

# Nutrition Recommendations for Ramadan

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During the month of Ramadan, a person's eating pattern endures a major change. Proper nutrition is very important to help prevent any health problems that may arise from inappropriate food choices or as a consequence of over-eating. There are no special dietary rules for Ramadan, just a balanced healthy approach.

Here's a list of tips to help get you started on a healthier Ramadan:

## 1. Let your predawn meal be the largest one!

Include complex carbohydrates to give you sustainable energy throughout the long fasting hours and to give you healthy bowels.

Carbohydrates such as:

- Multigrain and wholemeal breads
- All bran, porridge, oats
- Basmati rice
- Lentils and other legumes
- Semolina.

Include protein rich foods such as meat, chicken, fish, dairy and legumes to help maintain your muscle mass and metabolism. For example:

- Cooked lean meat or chicken or fish
- Eggs
- A handful of nuts or seeds
- A cup of lentils/beans.

## 2. Break your fast with a 'sunset snack' of 2-3 dates, a cup of water and a bowl of soup. This is a Prophetic tradition and will provide an instant boost of sugar and hydration to help settle your hunger and prevent overeating at the main meal.

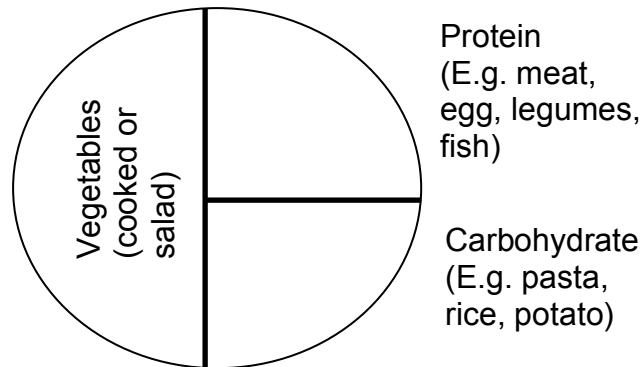
## 3. Give yourself at least 10 minutes between the sunset snack and your dinner meal; the food is not going to run away!

## 4. Eat slowly and chew very well to help pace yourself.

## 5. Hydration, hydration, hydration!

A good technique to help you remember your fluids is to "drink 2 by the hour" – meaning 2 cups of water (250 ml = 1 cup). From sunset (~ 5 pm) to 10 pm, you would have consumed 2.5 L of fluid keeping you very well hydrated.

6. The healthy plate model should be applied to your dinner meal to help you maintain a good balance of carbohydrates, protein and vegetables.



7. Two hours after the dinner meal, it is likely you will feel hungry. It is important you initially appease your hunger with a healthy choice prior to indulging in the traditional sweets. Healthy choices could be:

- A 100-200g of low fat yoghurt
- A wholegrain salad/cheese/tuna sandwich
- 1-2 pieces of fresh fruit
- A cup of low fat milk
- A handful of nuts
- Popcorn (unsalted and unbuttered)
- Fresh fruit juice
- Vita-brit biscuits with low fat cheese
- Hummus dip with vegetable sticks.

8. Avoid as much as possible:

- Fried foods which can make you feel sluggish and fatigued
- Salt and high salt foods
- Foods high in refined sugars, which do not provide sustainable energy.

9. If you have a chronic disease and/or regularly take medication it is very important you discuss your Ramadan plans 1-2 months before with your doctor.

Your Ramadan Health Goals:

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Dietitian \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_