

Keeping Healthy during Ramadan

Preparation

- Consider existing health conditions (e.g. diabetes) and consult your healthcare provider for medication or diet adjustments
- Speak to a health professional before changing medication regimes for Ramadan.
- Reduce food intake
- Increase fluid intake
- Prepare meal plan, keeping it simple and balanced

Eating Healthily during Ramadan

- Divide your food into at least two meals, *Suhoor* (the pre-dawn meal) and *iftar* (the meal at dusk)
- At Suhoor, include light and slow digesting foods to have constant release of energy, e.g. pitta bread, salad, cereal (especially oats), toast and fluids with vitamins, e.g. fruit juice, fruit. Fibre-rich foods are also beneficial, e.g. bran, potatoes with the skin, apricots, prunes
- During iftar, dates and glass of milk traditionally break the fast. Dates provide a burst of energy, which fruit juices also provide. Drink plenty of water to rehydrate and avoid rich dishes

Beneficial foods

- Fruit and vegetables
- Bread, cereal and potatoes
- Meat, fish or alternatives
- Milk and dairy foods – including milk-based sweets and puddings
- High fibre, fruit, vegetable – slow energy release

Foods to avoid

- Deep fried foods, e.g. pakoras, samosas, fried dumplings
- Fatty foods, e.g. oily curries, greasy pastries
- High sugar foods, e.g. Indian sweets, cakes, chocolates
- Heavily processed foods, e.g. breakfast cereals, cheese, savoury snacks, such as crisps
- Caffeine-based drinks such as tea, coffee and cola as caffeine is a diuretic and stimulates faster water loss through urination.

Sleeping

- Develop a sleep routine
- Consider power naps

Exercise

- When you fast, bodies become less active, because of the reduced energy from food and so consider avoiding excessive exercise during fasting times.

General wellbeing

- Maintain cleanliness
- Cleanse before sleeping

Preparing for the exams:

(Copied from

<http://www.swansea.ac.uk/registry/academicguide/assessmentissues/religiousfastingduringexaminationperiods/>)

- Prepare the night before by mentally rehearsing the day ahead and note areas that may present difficulties.
- Work out how to overcome those difficulties but try to imagine it as an ordinary day.
- Ensure you are well rested - this may mean not attending 'tarawih' (night prayers in congregation).
- Ensure you have 'suhur' (a pre-dawn meal) that has slow-release energy food.
- If the exam is in the afternoon, take a short rest of 45 minutes around midday.
- If you feel lethargic or irritated, refresh your 'wudu' (ritual ablution).

Sources of information:

Ramadan Health Guide, Communities in Action and NHS,

<http://www.communitiesinaction.org/Ramadan%20Health%20and%20Spirituality%20Guide.pdf>

Healthy Ramadan, NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Healthynamadan/>

Healthy Ramadan Meal Plan, NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Healthynamadan/Pages/fastingdietplan.aspx>

Video

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/HealthyRamadan/Pages/healthynamadanhome.aspx>