

## Staying healthy during Ramadan

Ramadan is fast approaching; it is a period of fasting observed by Muslims worldwide. During this month, many will try to break bad habits, spend time with family, reflecting and in prayer. For 30 continuous days nothing will be eaten or drunk within daylight hours. Instead, a meal will be eaten upon waking and after sunset, so routines are very likely to change.



- Iftar – a meal eaten directly after sunset.
- Suhoor – a meal eaten just before sunrise.

It is still possible to eat a healthy diet during Ramadan, here are some top tips to help!

Top tips:

- ✓ Try to always have a portion of vegetables on your plate, as the fibre will help you to feel fuller for longer and prevent constipation.
  - Lentil dhal
  - Salad
  - Boiled or curried vegetables
- ✓ Fruit also contains essential nutrients and can be included at your mealtime to help you reach your 5 a day.
- ✓ Try to have a balanced meal, this means always having protein eggs as this will help your meals to be more filling so you can get through the hours of fasting, and is full of essential nutrients:
  - Meat
  - Fish
  - Tofu
  - Lentils

- Beans
- Chickpeas
- Eggs – meat / fish / chicken / lentils / beans /
- ✓ Keep an eye on fat content of foods – can a healthier oil be used such as vegetable or corn oil rather than ghee?
- ✓ Have carbohydrates, but try not to let them be the main part of your meal as they could leave you feeling hungry later if not eaten with enough protein and vegetables:
  - Chapati
  - Rice
  - Potato
  - Pasta
  - Bread
  - Pastry
- ✓ Can deep fried foods be air fried instead? If not, try not to have them every day, and don't allow them to take up the majority of your meal.
- ✓ Drinking regularly between Iftar and Suhoor to hit your fluid needs is helpful, as drinking a lot in one portion could impact appetite at your mealtime.
- ✓ Try not to have too many salty and processed foods as this can cause thirst during the day. Reduce salt added during cooking and try not to put it on the table at mealtimes.
- ✓ Take time over your meals, listen to your hunger and fullness cues and chew thoroughly.
- ✓ Gentle exercise such as yoga or walking is good for your heart, and can stimulate bowel movement if struggling with constipation.
- ✓ Try not to go for too many sugary foods, as these can cause an energy crash leaving you feeling hungry. If having something sweet have it after your main meal, and try to choose a milk based dessert over a sugary one.