

Ramadan 2020 & Covid-19



“While there is no doubt that Ramadan will be different this year, the key values of kindness, respect for others and charitable giving have never been more important - Ramadan Mubarak to all those observing this holy month”

Dr Michael Seeraj, CACT Head of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

“Ramadan is a time for prayer, contemplation, self-sacrifice and charity - all of these qualities are key to supporting our collective effort in tackling this pandemic... Let us not forget the deeply spiritual reminders this pandemic brings; unite, pull together and leave nobody behind”

Osman Dar, Consultant in Global Health at Public Health England, 2020

#RamadanAtHome

**Stay Home
Protect the NHS
Save Lives**

The holy month of Ramadan will be followed by Muslims all over the world, from Thursday 23 April to Saturday 23 May. For many Muslims, Ramadan is the most important and spiritual time of the year, a time for reflection and prayer, highlighting the importance of empathy, compassion and an understanding of those who are less fortunate.

Ramadan has traditionally been marked by social and religious gatherings, and is a period of daily fasting (not eating or drinking), longer prayers (often at mosques), and acts of charity for those in need. Meals are only taken at the start and end of the day, before dawn (during 'suhour') or after sunset (during 'iftar') where families and friends gather to 'break' their fast together. The obligation of fasting does not apply to those with ill health or long-term health conditions, or who are pregnant, elderly, or travelling. These traditional and religious practices are regularly observed throughout the month of Ramadan.

“Ramadan for me is a time to reflect, and remember the values that faith teaches about compassion and thinking of others, and showing every day acts of kindness - which, as always, is very important”

Ali Azam, CACT Research and Funding Officer.

However, Ramadan falls as the Covid-19 pandemic continues, and this means a very different experience this year. Keeping safe, and protecting everyone's health and wellbeing during Ramadan will mean adapting usual religious and cultural practices. This is particularly important for safeguarding vulnerable people, such as those with underlying health conditions, as well as family, friends and carers of those who are vulnerable.

In line with public health guidelines, it is therefore crucial to ensure we all continue to adhere to the current UK Government advice for social distancing and self-isolation that have been implemented due to Covid-19 (Department for Health & Social Care, 2020). Physical distancing measures include the closure of places of worship, the monitoring of public gatherings, and other restrictions on movement.

These measures are critical, to control the spread of Covid-19. Both the Muslim Council of Britain and the British Board of Scholars and Imams advise to “pray from home and not congregate together for worship” (NHS, 2020).

Despite people being physically apart, religious practices can still be observed. Faith Leaders will be able to advise on the many ways to stay connected. For example, technology can be used to stay in touch and connected with family, friends, and the wider religious community. Video, social media and other online platforms can provide valuable connections.

Dr Habib Naqvi, NHS Deputy Director Workforce Race Equality Standard, said:

“The whole of the UK is continuing to make huge efforts and sacrifices to delay the spread of the coronavirus... This is another critical period where communities should make use of online platforms and alternative approaches to communicate with family and friends and stick with government regarding social distancing” (NHS, 2020)

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) are also urging Muslims to use social media and other online platforms, and have published guidelines on how to celebrate Ramadan under the coronavirus lockdown.

Harun Khan, Secretary General of The Muslim Council of Britain, emphasises:

“The message for this Ramadan is clear: fast and pray at home and share Ramadan digitally. This is the way to help save lives”

To help observe **#RamadanAtHome**, the MCB is hosting a number of social and spiritual events on their social media channels.

For further information and advice:

- **NHS**
<https://people.nhs.uk/guides/covid-19-and-ramadan/steps/at-a-glance-ramadan-2/>
- **Public Health England**
<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2020/04/22/stay-at-home-for-ramadan/>
- **The British Board of Scholars and Imams**
<http://www.bbsi.org.uk/>
- **The Muslim Council of Britain**
<https://mcb.org.uk/resources/ramadan/>
- **Department for Health & Social Care**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-leaflet/coronavirus-stay-at-home-protect-the-nhs-save-lives-web-version>

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Ramadan Mubarak



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