Ramadhan Health Guide

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overview

• what happens to our body during fasting

• benefits of fasting

• food guide

• health issues and frequently asked questions

• your questions
background

- “health is the key to happiness”
- Islam encourages responsible health
- “take advantage of good health before illnesses afflict you”
our state of health

- DoH: **poor health** and lifestyle choices by Muslims
- higher levels of smoking and diabetes
- 5 portions of fruit and veg per day…
spirituality and food

- food has great significance in Islam:

كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا فِيهِ

"Eat from the good things with which We have provided you and do not exceed therein"

(Quran 20:81)
spirituality and food

• physical body an amanah

• food and activity affects this amanah...

• overeating is sinful (spiritual and physical...)

background fasting food guide health issues q & a
spirituality and food

- The Prophet said: “...sufficient for him are a few morsels...” (Al-Tirmidhi)
Ramadhan a great opportunity

- spirituality and healthy lifestyle
- develop self-control and discipline
- chance to give stomach a break, refresh the body
what happens during fasting

- blood **glucose** body’s main energy source

- during fasting, **glucose is used up first**

- fat becomes the next source of energy
what happens during fasting

- ample opportunity to replenish energy stores

- use-up of fat aids weight loss and reduces your cholesterol

- better control of diabetes and high blood pressure
food guide

• fasting may improve a person’s health, but **if a correct diet is not followed may worsen it**

• a **simpler, though balanced, diet** is enough to be healthy and active
simple and balanced diet

Fruit and vegetables

Meat, fish, eggs, beans, and other non-dairy sources of protein

Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar

Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta, and other starchy foods

Milk and dairy foods
helpful foods

- **complex carbohydrates**: grains like wheat, oats, beans, lentils, wholemeal flour
- **fibre-rich foods**: bran, cereals, potatoes with skins, vegetables and fruit
- healthy and slowly-digested
foods to avoid

- deep-fried foods (pakoras, samosas)
- high-sugar/high-fat foods (gulab jaman, baklawa)
- high-fat cooked/spicy foods (parathas, oily curries, greasy pastries)
- avoid caffeine drinks...
suhoor

• “Have Suhoor, as indeed there is a blessing in it.” (Bukhari)

• **vital meal** for your health

• should be a **wholesome but moderate** meal that is fitting and energy-providing for hours

• should include **slowly-digested foods**
an alternative suhoor!
iftar

- **dates** (burst of energy)
- fruit juices similar
- meal should remain a meal, **not become a feast!**
- small portions

- The Sunnah: milk, dates, water, lamb, oats
patterns during Ramadhan

- study of Muslim family habits in Jeddah
- expenditure...
- weight change...
patterns during Ramadhan

• 20% indicated increase in expenditure

• 60% reported weight gain

• importance of lifestyle and dietary modification
potential health issues
heartburn (indigestion)

• why does it occur?

• continue medication

• moderate eating, avoid oily, deep-fried, spicy food

• losing weight and raising pillow can help
headache

- **common problem**, many reasons...

- **moderate balanced diet**, especially not missing suhoor, drinking fluid, paracetamol

- those with **migraines** should aim for adequate control beforehand
dehydration

• common occurrence
• various factors...
• risk greater in the elderly
• symptoms...
• urgently rehydrate
• adequate fluids at suhoor
common medical conditions

- diabetes, heart disease, asthma, high blood pressure
- anything needing regular medication
- consult your doctor
- usually flexible options
diabetes risks

• study indicated alarming numbers of hospital admissions during Ramadhan:

• 5x increased risk of extreme blood sugar
diabetes advice

• those on insulin should not fast
• those on tablets, or associated complications (heart/kidney disease) should seek specific advice...
• both high and low blood sugar levels can be fatal: feeling unwell, sweaty, dizzy, disoriented
• seek attention
general points

فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ

“So whoever among you is ill or on a journey – then an equal number of days…” (Quran 2:184)

- genuine health risks are exempt
- make up fast, or organise fidyah
frequently asked questions
is Ramadhan a good time to quit smoking?
can an inhaler be used during fasting?
can I fast if having a blood transfusion or on dialysis?
can I swim during fasting?
could dehydration require the fast to be broken?
academic research on fasting

possible evidence on fasting benefits:

• improved blood cholesterol
• exercise during fasting may improve performance
• improved mental well-being and clarity
• improved neurological health…
brain disease protection

• article in ‘The Guardian’
• looked at degenerative brain illness, including Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s
• they suggest that fasting for regular periods may help protect the brain
• more studies planned
Summary

- Muslim community is not in good health

- Ramadhan a glorious opportunity to increase spirituality and improve health

- many benefits of fasting

- those with medical conditions should seek advice to minimise risk to their health
brief questions?
useful resources

• Local healthcare professionals

• Department of Health website

• Diabetes UK
Ramadan Mubarak