

Diet and Ramadan

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09.00am-11.00am

Aim

To provide an overview of the concept of Ramadan and promote best dietary practices for healthier fasting

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Have an awareness and purpose of Ramadan in Islam
- Understand the spiritual, emotional and moral aspects of Ramadan
- List physiological effects of fasting on the body
- Recommend suitable foods for healthier eating during Ramadan
- Provide first line advice for the management of common nutritional related complications of fasting

Islam and the 5 Pillars

1. **Shahaadah** – testimony of faith
2. **Salaah** – 5 daily obligatory prayers
3. **Zakaah** – giving alms/charity
4. **Saum – fasting** (Ramadan)
5. **Hajj** – pilgrimage (Mecca)

Ramadan – the purpose

- **Spiritual and Mental Wellbeing**
Increased devotion/charity/family bonds/community spirit
- **Self Discipline and empowerment**
Behaviour change/establishing better habits/mindfulness
- **Purification**
Physically/emotionally/spiritually (forgiveness)
- **Physical Wellbeing**
Detoxification/Healthy Eating/moderation
- **Reminder of Poverty**
empathy/humanity/reinforce gratitude

Ramadan- the month of fasting

Islamic calendar months

1. Muharram
2. Safar
3. Rabi' al-awwal
4. Rabi' al-thani
5. Jumada al-awwal
6. Jumada al-thani
7. Rajab
8. Sha'ban
9. Ramadan
10. Shawwal
11. Dhu al-Qi'dah
12. Dhu al-Hijjah

- **9th month** of the Islamic calendar
- 29 or 30 days – lunar cycle
- Month of fasting – obligatory for adults*
- Abstinence of:
 - Food and drink
 - Sexual activity
 - Smoking/shisha/other dependency based substances
 - Profanity/immoral behaviour
 - Lying/cheating/disputes/anger/gossip/bad habits

Ramadan – exemption from fasting*

- Sick/medically unwell
- Breastfeeding women
- Pregnant women
- Menstruating women
- Travellers
- Mentally infirm
- Elderly
- Children (although they like to practice!)

Ramadan 2022

- Commencing around 2nd April to beginning of May
- Dawn (Suhoor/sehri) 4.31am to 2.44am
- Sunset (Iftar/iftari) 7.49 to 8.43pm
- Approximately 15-16.5 hour of fasting period
- 5.5-7 hours non fasting period (free window)
- Taraavi – long night prayers (from 9.30pm-11pm)
- Fast broken with symbolic date and water

Physiological effects of fasting

Detoxification Stage 1 **Day 1-2**

- Blood sugar drops
- Glycogen stores (Liver/muscles) used/depleted
- Headache, dizziness, nausea, bad breath, heavily coated tongue
- Intense hunger

Physiological effects of fasting...

Detoxification Stage 2 **Day 3-7**

- Fats mobilised
- Endorphins released
- Skin becomes oily, digestive system becomes rested, immune system boosted
- Protein breakdown (muscles/organs) locked

Physiological effects of fasting...

Detoxification Stage 3 **Day 8-15**

- Enhanced energy and vitality
- Endorphins continue to be released
- Cognitive clarity
- Feel better
- Body healing at optimum efficiency
- Old injuries may be irritated/painful

Physiological effects of fasting...

Detoxification stage 4 **Day 16-30**

- Body completely adapted to fasting
- Increased energy and vitality continues
- Enhanced cognitive clarity
- Tongue pink and healthy
- Improved memory
- Improved gut health

Share your experiences of dietary habits during Ramadan in your area of work?

- Foods eaten can be high in fat, sugar and salt
- Methods of cooking – deep or shallow frying
- Large portions
- Several courses can be offered at Iftar
- Communal iftars/Iftar parties
- Snacking behaviour
- Sugary juices and fizzy drinks
- Convenience and takeaway meals



Eatwell Guide

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.

Check the label on packaged foods

Each serving (150g) contains

Energy 1046kJ 250kcal	Fat 3.0g LOW	Saturated 1.3g LOW	Sugars 34g HIGH	Salt 0.9g MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars



6-8 a day

Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count.

Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.



Oil & spreads

Choose unsaturated oils and use in small amounts



Eat less often and in small amounts

Per day 2000kcal 2500kcal = ALL FOOD + ALL DRINKS

Summary – foods to eat

- Eat foods from all 5 food groups!
- High fibre complex carbohydrates – wholegrain chapatti/pitta/bread/cereals, porridge
- Include low glycaemic index foods wherever possible – legumes/pulses/nuts, yoghurt, oats, fruit and vegetables
- Include dairy and protein foods at suhoor and iftar – eggs, yoghurt, chicken, beef, soya, legumes, nuts
- Include fruit and vegetables – aim for 5 smaller portions
- Limit foods high in fat, sugar and salt – e.g. pakoras, samosas, sweets, juices
- Ensure adequate low sugar and low calorie fluid intake – water, sugar free squash, decaf tea/coffee, milk, low sugar lassi

Comfort break

Nutritional related minor complications of fasting



Dehydration

- Headaches, constipation, poor concentration
- 10% drop in hydration status causes symptoms
- Common in the first few days
- 6-7 hour window for fluid intake

Solutions?

- Don't miss suhoor (ensure adequate fluids)
- Use low calorie and sugar free drinks to hydrate
- Hydrate moderately during the “free” period

Headaches

- Dehydration
- Lack of sleep/oversleeping
- Low blood sugar
- Withdrawal of caffeine, nicotine, other substances etc.
- Poor eating habits/missing Suhoor

Solutions?

- Reduce caffeine intake prior to fasting
- Smoking cessation
- Include a nourishing meal at Suhoor
- Include plenty of fluids (low calorie/sugar free) at Suhoor and free period
- Consider prophylactic mild painkillers for first 1-2 days

Constipation

- Poor fluid intake (missing Suhoor?)
- Low fibre intake (reduced fruit and veg intake, refined diet)
- Reduced activity
- Low F+V intake
- Reduced food bulk intake

Solutions?

- Include high fibre foods at Suhoor and Iftar
- Ensure adequate hydration
- Aim for 5 a day (smaller portion)
- Keep active
- Consider a mild laxative

Weight Gain

- High fat intake
- High sugar intake
- Overeating calories (large portions, energy dense foods)
- Decreased activity

Solutions?

- Limit fatty and sugary foods
- Moderate portion sizes and courses
- Use healthier methods of cooking
- 30 minutes of moderate activity

Weight loss

- Reduced calorie intake
- Low calorie food overeaten (fruit, drinks)
- Missing one of the 2 meals (Suhoor/Iftar)
- Illness
- Intentional weight loss (very low calorie diet)

Solutions?

- Ensure nourishing and balanced meals at Suhoor/Iftar
- Limit low calorie food intake
- ?exemption if ill

Heartburn/Indigestion

- Overeating (washing machine analogy)
- Consumption of fatty /fried or highly seasoned foods
- Large portion sizes
- Consumption of fizzy drinks
- Caffeine/smoking

Solutions?

- Limit portion sizes and courses
- Limit fatty, sugary and highly seasoned foods
- Smoking cessation/limit caffeine
- Over the counter antacids

Further information

- Eatwell Guide

[Eatwell guide 2016 FINAL MAR29 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

- The British Nutrition Foundation

[A healthy Ramadan - British Nutrition Foundation](#)

- The British dietetic Association

[Ramadan and eating well when working from home | British Dietetic Association \(BDA\)](#)

[Glycaemic Index Food Fact Sheet | British Dietetic Association \(BDA\)](#)

[UK Ethnic Dietitians \(RDs\) GB \(@ethnicdietitians\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)

[Diabetes and Ramadan | Fasting | Diabetes UK](#)

[Diabetes and Ramadan | Fasting | Diabetes UK](#)

[MCB Ramadan-Health-Factsheet-2021-1.pdf](#)

