



Welcome to Ramadan, Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar (It is based on the monthly moon cycle which can be 28-30 days so it is always changing in relation to the western calendar), and lasts either 29 or 30 days, depending on when the new crescent moon is, or should be, visible. It is a period of fasting and spiritual growth, and is one of the five “pillars” of Islam.

Now, you many have some questions.

Do I have to fast while I am pregnant?

Islamic law gives permission to pregnant and breastfeeding people to opt out of fasting if they fear that it will harm their health or the health of the baby.

What happens if I miss days of fasting?

Missed days can be made up at a later date, or if this isn't possible, a 'fidyah' can be paid by providing food for someone in need for every missed day of fasting.

How can I make my decision to fast or not to fast?

Some pregnant Muslim people decide to fast during Ramadan. This is a very personal decision and will depend on your personal circumstances such as the stage of pregnancy, how you are feeling and if you have experienced any problems so far in your pregnancy. Fasting should be discussed with your midwife or doctor. Keep in mind that pregnant people with underlying health conditions should avoid fasting in order to protect themselves and their unborn babies from any further unwanted complications.

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If I decide to fast, what should I know?

1. Plan ahead.
2. At iftar (sunset, the time you break the fast), choose foods that quickly turn to sugar to give you energy right away, like dates, figs, yoghurt, and fruits. Follow the quick calories by a variety of healthy foods and a balanced diet.
3. At suhoor (the last food before dawn), eat foods that keep you fuller longer. Complex carbohydrates and high-fibre foods, like oatmeal and sweet potatoes, will stave off hunger. Add protein foods, like meat and lentils, and healthy fats, like nuts and peanut butter, to keep you fuller even longer.
4. Drink sufficient amounts of water, between eight to twelve cups per day to avoid dehydration. Choose water, milk, and 100% fruit juice. Keep water with you to sip throughout the night.
5. Pace your meals between iftar and suhoor. It is important not to under-eat or over-eat. Be aware when you are starting to get hungry, and eat a snack.
6. If you are doing more prayers during the night time, it is a good idea to have naps in the daytime.
7. Stay away from fatty or fried foods to avoid heartburn and excessive weight gain.
8. Avoid consuming too many salty foods, especially first thing in the morning, as this may make you feel even more thirsty.
9. Continue to take your prenatal vitamins with water every day in the non-fasting hours.

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Always Keep in Mind

1. Do some kind of physical activity for half an hour every day.
2. If you have decided to fast during Ramadan and then begin to feel unwell, or if there is a decrease in fetal movement, it is important to break your fast. If there is no improvement, it is vital to contact your midwife or doctor as soon as possible.
3. Remember how you count the fetal movements. Count your baby's movements once a day. You should feel 6 or more movements in 2 hours.

Resources

- <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/frm-20589.pdf>
- <https://www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/nutritionforpregnancy/ramadanpregnancy.html>
- <https://www.eshospital.com/0pregnancy-and-fasting-tips/>
- <https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-018-2048-y>
- <https://www.qatarliving.com/forum/news/posts/hmc-advises-pregnant-breastfeeding-women-take-precautions-while-fasting-during>
- <https://www.qu.edu.qa/health-clinic/your-health/healthy-ramadan/fasting-during-pregnancy>

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