



# Ramadan and diabetes

Things to think about before and during fasting

This leaflet has been developed by the Novo Nordisk Support Team for people living with type-2 diabetes.







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Ramadan is a deeply spiritual and sacred time. In this leaflet, you'll find information on how to observe Ramadan, alternatives to fasting, and healthy food choices for suhoor and iftar.

**For more information about Novo Nordisk, please visit [www.novonordisk.co.uk](http://www.novonordisk.co.uk).**

# Before Ramadan

## What are the risks of fasting?

Ramadan isn't about choosing between your health and your religion. It is possible to fast, but there are some risks you should be aware of.

### **Glucose levels too low (hypoglycaemia):**

Look out for shaking, sweating, anxiety or heart palpitations.

### **Glucose levels too high (hyperglycaemia):**

More likely to happen after iftar. Check for headaches, extreme tiredness and going to the toilet more often.

### **Dehydration:**

It's important to replenish yourself with plenty of fluids at suhoor and iftar.

## Alternatives to Sawm

Islam makes exceptions for the elderly, young, ill, or pregnant. If your health is affected by fasting, there are alternatives that are still seen as holy and acceptable.

### **Give to charity:**

Provide food for the poor on each day of Ramadan.

### **Fast later:**

If you can't fast this Ramadan, you can make up the days later in the year

### **Speak to your GP:**

Before Ramadan, talk to your doctor about how to fast.



### **Think rehydration:**

You don't have to drink water to rehydrate. Fruit, vegetables, (low salt) soup and (zero-sugar, caffeine free) fizzy drinks do the trick too!



**Rain check:**

You may be able to make up your fast in the winter months when days are shorter.



# During Ramadan

## Healthy food choices

During Ramadan, it's important to make healthy choices at suhoor and iftar. The right food and drink will help you sustain your fast while keeping your blood glucose levels stable.

### Suhoor

#### Good:

Slow release foods like porridge, lentils chapatti, dhal, basmati rice and beans.

#### Bad:

Foods high in saturated fat like ghee, samosas and pakoras.

### Iftar

#### Good:

Sensible quantities and low-fat food like nuts, dates, fruit and soup. Remember lots of fluids!

#### Bad:

Sweets and fatty foods, anything fried.

## Looking after your body

Here are some other things to consider as you get ready for Ramadan.

### Continue to monitor your blood glucose levels:

This does not count as breaking fast.

### Sit out of Taraweeh:

Taraweeh is not obligatory. It's OK to sit out.

### Tell someone you're fasting:

Friends, teachers and/or colleagues should be told what to do if you feel unwell. For full details on how to treat a hypo, visit the Diabetes UK website.

### Carry a glucose tablet and water:

If you feel dizzy or sick, you must break fast. Always listen to your body.



### Keep it light:

Although you may be hungry, avoid over-eating at iftar. This could lead to a spike in your blood glucose levels.



## Other resources

Where can I get more information?

While observing Ramadan is a deep show of faith, the Qur'an states you should not bring harm to yourself. This leaflet is designed to help you fast, but there's lots more information out there.

**For more information, please don't hesitate to get in touch with your GP or Diabetes Specialist Nurse, or visit the Diabetes UK website.**

This information was developed for you by the **Novo Nordisk Support Team**. Novo Nordisk has been dedicated to diabetes care for more than 90 years. We support people living with diabetes all over the world, producing materials like this to ensure you have the information you need to make informed decisions. We're committed to being by your side throughout your journey with diabetes..

**For more information about Novo Nordisk, please visit  
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