

TrueNorth Health Foundation

The Foundation's new website is poised to generate positive change through research and education.

by Jen Howk

The world is slowly waking up to what we have known at TrueNorth Health Center for decades: that an exclusively whole, plant-food diet free of added salt, oil, and sugar—especially when combined with medically supervised water-only fasting—is a safe and very effective way to regain and maintain optimum health.

The power of water-only fasting, in particular, is finally beginning to receive the attention it deserves. Fasting went more mainstream than ever in 2018, from widely available and popular streaming documentaries like *Fasting* and the iThrive series, to Dr. Valter Longo's groundbreaking research into fasting's effects on longevity and disease processes.

We know a health-promoting diet and fasting work. Here at TrueNorth, we have watched it work with consistently positive outcomes for 34 years. We are now setting out to rigorously investigate exactly *how* and *why* it works so well. We want patients and physicians around the world to know what we know, and to empower them to replicate our success.

That's where the TrueNorth Health Foundation comes in.

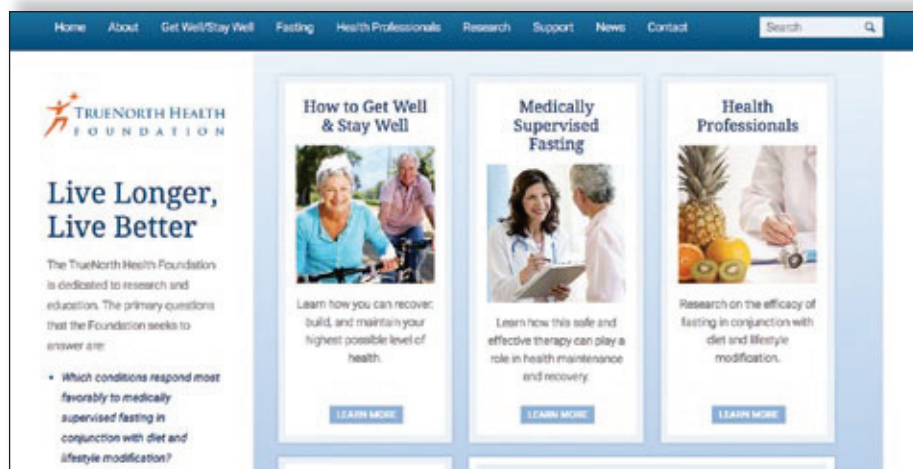
The Foundation's mission is to promote human health and well-being through creative research and public education on nutrition, lifestyle, and water-only fasting. Our goal is to scientifically validate the safety and efficacy of water-only fasting and a health-promoting diet.



Dr. Toshia Myers, director of research

Research

Under the direction of Dr. Toshia Myers, our director of research, we have already published a number of papers in the



Visit fasting.org to learn more about medically supervised water-fasting at TrueNorth Health.

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medical literature. This month, you can read our case report in the *British Medical Journal* on the successful use of an exclusively whole-plant diet to reduce pharmaceutical dependence and contribute to marked cardiovascular improvements after just a few months.

Other recent publications in peer-reviewed journals include a groundbreaking fasting safety study, a three-year follow-up case study documenting remission of lymphoma after fasting, and papers on the use of fasting for a variety of conditions, including hypertension and appendicitis.

In the last year, the Foundation also built a state-of-the-art lab that will allow us to do research and analysis on site. It also gives us the ability to biobank samples for ongoing and future analysis. Having this new facility greatly enhances our opportunities for exciting collaborative research with outside institutions. As an important part of that effort, we have also established an Institutional Review Board to protect the rights and welfare of our research participants, and obtained a Federalwide Assurance in compliance with the Department of Health and Human Services.

We have just concluded data collection in a pilot study in collaboration with the National University of Natural Medicine to investigate how 5 to 14 days of water-only fasting affects taste sensitivity. In 2019, we are moving forward with several exciting clinical studies, including a

collaboration with the Mayo Clinic to discover the effects of water-only fasting on brain and heart health, as well as stroke risk. We are also conducting a study to assess factors affecting dietary adherence to an exclusively plant-food diet, and are in the early stages of investigating whether fasting can play a role in normalizing the gut microbiome.

This research will potentially allow us to identify key biological markers that help us understand who will benefit most from fasting. As we learn more, we will be able to fine-tune the frequency and duration of fasting to ensure optimal outcomes, and empower and educate other clinicians to do the same.

Education

Fasting and nutritional excellence are the future of health care. As our own work and that of others demonstrate, awareness of and interest in fasting is at a critical turning point right now. That's why we've created a new website at Fasting.org to share our vision and to make readily available all of the most current research and resources that are related to water-only fasting. The website will have ongoing updates about cutting-edge research and special opportunities to engage with our doctors, staff, and collaborators to learn more and get involved in this important work.

The Foundation's mission is not just research but also education. Our vision is to educate and empower future health-care providers with life-changing information and practical, hands-on training and experience. To that end, we recently purchased a 3,000-square-foot building to house and train our growing intern and residency programs.

We host practitioners from a variety of backgrounds and at all stages of training, including programs for medical doctors, naturopaths, chiropractors, nurses, and physician assistants. These visiting clinicians stay with us for anywhere from an intense three-day-long observation to a full year-long residency. As we expand these programs, we continue to invite new partnerships and collaborations, including a functional medicine rotation with Texas A&M University College of Medicine.

Our internship and residency programs expose clinicians to the power of fasting and nutrition, as well as inspiring future research. During their time at TrueNorth, clinicians gain experience and develop the skills needed to



Research assistant Su-Yeon Hwang in the TrueNorth lab.


educate students and other providers, including, when appropriate, the ability to certify other physicians in water-only fasting.

Public education is also a key part of our mission, and one of the most effective ways to reach people is through short, powerful videos. We plan to share these on our website as they are created.

Looking Forward

The path to optimal health is not a mystery. Health results from healthy living. Unfortunately, that essential truth all too often conflicts with aggressive marketing messages for addictive, high-calorie foods that appeal to our ancient scarcity programming and undermine our health and happiness. Our goal at the TrueNorth Health Foundation is to get this life-changing, transformative information to as many people as possible.

Many people seem relatively healthy during their younger years and even into middle age, but their bad habits eventually catch up with them. Too often, people spend the later years of their lives in a markedly debilitated state, unable to enjoy life to the fullest. It doesn't have to be that way. Regaining and maintaining optimum health in our modern environment is not always easy, but it *is* simple. People of all ages can maximize their health potential by making the right choices. We intend to show them just how powerful those choices can be.

You can get involved and learn much more at Fasting.org. I look forward to connecting with you there. 

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Jen Howk went plant-based overnight after reading *The China Study* in 2006, and rigorously “followed the data” in pursuit of dietary and lifestyle excellence in a journey that eventually led her to TrueNorth. In addition to serving as director of the TrueNorth Health Foundation, she frequently lectures at the Center for Evolutionary Psychology on esteem processes, and mastering the complex pathways of human motivation and cooperation. She is currently completing her Ph.D. at Harvard University.