't get very well absorbed by the body at all. It can cause a lot of gastric distress. And unfortunately, it is the cheapest and easiest-to-find magnesium. So that's the one we don't want to have. So just keep that in mind, everybody.

[00:09:33] When it comes to fasting communities, I do want to speak pretty quickly to this because I have seen a lot of confusion lately in our Facebook group. At The Fasting Method, we do have a Facebook group. It is a free Facebook group. Anybody can join it, and people are welcome to chat amongst themselves and support each other throughout their journeys and share resources. Now, we do have a team of moderators, and their job is to make sure that everybody is being respectful and isn't sharing any harmful materials, but they're not there to provide coaching or guidance to anyone. There's a lot of issues with social media in today's day and age. There's a lot of restrictions as to what you can and cannot do on social media. And I'll tell you, every day, we get warnings from Facebook about content. So we can't do too much on Facebook, but we like to provide an outlet. We will share updates on Fasting Method events and things going on, and we'll occasionally hop on and do some Facebook Lives and other events here and there. But it's not our actual Fasting Method Community.

[00:10:53] The Community is really where people can engage with the coaching team and ask questions, and we can interact with them in a safe way and one that is not censored by social media companies and what they determine is right or not right. So our Facebook group is not our Community. So when Terri, and Nadia, and I, and our other guests on this podcast talk about our Fasting Method Community, it's actually a separate program. So you can learn more about it at our website, thefastingmethod.com. If you go under Programs, you'll see Community.

[00:11:34] The Community is largely structured around three main things. We have over 30 live meetings a week on various topics around fasting, nutrition, mindset, and meditations. They are 50-minute-long group sessions led by coaches. You can interact with coaches. I run a challenge every month, and every week we have a check-in to see how that challenge is going and people can share their updates and ask me questions. So we have our Community meetings for support.

[00:12:09] We also do a series of webinars every week. So right now, I'm in the midst of doing a webinar series on maintenance strategies, but we do them on a variety of topics like fasting and exercise, fasting and thyroid function, you name it, fasting and lipids. We do webinars, they're educational. You can attend them live or you can watch the replays if you're unable to make them. Dr. Fung even does a monthly Q&A where he answers our members' questions live during these sessions, and they get recorded, too, for any Community members who want to watch them later.

[00:12:52] We also do coaching at The Fasting Method, and I think a lot of you know that. We do group coaching and one-on-one coaching as well. But I did want to speak to the difference between the Facebook group and the Community. The Community also has a forum, and in that forum-- it's hosted by us and we control it so we can share information and we can engage and answer questions, things that we cannot do on Facebook just because of the rules that are out there. So those are the big differences and I hope that helps clarify for those of you who have been asking a lot of questions about that lately. And I will tell you, there is a ton of information about magnesium, and salt, and different ways to get in salt during your fasts, and how to strategize with it and what to look out for. So we do go into depth on that, but it's important to understand that hydration isn't just water alone, it's water and electrolytes, and usually focusing on some sodium and magnesium can help get you there.

[00:14:00] All right, everyone, thank you so much for joining us today. And we'll be back next week with another episode.