



The Muslim holy month of Ramadan will begin on Friday 26th May 2017, and continue for 30 days

During this time many Muslims will consider it an obligatory duty to fast from dawn to dusk. Fasting, in one form or another, has always been an important and often necessary part of religious life. As well as being one of the focal points of the Muslim year, one of the goals of the month is to make those who fast conscious of others; a time for prayer, fasting, charity-giving and self-accountability. Through not eating, people are encouraged to think of the less fortunate who are often without food.

Ramadan fasting is a total fast between the hours of sunrise and sunset, with complete abstinence from food and drink. There are only a few people who are exempt from fasting and these include pregnant and menstruating women, lactating women who have concerns about their own or their child's health, children, the elderly, infirm, those who are ill and persons travelling long distances. However, in many cases, exempted persons and other people who may be vulnerable such as diabetics and the elderly will want to fast. It is a very special time where every Muslim will want to take, and be part of this time of reflection and consideration. To mark the end of Ramadan, Eid-ul-Fitr, a celebration day will take place on or about 24th June depending on the sighting of the new moon.

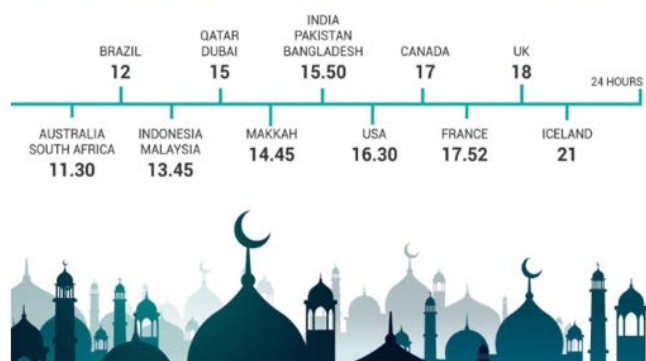
Religion and belief is one of the main strands of diversity, and festivals like Ramadan, as well as Easter, Yom Kippur, Vaisakhi and Diwali, and the other religious days and periods give us an opportunity not just to support those who observe them, but also to learn and understand more about the people we work with and serve.

Communications & the patient's perspective

Good communication with diverse patient groups and using tools such as Language Line and The Community Handbook are identified as best practice for all SECamb health care professionals. This not only supports the users of our services but also assists SECamb's clinical staff to have additional support when providing medical interventions, care, advice and respect to Muslim patients during Ramadan.

HOW MANY

HOURS Are Your PATIENTS & COLLEAGUES FASTING?



Being equipped with the necessary information in relation to Ramadan not only supports the users of our services in respect to patient choice but also assists SECamb's' clinical staff to have an additional communication aid when providing medical interventions, care, advice and respect to Muslim patients. When approaching the issue with Muslim patients, it is important for healthcare

professionals to provide an acknowledgement to the fast e.g. “I understand that it is Ramadan, are you fasting at the moment? I would like to be able to... I believe this may/may not break your fast (where applicable)... are you comfortable with this”.

Where Muslim patients refuse treatment, even though it may not break the fast, the patient’s choice should be respected and advice should be offered on medical grounds.

FASTING WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON CLINICAL ASSESSMENTS

The fast will break when:	The fast will not break when:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eating or drinking intentionally 2. Taking oral medication 3. Providing nourishing medication (also by intramuscular or intravenous injections) 4. Smoking 5. Using vaginal or rectal pessaries 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administering injections (intravenous, intramuscular and subcutaneous) 2. Taking bloods (thumb pricks or intravenous) 3. Using puffers and inhalers or eye and ear drops 4. Eating or drinking unintentionally <p><i>Caution this will be open to the individuals interpretation.</i></p>
Typical SECamb clinical interventions that would break the fast include (the list is not exhaustive):	Typical clinical interventions that will not break the fast include (the list is not exhaustive):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Aspirin • Glucagon (IM) • Glucose drip (IV) • Glucose drinks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GTN (Glycerin Tri Nitrate) • Treating wounds • Rectal Diazepam • Nebulisers and Oxygen • Ventolin sprays / Salbutamol • Saline infusion (IV) • Morphine (IV) • Diazepam • Adrenaline • Penicillin

Further considerations for managers

Managers need to be aware that Ramadan is about ‘being part of’ and could lead to placing a different demand on Trust services in areas where there are high density ethnic minority Muslim populations.

Managers will also need to consider the impact of Ramadan on staffing and ways to accommodate Muslim staff during this period. Consideration should be given to allowing breaks at different times of day to support Muslim staff.

Other considerations Managers should take into account will be to:

- Consider / sensitively any requests for annual leave or shift swaps for Eid-ul-Fitr

- Consider flexible working or changing shift rotas to accommodate breaking the fast at the end of each day where this is possible
- Consider allowing extra time off to pray, especially at sunset
- Allowing meal breaks at different times, for example lunch break at dusk, approx 9.30pm initially to coincide with breaking the fast.
- Consider the impact of any events during this time if Muslim staff / public are to be invited to the events and provide a designated space for prayer.

However, all requests based on religious identity and practice, should be considered and balanced against operational need. As a supportive employer and proactive service provider it is good practice to accommodate these requests wherever possible. Accommodating religious belief and practices, does not mean allowing extra time off – it is about being flexible about employees' existing holiday entitlement, working patterns or break periods.

If you require any further information please contact me on Asmina asmina.ichowdhury@secamb.nhs.uk or 07795 236 554.

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