



RAMADAN & HEALTHY EATING

Are you planning to fast during
Ramadan?

Ramadan Kareem!

Ramadan is a special time for Muslims, encompassing practices in spirituality, self-discipline, compassion and gratitude.

There are some people who are exempt from fasting during Ramadan as emphasized in religious scripture. This includes people with chronic illness with type 1 & type 2 diabetes, kidney disease, menstruating women, pregnant and breastfeeding women, children, individuals with acute health concerns, those who are sick, the elderly, and those who are travelling. If you decide to fast it is important to meet with your health provider.

We hope this guide will help you with healthy meal planning during Ramadan.

Healthy Eating & Ramadan Meal Planning ^{1 2 3 4}

Ramadan is one of the longest religious periods of fasting. It goes from sunrise to sundown and includes abstaining from water and food, and it includes meditation for spiritual wellness. It is acknowledged that nutrition is not the sole practice of Ramadan and therefore we respect religious and cultural practices that Muslims adhere to during this time.

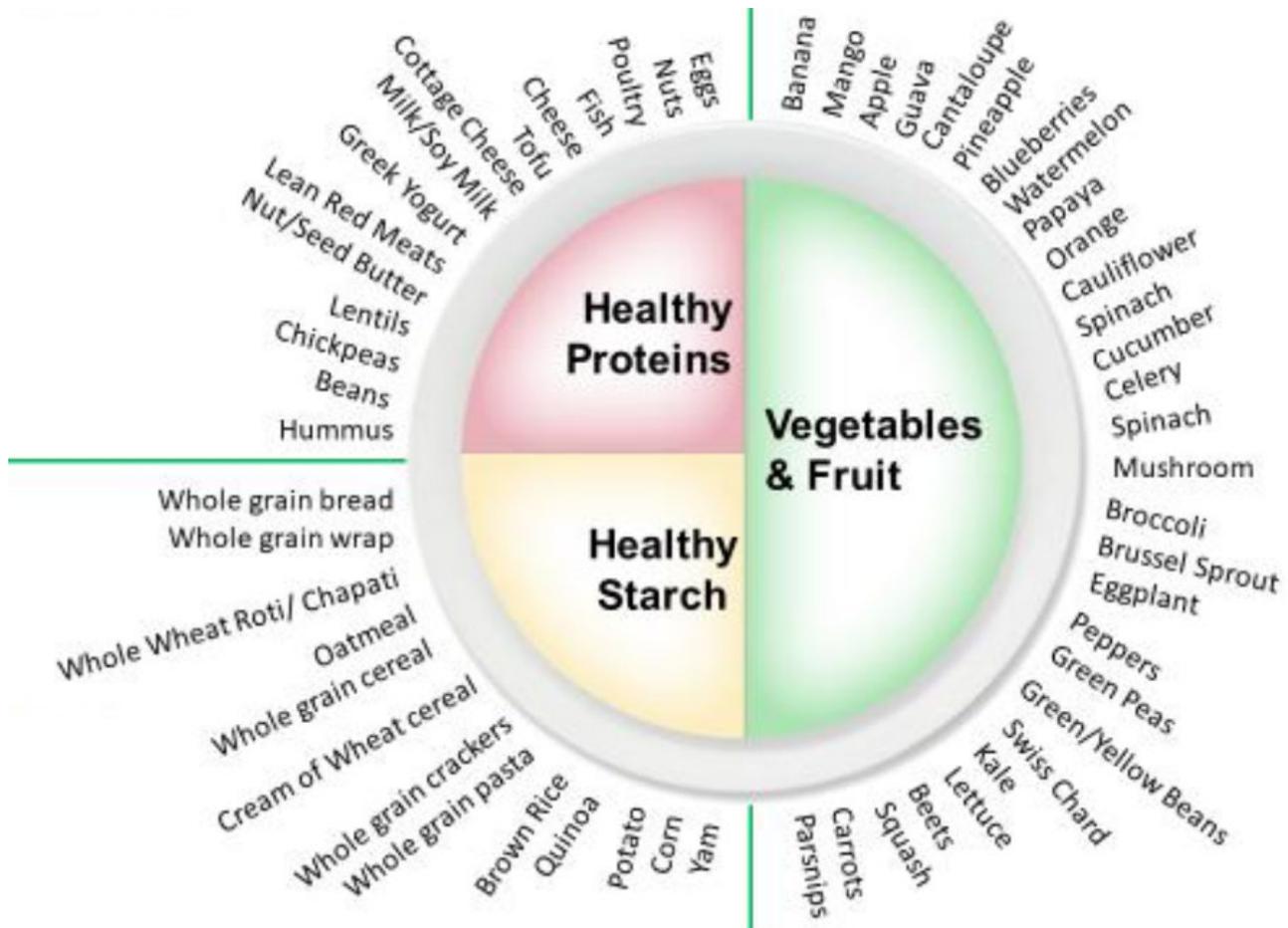
This guide is to help optimize your energy and wellbeing during Ramadan. Consider using this resource and meal planning template 1-2 months before Ramadan. Remember to consult with your medical team to check if you are fit to fast during this time of the year.

During Ramadan, mealtimes change based on sunrise and sunset. Nourish your body with the right healthy foods and calories in the evening to keep you energized for a full day of fasting. You can do this by **spacing your food intake between suhoor, iftar and if necessary, 1-2 snacks.**

At **Suhoor and Iftar time, plan more balance in your meals and snacks** to help you balance your blood sugar levels and keep you full and satisfied.

Choose meals with:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ of your plate non-starchy vegetables
- $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate protein
- $\frac{1}{4}$ of your plate whole grains or starchy vegetables
- Include protein and fiber with your snacks



Stay hydrated

- Drink 8-12 cups of fluid during the day. Reduce the number of caffeine & sugar-sweetened beverages and fruit juices you consume. Choose to eat fruit and vegetables because they contain lots of water.
- Signs and symptoms of mild dehydration may include:
 - Fatigue
 - Restlessness
 - Irritability
 - Headache
 - Constipation
 - High blood pressure
 - Decreased frequency of urination
 - Higher appetite for foods which may warn you to break your fast

Move your body

- Bowing, kneeling and rising during nightly prayers provide some physical activity.
- Different eating and sleeping patterns may change your usual physical activity. Try to do 15-30 minutes of moderate physical activity a day such as walking in a cool environment. Reduce highly intensive physical activity while fasting such as cardio and strength training.
- You may find it helpful to do some light activity just before Iftar, or 2-3 hours after Iftar, for no longer than 60 minutes.
- Stop activity if you feel dizziness, nausea, difficulty breathing or chest pain.

Rest or Energy Boosting Activity

Fasting can lead to lower energy levels and lack of concentration. Some people find planning intentional activity 1-2 hours before Iftar helps with energy and wellbeing. Consider other restful or energy boosting activities below:

- Short nap
- Meditation
- Taking a break
- Art or colouring
- Light walking
- Read Quran
- Journal
- Call a friend
- Shower/take a bath
- Prep or plan meals & snacks
- Pray
- Yoga/light activity

Managing Energy, Hunger & Appetite

Your eating patterns will change according to sunrise and sundown, which may impact mealtimes and your hunger and fullness levels. As you start your fast for Ramadan you may notice lower energy levels due to reduced food and fluid intake. As Ramadan is not a day long fast, mealtimes provide opportunity to replenish energy stores at predawn (Suhoor) and dusk (Iftar) meals.

When you start to have smaller meals during the first week of Ramadan you may feel more intense feelings of hunger and a higher appetite to overeat at Iftar. This can leave you feeling too full and make evening prayer times more difficult. To manage your intense hunger and appetite ensure to plan your meals and snacks ahead of time and try to eat slowly.

As you continue your fast you may find you are feeling fuller quicker and not able to eat and drink as much. Try planning smaller portions and consider tracking your food & fluid intake or increasing fruit and vegetable intake to stay hydrated.

Managing Digestive Symptoms

Ramadan is a time that includes many traditional foods that are high in sweets and fats. You may find yourself eating more of these traditional foods the first week of Ramadan and at Eid that may impact your digestion. Common symptoms that may also occur include **reflux, constipation and being overfull** after eating.

To manage digestive symptoms, you can:

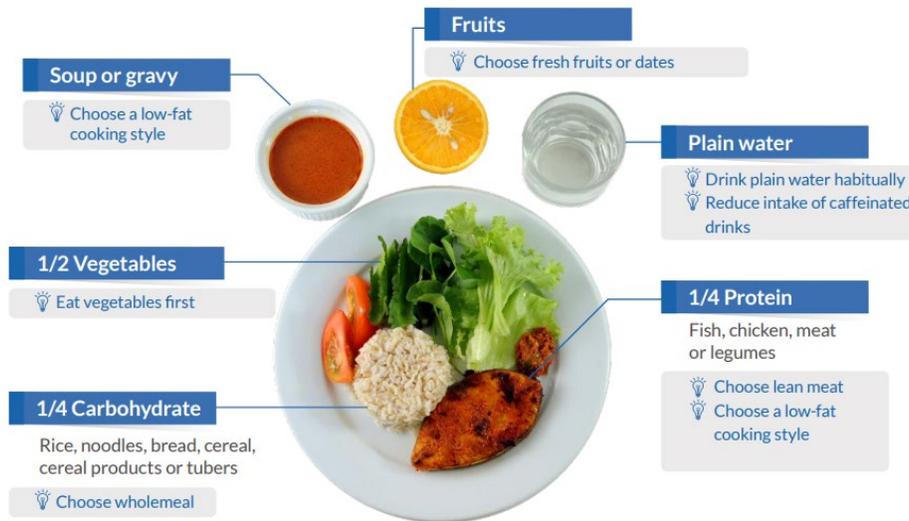
Reduce:	Try:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High fat items (e.g., deep fried foods, pakora, samosa, dumplings, parathas, curries, pastries, fried rice or potatoes, French fries, creams or whole milk) • Spicy foods, citrus fruits, juices, tomatoes, chocolate, onions and garlic if you're experiencing reflux. • Added sugars (e.g., ghulab, Jamun, rasgulla, balushahi, baklawa) • Caffeine • Carbonated drinks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plating smaller portions. • Take time to eat & chew your food. • Consider grilling, baking, measuring small amounts of oil during cooking. • Make chapatis with no oil. • Choose more milk-based sweets and pudding like rasmalai, barfee. • Elevate your pillow at bedtime if experiencing reflux at night or avoid laying down right away after meals. • Track your fluid intake. • Add more fiber from fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables, unsalted nuts and seeds or include some more beans and lentils. • Add daily light activity.

Schedule & Meal Guide ¹²³⁴

Suhoor is the pre-dawn meal and when balanced it can help to provide energy for many hours.

Avoid skipping Suhoor as it is a vital part of the day. If you have trouble waking for Suhoor, consider prepping the meal the day before. Choose foods that contain slower digesting carbohydrates (whole grains), non-starchy vegetables, protein, and healthy fats to help you feel fuller throughout the day. Consider taking suhoor as late as possible, especially when fasting for more than 10 hours.

To save time and energy, plan your meals 1-2 weeks before Ramadan. Consider choosing 3-4 breakfast ideas you can rotate through and prepare them during the daytime. Try batch cooking a few meals for the week to reduce cooking every day.



Reference 3:
Universiti Putra
Malaysia

Sample Mealtimes		Sample Meal Ideas
SUHOOR (Pre-dawn meal) Mealtime before fasting during the day Try eating 20 minutes before fasting	AM*	1-2 cups of water AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overnight oatmeal with milk, nuts and fruit OR Egg wrap (2 scrambled eggs whole wheat tortilla) with fruit or vegetables OR Hummus with pita bread, carrot and cucumber, OR ¾ cup daal, 1 whole wheat chapati with vegetables or fruit.
Fasting Time		
Rest Or Energy Boosting Activities	1-2 hours before IFTAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-minute nap, 15-minute walk, pre meals and snacks
Snack 1 (sundown) Mealtime before prayers	PM**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-2 cups of water AND 1-2 dates soaked in 1 cup milk or soup
Prayer		
IFTAR (Breaking fast meal) Mealtime after prayers	PM	1-2 cups of water AND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 cup salad, 1 cup rice and Chicken (Biryani) OR baked fish, 2 cup roasted vegetables and 1 potato OR 2 cup Salad, tandoori chicken, 1 cup brown rice OR Lasagna & stir-fried vegetables
Activity & Prayer	PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-2 cups of water 30-60 minutes light activity
Snack 2 (late suppertime) Mealtime after late night prayers	PM (20 minutes before bed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- 2 cups of water or milk or smoothie AND Crackers and peanut butter or cheese OR ¼ cup nuts and dried fruit OR ½ cup Greek yogurt and fruit OR Whole grain granola bar

*Depending on the time to commence fasting

**Depending on sundown time

Ramadan Meal Planner

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Suhoor	Protein*						
	Starch**						
	Vegetable/ Fruit						
Snack 1							
Iftar	Protein*						
	Starch**						
	Vegetable/ Fruit						
Snack 2							
Meal Prep for Tomorrow							

*Protein foods include meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, milk products & milk alternatives, tofu, legumes, nuts and seeds.

**Starch food include bread, grains and starchy vegetables such as potatoes, corn, yams, sweet potatoes.

Ramadan & Diabetes ²³⁴⁵⁶

If you are planning to fast during Ramadan and you have diabetes, follow these steps to stay healthy:

1. Meet with your doctor, dietitian and healthcare team to discuss a plan for potential medication adjustments due to meal timing and eating patterns changes
2. Have a glucose meter and know when & how to use it. Checking your blood sugar does not break your fast.
3. Know what actions to take if you have to break your fast or treat high and low blood sugars
4. Stay well-hydrated

Schedule a Ramadan preparation visit with your healthcare provider and diabetes care team 1-3 months before Ramadan. After Ramadan book a follow up to discuss any concerns or future goals for fasting.

Risks of fasting

Fasting may be done safely by some while others may have risks to keep in mind. **Check your blood sugar a few times throughout the day to learn about your new blood sugar patterns**, especially if you are on insulin, metformin, GLP-1 receptor agonists, insulin secretagogues or SGLT2 inhibitors.

Problem	Signs & Symptoms	Treatment
High blood sugar (Hyperglycemia)	Blood sugars levels over 11 mmol/L or feel very thirsty, very hungry, peeing more or blurry vision.	Follow the treatment recommended by your health-care provider recommendations as you may need to take insulin or adjust medication, your meal plan or physical activity.
Low blood sugar (Hypoglycemia)	Blood sugars levels under 4 mmol/L or feel shaky, sweaty, weak, fast heartbeat, confusion.	<p>Treat with 15 grams of fast-acting carbohydrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 g of glucose in glucose tablets • 15 ml (1 TBSP) or 3 packets of sugar dissolved in water • 150 ml (2/3 cup) of juice or regular soft drink • Six LifeSavers® (one = 2.5 grams of carbohydrate) • 15 ml (1 TBSP) of honey <p>Check blood sugar after 15minutes of treatment. If your blood sugar is above 4 mmol/L and your next meal is over one hour away, eat a snack with 15 grams of carbohydrate and a protein (see next page)</p>
Diabetes Ketoacidosis - Type 1 Diabetes	Blood sugar levels over 14 mmol/L before meals , or have nausea, vomiting, weakness, stomach pain, very thirsty, peeing more, drowsy, shallow breathing with a fruity smell.	<p>See your doctor.</p> <p>Check for ketones by performing a urine ketone test or blood ketone test. If blood ketone test is greater than 0.6mmol/L rapid insulin may be needed.</p>

If these signs and symptoms occur, take steps to treat them, break your fast and seek medical attention immediately. Consider being exempt from fasting if your risk for these symptoms is high.

Selecting a Healthy Snacks

Choose snacks with 1 protein and 1 Carbohydrate choice (15g)

Protein foods include: meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, milk products & milk alternatives, tofu, legumes, nuts and seeds.

Examples of foods containing 1 carbohydrate choice (15 g)⁷

Grains	Fruit	Starchy Vegetables:	Milk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice (30g) Whole grain bread, bun • 1 (44g) chapati, roti, • ½ large (12 inch) injera (teff or buckwheat) • ½ cup pasta or spaghetti • ¾ cup oatmeal or hot cereal • 1 medium potato • 1/3 cup brown rice • ¼ cup muesli • 3 pieces crackers • ½ cup cereal, cold: bran cereals • 1 tortilla or pita bread whole grain, ½ (6 inch or 15 cm) or ½ (10 inches or 25 cm) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 small dried apricots • 1 medium apple, mango, oranges, pear, peach • 1 small or ½ large banana • 3 small dates • ½ cup green peas • ½ cup applesauce, unsweetened • 2 cup blackberries, raspberries, strawberries • 1 cup blueberries • 15 cherries • 15 grapes • 2 medium kiwi, plum mandarin orange or tangerine • 1 cup melon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup beans, lentils, split peas dried and cooked, or canned • ½ cup corn, ½ cup • 1 cup shitake mushrooms cooked • ¾ cup parsnips, • 1 cup green peas • ⅔ cup hummus • ½ cup (84 g) medium potato boiled, baked or mashed potatoes • ¾ cup mashed squash: acorn, butternut, Hubbard • ⅓ cup sweet potato • ½ cup yam baked and cubed* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup milk or fortified soy beverage (unsweetened) • ½ cup evaporated milk • ¾ cup yogurt, plain or no added sugar

*Cooked portions

Food, Blood Glucose and Insulin Dose Log

Date	Blood Sugar	Suhoor Meal	Other Daily Blood Sugars	Blood Sugar	Iftar Meal	Other Daily Blood Sugars
	Before Suhoor:			Before Iftar:		
	Time:			Time:		
	Insulin:			Insulin:		
	Time:			Time:		
	2-hours after:			2-hours after:		
Date	Blood Sugar	Suhoor Meal	Other Daily Blood Sugars	Blood Sugar	Iftar Meal	Other Daily Blood Sugars
	Before Suhoor:			Before Iftar:		
	Time:			Time:		
	Insulin:			Insulin:		
	Time:			Time:		
	2-hours after:			2-hours after:		
Date	Blood Sugar	Suhoor Meal	Other Daily Blood Sugars	Blood Sugar	Iftar Meal	Other Daily Blood Sugars
	Before Suhoor:			Before Iftar:		
	Time:			Time:		
	Insulin:			Insulin:		
	Time:			Time:		
	2-hours after:			2-hours after:		

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