

# Ramadan Tips for Fasting

The purpose of fasting in Islam is to gain self-restraint, arouse spiritual consciousness, and better understand the plight of the poor, hungry, and sick. Islam has allowed many categories of people to be exempted from fasting, including individuals with chronic illnesses or whose acute illness can be adversely affected by fasting.

**Key considerations during the fasting period:  
Hydration • Nutrition • Compliance with your treatment**

## Hydration

**Keep yourself hydrated** with water and natural drinks like coconut water if you can tolerate it. Avoid sugary drinks as they can lead to diarrhea.

## Nutrition

Some people prep before Ramadan. “I fast for half a day or more if I can, to try and get my body acclimated to fasting. I try to do this 2–3 times a week. And then I try to do one full day of fasting. I like to use the analogy of a marathon. You don’t just show up and run a marathon, it usually involves preparation and discipline.”

GI symptoms like bloating, indigestion and often heartburn may get worse during fasting. Avoid unhealthy eating habits, excessive eating, and large meals. **Pace yourself!** Create a weekly meal plan with lots of meal ideas. Before Ramadan, test and try different recipes that are high in nutrients and energy.

## Medications

**Don’t skip medications!** During fasting it is important to be compliant with your medications. Seek advice from your medical team if your oral medications can be adjusted to once or twice daily. Keep your infusion appointments and maintain your testing schedule if it cannot be delayed.

## What if I cannot fast?

If you cannot fast due to medical reasons—ostomy with high volume output (diarrhea), ongoing weight loss, active inflammation, or your medications must be taken at different times of the day or with food—don’t let this break you. **In place of fasting, you can help feed the poor and deserving by making charitable donations through available legal channels and resources.** This is another way to reap the rewards of Ramadan.

Be realistic with your schedule and commitments during Ramadan. This month is really about reflection, spirituality, and learning and applying the tenets of our faith. **It is important to listen to your body and make sure that you take care of it!** The acts in Ramadan are enhanced by intention. Let’s intend to keep our physical and mental health in check and meet ourselves where we happen to be on any given day, so we can achieve the spiritual gains during the blessed month.

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