**Advice on Observing Ramadan for Healthcare Professionals and Patients with Diabetes during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

With the recent onset of Ramadan, we thought it would be useful to share this short reference guide of information sources for patients and healthcare professionals around actions to be taken or points to be considered when observing Ramadan during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Resource for clinicians with patients considering fasting

The British Islamic Medical Association (BIMA) has undertaken a rapid evidence review to explore the effect of observing the fast of Ramadan in patients with common health conditions. Their advice on fasting with co-morbidities in the presence of COVID-19 can be accessed via the British Society of Gastroenterology [website](https://www.bsg.org.uk/covid-19-advice/rapid-evidence-review-on-fasting-in-ramadan/).

Advice relating to healthcare workers

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) has produced a helpful [Ramadan Health factsheet 2020](https://mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/MCB_Ramadan-Health-Factsheet-2020.pdf) that outlines that healthcare staff, who are required to provide care to COVID-19 patients, are exempt from fasting due to the risk of dehydration and making clinical errors when wearing PPE for long shifts.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have also produced a [COVID-19 and Ramadan Guide](https://people.nhs.uk/guides/covid-19-and-ramadan/) on how to support staff who may be fasting.

This factsheet also serves as a useful resource for healthcare staff in terms of raising awareness of potential implications for people observing Ramadan and various aspects of healthcare.

General advice for clinicians managing patients with diabetes

Check and confirm that patients:

* Have sufficient insulin/oral hypoglycaemic medicines.
* On medications that have a risk of hypoglycaemia, have sufficient blood glucose monitoring test strips/ sensors and, if applicable, ketone strips to support regular monitoring of their blood glucose and ketones as clinically appropriate.
* Are aware of the recommended sick day rules, where applicable. Details on sick day rules in diabetes and medications to stop when unwell are available on [NHSE and NHSI London’s website](https://www.england.nhs.uk/london/london-clinical-networks/our-networks/diabetes/diabetes-covid-19-key-information/).
* Under the care of a diabetes specialist team, have the relevant emergency contact numbers.

Advice for managing patients with diabetes and suspected COVID-19 Infection[3](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dme.14312)

* If a patient with diabetes develops COVID-19 related symptoms, they should be advised to break from fasting until symptoms have completely subsided or as advised by a clinician.
* Ensure patients maintain adequate fluid intake to avoid dehydration and undertake regular blood monitoring in keeping with their treatment modality and severity of COVID symptoms.
* If unwell requiring admission consider stopping metformin (if evidence of AKI), SGLT2 inhibitors and GLP-1 receptor agonists. Continue other oral hypoglycaemic medicines and insulin.
* If symptoms of dehydration, consider stopping SGLT2s.

Advice for patients on fasting for Ramadan is also available for patients on the Diabetes UK website. (Includes factsheets on fasting in Arabic, Bengali and Urdu).

References:

1. Ramadan Rapid Review & Recommendations; The British Islamic Medical Association (BIMA) April 2020
2. [Ramadan Health factsheet 2020](https://mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/MCB_Ramadan-Health-Factsheet-2020.pdf) The Muslim Council of Great Britain (MCB); accessed 24 April 2020
3. COVID-19 and Ramadan Guide [NHS People](https://people.nhs.uk/guides/covid-19-and-ramadan/); accessed 27 April 2020
4. Managing People with Diabetes Fasting for Ramadan during the COVID‐19 Pandemic: A South Asian Health Foundation Update; S. Hanif et al. Diabetic Medicine, First published: 25 April 2020 [https://doi.org/10.1111/dme.14312 accessed 27 April 2020](https://doi.org/10.1111/dme.14312%20accessed%2027%20April%202020)
5. Diabetes COVID-19 Key Information; [NHSE and NHSI London](https://www.england.nhs.uk/london/london-clinical-networks/our-networks/diabetes/diabetes-covid-19-key-information/) accessed 24 April 2020
6. Ramadan and Diabetes; [Diabetes UK](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/guide-to-diabetes/managing-your-diabetes/ramadan); accessed 24 April 2020