

Changes to Diabetic Diet

Your diet should normally be based on the following guidelines:

- Regular meals based on starchy foods e.g. rice, chapati, bread, cereals
- Avoid adding sugar to foods
- Choosing sugar-free drinks
- Lower fat intake
- Five servings of fruits and vegetables each day

During Ramadhan dietary habits change. Only 2 meals a day are eaten, Sehri (early morning meal) and Iftar (break of fast after sunset). There are longer gaps between meals; greater amounts of foods and different types of foods are eaten. In Ramadhan you may get large swings in your blood sugar levels.

In order to help control blood sugars follow these dietary guidelines during Ramadhan:

- Limit the amount of sweet foods taken at Iftar. Have small amounts of foods such as laddoo, jilabi, and burfi.
- Fill up on starchy foods such as basmati rice and chapati.
- Include fruits, vegetables, dhal and yoghurt in your meals at Iftar and Sehri.
- Try to have the meal at Sehri just before sunrise, not at midnight. This will spread out your energy intake more evenly and result in more balanced blood sugars when fasting.
- All drinks should be sugar-free. Choose sugar-free types of fizzy drinks and cordials. Avoid adding sugar to drinks, use a sweetener where needed, e.g. Canderel/Sweetex
- Have 1-2 glasses of fruit juice/day. Choose sugar-free drinks or water to quench your thirst.
- Limit fried foods such as paratha, samosas, chevda and bombay mix. Measure the amount of oil used in cooking (use 1-2 tablespoons for a 4 person dish)

Changes to Diabetic Treatment

Diet only

People controlled by diet alone may fast.

Diet and Tablets

If you take tablets for your diabetes you may fast but the timing of your tablets will change. It is essential to take your tablets during Ramadhan as they are needed to even out your blood sugars and keep you feeling well.

- If you normally take your tablet in the morning only, take the same dose at Iftar instead.
- If you normally take your tablets twice a day, take your morning dose at Iftar and take half your normal evening dose at Sehri.
- If you normally take your tablets three times a day, consult your diabetes doctor as the dose and timing will have to be changed for Ramadhan.

Diet and Insulin

If you are treated with insulin you will need to be very careful if you decide to fast.

1. Your insulin doses will need to be changed. Usually your normal doses are swapped over. e.g. take your normal morning dose at Iftar, and your normal evening dose at Sehri.
2. Contact the diabetes doctor
3. In order to avoid low blood sugar, rest as much as possible during the day.

Do not stop your insulin during Ramadhan

Monitoring during Ramadhan

During Ramadhan your blood sugars may swing from very high to very low.

You need to know the signs and symptoms of low blood sugar. These include weakness, sweating, trembling, tingling in the lips and fingers, slurred speech, bad temper, hunger, sleepiness.

If your blood sugar goes below 3.5, or if you feel any of these symptoms, you should break your fast and take a sweet drink, followed by a starchy food such as chapati or bread.

If you are on tablets or insulin, seek advice from your doctor immediately if your blood sugar goes low.

Your blood sugar may go low for many reasons during Ramadhan.

It may be wise to rest during the day when you are fasting and be more active at night after you have eaten. This will help to balance your blood sugar levels.

Diabetes and Ramadhan

Guidelines for Fasting Safely During The Holy Month

Fasting during Ramadhan is one of the five pillars of Islam.

Fasting is obligatory for all healthy adult Muslims. Exemption from fasting is granted to certain people, including children under twelve, the sick, the elderly, pregnant and breast-feeding women and travellers.

During Ramadhan your treatment for diabetes will change because you are fasting.

This leaflet will provide you with information on how your treatment will change.

You will also need to speak with your doctor before you change your medication or insulin doses.

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