

رمضان كريم

Ramadan Kareem

MAINTAINING GOOD HEALTH DURING *Ramadan*



NHS

Greater Manchester
Neurorehabilitation & Integrated
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BRITISH MUSLIM HERITAGE CENTRE

Centre of Excellence for Learning and Development

Maintaining Good Health in Ramadan

"O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may develop God-consciousness." (Quran 2:183)

Ramadan is a sacred and joyous time in the Islamic calendar, Muslims around the world are welcome the month as a prestigious gift and busy themselves in their ambitious in their goal setting to gain optimum benefit and blessings. We have put together this information to help maintain health in Ramadan and to highlight the importance of the allowance that Islam makes for those individuals that may not be able to fast, there are numerous reasons for this, and these are highlighted below.

"So, whoever sights [the new moon of] the month, let him fast it; and whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days. Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship and [wants] for you to complete the period and to glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you; and perhaps you will be grateful." (Al-Baqarah:185)

The people that are excused are:

- People suffering from Chronic Physical or Mental illnesses
- Menstruating women
- Children that haven't reached the age of puberty
- The elderly
- Pregnant or Breastfeeding women
- Travellers

There are number of Chronic health conditions such

- Heart Failure
- Diabetes
- Chronic Kidney disease
- Epilepsy
- Adrenal crisis.
- Mental Illnesses



Imam al-Bukhari mentions in his anthology of authentic hadiths: 'Al-Hasan and Ibrahim mentioned that an elderly person who finds fasting too hard may feed a poor person. Anas did that for a year or two when he was too old: he fed a poor person in compensation for every day he could not fast.[1]

Depending on disease severity, completely refraining from fasting might be recommended, this decision should be made in association with healthcare professionals, with lifestyle changes, values, fasting experience, time of year and alternative medication should all be considered.

Please don't be disheartened by this advice, the Quran address these concerns and provides guidance for those that are suffering from any of the chronic illness listed above, outlining alternate ways of compensating, and gaining reward.

KEY MESSAGE

Please consult Your GP practitioner when considering fasting when suffering from pre-existing conditions,

Fasting against the advice of your health care practitioner can lead to serious complications and can worsen disease severity and prognosis.

Alternatives to fasting

People unable to fast can partake in the non-fasting elements of Ramadan

- Charity
- Spirituality
- Prayers

If fasting is never going to be possible then the person is allowed and welcome to make a charitable donation (fidyah) in place of missing fasts.

Health Ramadan Hints

To ensure we all have a healthy Ramadan and to help prevent chronic diseases in future we have put together some tips that may be useful in the month of Ramadan

Never skip Suhur

- Helps keep you active and serves as a source of energy
- Include complex carbohydrates such Porridge, Weetabix or shredded wheat, Granary, and wholegrain breads, rather than white bread
- Reduces excessive thirst

Break the fast with dates and healthy foods

- These types of foods prevent blood glucose rising too quickly and can help control appetite. Examples - try some food swaps as follows:
- Brown rice rather than white rice
- Wholegrain pasta rather than white pasta
- Whole fruits rather than fruit juices or dried fruit

Make sure you eat a minimum of 5 portions of fruits and vegetables –

- Eat more fresh vegetables as they contain less sugar.
- Try sweet potato, peppers, mushrooms, broccoli, spinach, carrots,
- Try making a soup
- ensures you are getting 5 vegetables per day

Eat Less sugar

- Watch hidden sugar in sweet foods, such as biscuits, pastries, cakes, and sugary drinks, as these types of foods have no nutritional value and can lead to long term health conditions.

Avoid fried food –bake food instead

No binge eating after Iftar

- Overindulging is against the rules of fasting and leads to weight gain and obesity
- Iftar meals should be light with a combination of proteins and vegetables
- Ensure adequate portion size, one portion is the size of your own palm.

Healthy alternatives

- Baked samosas and boiled dumplings
- Chapattis made without butter, ghee, or oil
- Baked or grilled meat and chicken
- Homemade pastry using just a single layer
- Milk-based sweets and puddings instead of fried and sugar filled

Rest

- Try and get as much rest and sleep as possible

Stay Hydrated

- Try to drink as much as possible between iftar and sleeping
- Good intake on a normal day would be a minimum of 8 glasses of water per day

Smoking

- During the fast, you will not smoke, making this month one of the best times of the year to quit smoking for good!

Exercise

- Ensure you are doing some aerobic exercise as this is essential to maintain health and prevent disease
- Try to Include walking, low intensity running or cycling and for a minimum of 30 mins per day

Increase in Spirituality

- Recite Quran
- Pray the night-time prayer
- Give what you can in charity
- Increase your Islamic knowledge

Following GP Advice

- • Some health conditions can make fasting difficult or not advised
- Discuss options with GP well in advance
- Trial alternate day fasting
- Or shorter day fasting at a different time of year
- Non-consecutive days of fasting
- Discuss safety measures and red flags if health deteriorates during the fast
- Consider alternative medications or alternative timings and preparations.

Be Kind and Compassionate

- Allah encourages small kindness and embeds these actions deep in our faith
- Do not judge anyone that may be eating (they maybe have a pre – existing condition)

References

- (1) Al-Bukhari, Sahih, vol. 6, p. 25.