



*This week we mark the start of Lent. Traditionally, the following 40 days concluding on Easter Saturday, are, for Christians, a period of fasting. Christianity, like all of the world's great religions, believes these periods of fasting are a path to spiritual enlightenment.*



Although we have the tradition of observing the Lenten season, few people actually fast during Lent. The modern practice is to give up something you really enjoy - and many do it as a symbol of sacrifice and devotion. The daily deprivation of something special during Lent for Christians is a constant reminder of Easter and God's sacrifice.

But giving up things you like for Lent isn't only a good spiritual exercise: it can also be great for your health, too. We all know that we should try to cut back on foods that are high in calories, fat, salt and sugar in order to improve our health. It doesn't matter if you're Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, agnostic - or any other sort of believer - this could be the motivation you need to make a few lifestyle changes which will help your general well-being.

**For example, by giving up just one can of soda daily for 40 days you will cut out 6,000 calories and 400 teaspoons of sugar (that equals a 2-liter bottle filled with just sugar)! Try giving up your daily potato chips; you'll save another 6,000 calories plus a lot of extra salt and fat.** The table below shows some popular high calorie foods, the number of calories per serving and the number of calories you would save if you gave up eating this food every day during lent. Just see what you can save by having 40 days free of these favorite indulgences.

**HEAL ME, O LORD, AND I SHALL BE HEALED; SAVE ME, AND I SHALL BE SAVED: FOR THOU ART MY PRAISE.**  
JEREMIAH 17:14

food/serving size	calories per serving	calories SAVED by not eating this for 40 days
soda, 12oz can	155	<b>6,200</b>
Hawaiian Punch, 8oz glass	120	<b>4,800</b>
potato chips, 1 oz bag (small)	150	<b>6,000</b>
hamburger, quarter pound	600	<b>24,000</b>
personal cheese pizza, 6 inch	590	<b>23,600</b>
ice cream, 1 cup	260	<b>10,400</b>

**The really good news is that for every 3,500 calories we don't eat during these 40 days, we could lose a whole pound of fat.** Fasting doesn't have to be about not eating at all, it can be all about small changes we can make to improve our health. A vital part of fasting can – and really should – also include some activity. One thing we could give up for Lent is being a couch potato, as well as giving up all our high-calorie junk food habits. Half an hour a day of brisk walking will burn up an extra 9000 calories. That means your body will get rid of almost another 3 lbs of fat. Knowing that we can break the shackles of our bad habits is an important part of Lent. It is the sacrifice that mirrors the Great Sacrifice: it brings well-being, health and inner peace. Though the prospect of a few days without food might not be appealing, try it once and you'll be a regular.

**BELOVED, I WISH ABOVE ALL THINGS THAT THOU MAYEST PROSPER AND BE IN HEALTH, EVEN AS THY SOUL PROSPERETH. 3 JOHN 1:2 KJV**



Health and Blessings,

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