

Important advice during fasting:

- If you wish to fast during Ramadan it is advised that you undertake a medical assessment and educational counseling – please visit your doctor
- Delay the Sahour meal to be taken just before Imssak
- Drink adequate amounts of water and liquids between Iftar and Sahour
- Avoid sleeping between afternoon prayers and Maghrib prayers
- Reduce your physical activity during fasting hours –in particular before Iftar
- Stop fasting if you feel symptoms of hypoglycemia (fall of blood sugar)

When you should break your fast:

- If you are hypoglycemic – blood sugar <60 mg/dl (3.3 mmol/l)
- If your blood sugar reaches <70 mg/dl (3.9 mmol/l) in the first few hours after the start of your fast – especially if insulin or oral tablets are taken pre-dawn
- If your blood sugar exceeds 300mg/dl (16.7 mmol/l)
- If you are sick

Can I practice sports during fasting?

Diabetics are advised to avoid excessive physical activity while fasting, however, normal levels of physical activity may be maintained.



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Fasting and Diabetes

It is advised that you seek your doctor's advice about whether or not to fast. There are certain cases of diabetes which can tolerate, under specific instructions, safe fasting and others which may result in serious health complications.

Possible complications for fasting diabetics

1. Hypoglycemia (fall of blood sugar to below normal levels – less than 70mg/dl (3.9 mmol/l)).
2. Hyperglycemia (rise of blood sugar to above normal levels), which may lead to Diabetes Ketoacidosis in Type 1 diabetic patients.
3. Dehydration and Thrombosis due to limitation of fluid intake during fasting as well as due to hyperglycemia. In addition, contraction of intravascular space can contribute to hypercoagulable state.

It is advised that you do not fast if you are, or have, any of the following:

- Fragile and unstable diabetes
- Type 1 diabetes mellitus
- Chronic complications such as kidney failure and macrovascular complications
- Pregnant
- Undergoing dialysis
- Poor glycemic control
- Unaware of hypoglycemia, or have recurrent hypoglycemia
- Ketoacidosis or hyperosmolar hyperglycemia coma within the 3 months before Ramadan



How to manage diabetes during fasting

Diet-controlled diabetic patients

If your diabetes is controlled through diet, you may fast. If you are overweight, fasting will give you the opportunity to lose weight, although it is recommended that you eat the types and quantities of food advised by your doctor.

Diabetic patients on oral hypoglycemic agent

You may fast provided you follow the advice from your doctor. The adjustment to your treatment regime will likely be:

- If you normally take 1 tablet a day, take your dose during Iftar.
- If you normally take 2 tablets a day, take 1 tablet during Iftar and reduce the dose at Sahour. If you feel hypoglycemic (fall of blood sugar levels) during the day, you may skip the dose at Sahour.
- If you normally take 3 tablets a day, take 2 tablets during Iftar and reduce the dose at Sahour. If you feel hypoglycemic (fall of blood sugar levels) during the day, you may skip the dose at Sahour.

Diabetic patients on insulin

- If you need to take 1 insulin injection, take it before Iftar.
- If you normally take morning and evening insulin injections you are advised not to fast. If you still intend to fast, you should consult your doctor on how to modify the second dose, which needs to be taken before Sahour. You should also carefully monitor your blood sugar levels during the fasting hours – especially during the first days of fasting.