

Keeping Well Nourished and Healthy during Ramadan – key information for older adults

The holy month of Ramadan is a great opportunity to focus on a balanced and healthy diet as fasting can help you manage your eating habits.

The changes that occur in response to fasting depend on the length of the continuous fast. During the fast the body will use glucose energy first, then once this is used up it uses fat. Using fat for energy helps weight loss, better control of diabetes and reduced blood pressure.

After, prolonged fasting of days and weeks the body will use protein for energy which involves the breakdown of muscle, which is why some people become weak and look thin.

It is important that vulnerable members of the community are supported to stay well-nourished and hydrated during Ramadan.

Balanced food and drink intake are important between fasts to prevent muscle breakdown. It is better to avoid deep fried foods and opt for healthy wholegrains. Meals should contain plenty of starchy carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables and some fats and proteins. It is important to have enough fibre as fasting can lead to constipation so wholemeal starchy carbohydrates such as bread, pasta, rice, cereals and fruits and vegetables.

If someone you know is fasting and has lost weight without meaning to, they may need to add extra calories to their diet. For example, adding milk powder to full fat milk and adding cream to curries and including milk-based sweets and puddings such as Rasmalai and Barfee.

Staying Hydrated

It is important to make sure you are rehydrated before fasting to prevent dehydration, constipation and bloating.

Adults need 6-8 glasses/cups of fluid each day which may be difficult during shorter periods of time. In the warmer weather you may require more fluid due to increased losses through sweating.

The best fluid to drink is water but tea, coffee, milk and juice all count. It is best to avoid fizzy drinks, as they may aggravate digestive symptoms and lead to tooth decay.

Some foods are hydrating such as fruit, jellies, custards, yoghurt and soups.

For more information:

Muslim Council of Britain

The Muslim Council of Britain has issued the following guidance on Covid-19 and Ramadan:

[Ramadan at home](#)

[Public health matters blog from gov.uk](#)

[Stay at home for Ramadan](#)