



DIABETES AND RAMADAN GUIDANCE FOR IMAMS

The guidance has been written in partnership with the British Islamic Medical Association for Imams to inform worshippers during a Khutbah about fasting safely if you live with diabetes

“ Introduction

Today I would like to talk about diabetes and fasting, ahead of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Diabetes is when the amount of glucose (sugar) in your blood is too high because the body cannot use it properly. This is because your body doesn't produce any or not enough insulin, or the insulin produced doesn't work properly.

We are all looking forward to the month of Ramadan and participating in the extracts of worship, but if you have diabetes, and are planning on fasting then you need to be aware that if you are on insulin or certain types of tablets, then long fasts can put you at higher risk of hypoglycaemia (low glucose levels).

You may also develop high blood sugar levels during a fast if you miss your usual prescribed medication, if you have larger portions of starchy or sugary foods, if you are less physically active than normal or if you become unwell. High blood sugars can increase your risk of dehydration which can make you feel dizzy and tired.

If you have type 1 diabetes (or in rare cases if you have type 2), without medical advice this could lead to diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) – a serious condition requiring hospital treatment.

Therefore, if you have diabetes and are planning to fast, you need to take good care of yourself throughout this period, and it is important that you prepare for it beforehand, including making sure that you speak to your healthcare team.



Remember, we are fasting to please Allah, and while a degree of hardship is expected, Allah does not wish anyone who is fasting to harm themselves in the process.

Can you fast if you have diabetes?

Some people can be exempt from fasting for health reasons, this can include people with diabetes. Your risk of fasting will depend on:

- The type of diabetes you are living with.
- If you are currently keeping your average blood sugar level (HbA1c) in a healthy range for you.
- The type of medication you use to manage your diabetes.
- If you take medications that put you at risk of **hypoglycaemia**, such as sulphonylureas and insulin.
- If you're living with **diabetes complications** such as poor vision, nerve damage, heart or kidney disease. There is a risk that fasting could make these health conditions worse.
- Even if you think that you are feeling ok, and well enough to fast, please speak to your GP or diabetes nurse, as soon as possible if you are planning to fast.

Remember:

- If you cannot fast – some or all of the fasts in Ramadan – you may be able to make up any fasts at another time of the year when your health may be better or when the fasts are shorter and more manageable such as in the winter.
- Discuss this with your healthcare team.
- If it is not possible to fast at all, then feeding the poor or offering charity could be an alternative. Come and speak to me or your local Imam about this.

If you do fast:

- If you have been given a glucose meter, check your blood glucose levels more often, do not forget to check your sugars before you drive if you are on insulin or certain other medications, as you would do when not fasting. Checking blood sugars doesn't break your fast.
- Continue a varied and balanced diet.
- Try not to eat excessively at Suhoor and Iftar and be sensible on sugary and fatty foods
- When you break the fast, drink water and sugar free drinks and less tea and coffee to avoid dehydration.



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DiABETES UK
KNOW DIABETES. FIGHT DIABETES.

Always carry hypo treatment with you.

- Try to fast a couple of days in the month of Shabaan to see if it's safe for you to do so. Inform your doctor or nurse that you intend to do this, as this will aid them with helping you have a safe Ramadan and ensure shorter periods of fasting are also done safely.

If you would like more information you can contact:

Information available in other languages, videos and online tools: Diabetes UK website
www.diabetes.org.uk/ramadan

Diabetes UK Careline (with a translation service): 0345 123 2399*

*Calls may be recorded for training purposes. ”