**RAMADAN and DIABETES**

Fasting helps a person to choose a healthier lifestyle by making small yet lasting changes to their daily diet. People who have their diabetes under control with either diet or tablets (that does not cause low glucose levels) may fast after consulting their family physician to make required adjustments to their medication. Those people who need insulin to control their diabetes are advised not to fast.

*Chapter 2 verse 184 of Qur’an makes it clear that people who ever have an illness or medical condition of any kind that makes fasting injurious to their health are exempt from fasting. To compensate for the missed fasts, they must fast later when they are healthy; if it is not possible due to long term illness; they must feed the poor (give Fidyah).*

**Three D’s for safe fasting (Drugs, Diet and Daily activity)**

**Drugs:**
You should not stop taking medication and/or insulin. You may need some adjustment in your timings and dosage, speak with your physician and diabetes team.

**Diet:**
- Never miss your Suhur. Eat as late as possible towards the recommended end time (just 5-10 minutes before Fajr salat)
- Include slow digesting carbohydrate such as porridge, whole grain breads, basmati / brown rice, lentils, lots of vegetables and protein (eggs, meat, chicken, fish, legumes, tofu)
- Drink plenty of fluids. Keep away from refined and processed foods
- Avoid / limit caffeinated beverages like strong tea/ coffee and colas, caffeine act as diuretics and dehydrate you

**Commonly consumed foods by Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) were milk, dates, oats and lamb**
- At Iftar Eat light foods Avoid high fat / fried foods.
- Break 1 big meal at iftar into 2
- Eat lots of vegetables; choose real fruit instead of juices or sugary drinks. Include lentils, yogurt, whole grain breads/ brown or basmati rice in place of refined flour and white rice. As foods high in fibre get digested slowly and make you feel full for a longer time
- Include foods from all four food groups (vegetables and fruits, grains and starches, milk and alternatives and meat and alternatives)
- Drink lot of sugar free fluids during non fasting hours
- Rich sweets and processed or refined foods fluctuates blood glucose levels into highs and lows, thus avoid such foods
Healthy foods mentioned in Holy Quran are fruits and vegetables such as olives, onion, cucumber, figs, grapes, lentils. Include these in your diet. Keep your meal, a meal not a feast.

**Chapter 20 verse 81 of Qur’an** states “Eat of the good and wholesome things that WE have provided for your sustenance, but indulge in no excess therein”

**Chapter 7 verse 31 of Qur’an** states “Eat and drink freely: but waste not by excess, for He does not like the wasters.”

**Daily activity:**

Do not over-exert yourself. You can continue regular physical activity such as light walk after *Iftar*. Consider late night prayers into your physical activity.

**Monitor your blood glucose levels regularly for safe fasting (twice daily)**

If you feel low blood glucose symptoms such as weakness, shaking, sweating blurred vision, tiredness. You **MUST** break your fast right away; otherwise it could be dangerous (you could end up in coma).

**Treat low blood glucose (less than 4.0mmol/L) immediately:**

Drink ¾ cup of any regular fruit juice or regular soda or 1 table spoon of honey or 3 teaspoons of sugar dissolved in water or 3 glucose tablets, wait for 15 minutes and check again. If your glucose levels are still low repeat the treatment, and take a small snack if it is not your meal time.

**Stress Management**

Managing your stress is always important, but especially during Ramadan. Prayer can be an effective method of dealing with stress, as the feeling of connecting with a higher power and giving problems over to something greater than yourself can bring relief and calm.

Other ways of managing your stress include: taking a few minutes to be aware of your breath and practising deep breathing, listening to Quranic recitation, reading, writing your feelings down, enjoying the company of family and friends at Iftar and during congregational prayers, taking a nap in the afternoon, and going for a walk.

Any questions: Call Diabetes Education Program TAIBU Community Health Centre
Phone: 416 644 0361 ext 480