



Bedfordshire, Luton
and Milton Keynes
Health and Care Partnership

Ramadan and your health



Wellbeing for life

The holy month of Ramadan will begin in the evening of Wednesday 22 March 2023, and end in the evening of Friday 21 April 2023.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar and a time when many Muslims across the world fast during daylight hours for 29 to 30 days.

The fasting period may last up to 15 hours on some days, making it all the more important for people to look after their health and spirituality when fasting.



Muslims adults are expected to observe fasting during Ramadan. The following groups of people do not need to fast:

- ▶ Young children (under the age of puberty)
- ▶ People with mental illnesses
- ▶ The elderly
- ▶ Women who are menstruating, pregnant, or breast-feeding
- ▶ If you consider the fast is having a detrimental effect on your health or is life threatening
- ▶ People with chronic illnesses and sickness
- ▶ People on regular medication.

If your healthcare professional advises you to not fast (due to deteriorating health or life threatening illness), then you do not need to fast and you are not breaking any Islamic religious ruling by eating during Ramadan to maintain your health and wellbeing.

Taking medication during Ramadan

People who have chronic illnesses are exempt from fasting during Ramadan. However, some may still choose to fast and modify their treatment and medications around the day.

It is important to get advice from healthcare professionals on managing your medication, if you plan to fast, to make sure there is no risk to your health. All medications will need to be assessed, as some medications may be affected by sudden changes in the quantity of food and fluid consumed, such as when fasting. For example, you can become dehydrated when taking lithium and a lack of fluid intake.

Short term illness and fasting

People who experience acute or short-term ill health are exempt from fasting on the days they are ill in Ramadan. These days may be substituted by the same number of days in any other month of the year before the following Ramadan, if they are able.

Some medications can be taken during the fasting hours and will not break the individual's fast. These include paracetamol suppositories, intramuscular long-acting antipsychotic injections, inhalers or nebulisers and oxygen to aid breathing. If a medication can provide nourishment (such as glucagon/glucose in any formulation) or is a medication that needs to be taken with fluid such as water (for example, tablets or capsules) then that would break the fast.

If you are unwell

Covid-19 may present with symptoms such as fever, sweating, vomiting or diarrhoea, with a risk of dehydration. Therefore, it is advisable not to fast if you are experiencing these symptoms.

If you feel unwell you should stay at home, and avoid contact with other people.

Your local mosque may have their own safety guidance for their congregations, so please be respectful and follow their guidance to maintain the safety and comfort of others.

Covid-19 vaccine and fasting

If you are considering having a Covid-19 vaccination during Ramadan, some common questions are answered:

Is the Covid-19 vaccine halal?

The vaccines currently being administered in the UK (the Astra Zeneca and Pfizer vaccines) do not contain any animal products. This, by default, makes them halal.

Can I take the vaccine whilst fasting?

Yes, you can. Injections taken for non-nutritional purposes do not invalidate the fast. This is from the consensus of the Islamic Scholars in the UK. The injection of medicine into a muscle or vein does not constitute eating or drinking because the medicine does not enter the body by mouth, the normal way that we eat and drink. So long as there is no intent, by means of the injection, to seek relief from the hardship of not eating and drinking during the day, then it is lawful. Muslims should not therefore seek to delay their vaccinations on account of fasting. (Information obtained from Dr Mohammad Akram Nadwi).

Can I break my fast if the vaccine makes me ill?

The vaccine may give you side effects that are mild and short-lived. However, if you do become unwell to the point you think you cannot fast, you are allowed to break your fast. In fact, it would be haram (not permissible) to continue fasting at the expense of your health, when severely ill.

For more guidance, please visit the British Islamic Medical Association website: <https://britishima.org/guidance>

Useful links

Here are some useful links to support people who use CNWL services and manage medications during Ramadan:

The Muslim Council of Britain

www.mcb.org.uk/resources/coronavirus

The British Islamic Medical Association

www.britishima.org

Choice and Medications website

Handy fact sheet on Ramadan and mental health medications, in several other languages www.choiceandmedication.org/cnwl/printable-leaflets/handy-fact-sheet and in English www.choiceandmedication.org/cnwl/generate/handyfactsheetramadan.pdf

Guidance for staff celebrating Eid-ul-Fitr during COVID-19

<https://learninghub.leadershipacademy.nhs.uk/guides/eid-ul-fitr-2020-guidance-for-nhs-staff/steps/guidance-for-staff-celebrating-eid-ul-fitr-during-covid-19>

The British Nutrition Foundation: A healthy Ramadan

www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/seasons/ramadan.html

Ramadan health guide

Produced by Communities in Action and endorsed by the NHS
https://warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops/a-z/a_guide_to_healthy_fasting.pdf

Managing diabetes during Ramadan

www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/ramadan

This document is also available in other languages, large print, Braille, and audio format upon request. Please email communications.cnwl@nhs.net

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضاً بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة برايل للمكفوفين وبصيغة سمعية عند الطلب

Arabic

این مدرک همچنین بنا به درخواست به زبانهای دیگر، در چاپ درشت و در فرمت صوتی موجود است.

Farsi

এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায়, বড় প্রিন্ট আকারে, ব্রেল এবং অডিও টেপ আকারেও অনুরোধ পাওয়া যায়

Bengali

Dokumentigaan waxaa xitaa lagu heli karaa luqado kale, daabacad far waa-wayn, farta indhoolaha (Braille) iyo hab dhegaysi ah markii la soo codsado.

Somali

Mediante solicitação, este documento encontra-se também disponível noutras línguas, num formato de impressão maior, em Braille e em áudio.

Portuguese

நீங்கள் கேட்டுக்கொண்டால், இந்த ஆவணம் வேறு மொழிகளிலும், பெரிய எழுத்து அச்சிலும் அல்லது ஒலிநாடா வடிவிலும் அளிக்கப்படும்.

Tamil

Este documento también está disponible y puede solicitarse en otros idiomas, letra grande, braille y formato de audio.

Spanish

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku, w alfabecie Braille'a lub w formie audio.

Polish

આ દસ્તાવેજ વિનંતી કરવાથી બીજી ભાષાઓ, મોટા છાપેલા અક્ષરો અથવા ઓડિઓ રચનામાં પણ મળી રહેશે.

Gujarati

Be belge istenirse, başka dillerde, iri harflerle, Braille ile (görme engelliler için) ve ses kasetinde de temin edilebilir.

Turkish