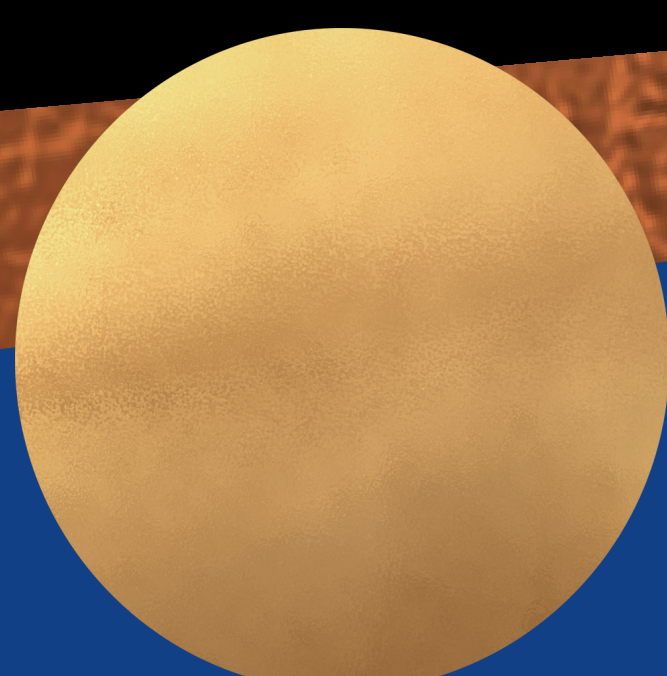
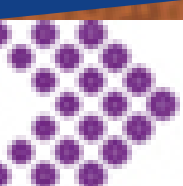




*Ramadan*  
&  
*Eating Disorders*



A Brief Guide for Young  
People, Parents/Carers  
&  
Families.





# Coping With An Eating Disorder During Ramadan

Ramadan is a time of self-reflection and devotion that many Muslims look forward to. However, for people with eating disorders, this can be triggering & anxiety provoking time and can exacerbate their difficulties. As eating disorders seriously compromise bodily functions, particularly if the body is already in a state of starvation, fasting during Ramadan could adversely and significantly affect your health, welfare and overall recovery. We therefore advise that you discuss whether fasting is right for you with your Eating Disorder team, friends/family and/or Imam/spiritual leader, in order to get the right support and advice to help you get the most out of this special time.

You may feel guilty and overwhelmed with not being able to fast during Ramadan, but remember, you are exempt from fasting on medical grounds, and there will be other acts of worship you can participate in. Allah says in the Quran,

*"Fast the prescribed number of days; except if any of you is ill or on a journey, let him fast a similar number of days later. For those who cannot endure it for medical reasons, there is a ransom: the feeding of the poor person for each missed day". [Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 184].*

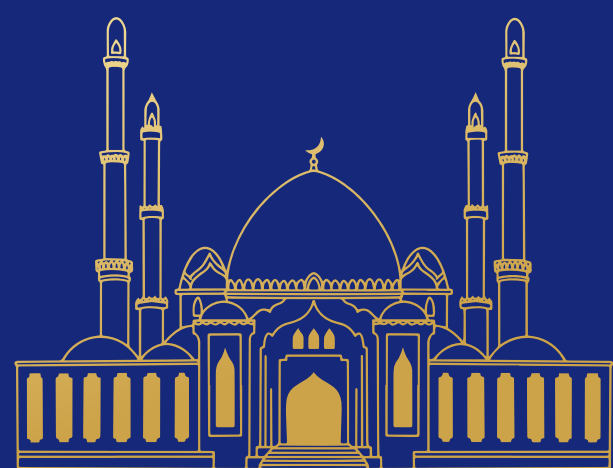
If you do not fast during Ramadan you can make up the missed days at a later time when you are physically and mentally in a better place. If fasting triggers your eating difficulties and you are unable to make up your fasts you can pay Fidyah instead (a donation of food or money for those in need).

- Remember this is a time where God is looking for abstinence from bad characteristics so the abstinence from food is only one aspect of the fast. There are other ways to work towards the goals of Ramadan.
- Remember you are also able to reap in the reward of another person who is fasting
- Most importantly, remember the rewards for not fasting are based on the intentions of your heart.

Other acts of worship you can take part in if you are not fasting:

- Preparing food for those who are fasting
- Feeding others
- Read your obligatory prayers, as well as praying Tahajjud and/or Taraweeh prayers.
- Spend time making Dhikr (rememberence of Allah) and Dua (supplication).
- Read the Quran daily, with its interpretation.
- Read books to increase your knowledge on Islam.
- Spend your time doing things that make you feel happy, closer to God and serving others.
- Give to charity and show small acts of kindness to people around you.

Above all, remember to practice self-compassion and be kind to yourself and make a personal Ramadan plan for you.

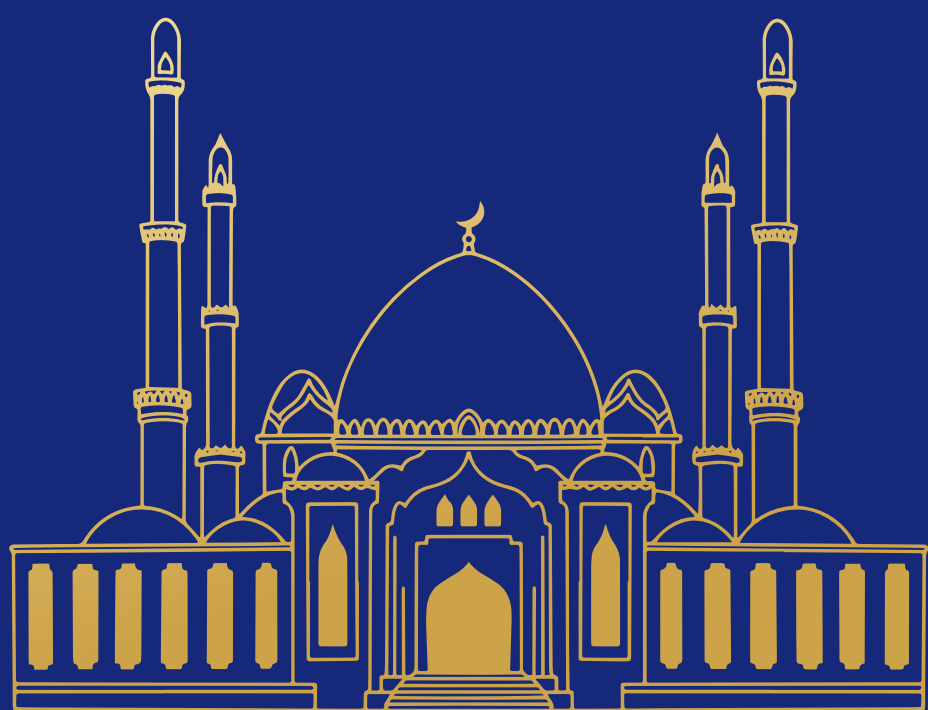


# How to look after yourself if you are fasting.

If it has been established that it is in fact safe for you to fast, and fasting will not jeopardise your recovery or increase the risk of a relapse, then there are a number of things you can do to help you to get through Ramadan.

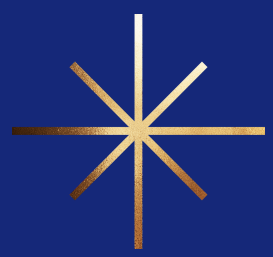
1. It is important to keep checking in with yourself. Some people can start to experience unhelpful thoughts about losing weight through fasting, so keep reminding yourself of the real meaning behind Ramadan. If you notice any signs of a relapse then it might be helpful to speak to loved ones and to stop fasting, temporarily.
2. Do not skip Suhur or Iftar.
3. Plan your meals in advance. Ensure that you include energy providing foods in your meal, i.e. rice, breads, dates and yoghurt and desserts.
4. Eat your meal at a sensible pace and remember to drink plenty of water between Iftar and Suhur gradually, rather than drinking large amounts of water at once.
5. If you struggle with binges, long periods of low food intake can trigger a binge episode. To reduce the risk of losing control make sure you do not skip suhur or iftar and practice mindful eating during iftar.
6. Following iftar, try to distract yourself from unhelpful thoughts by talking to others, read the Quran or spending time with family.
7. Make dhikr (remembrance of Allah) and prayer.
8. Above all, be compassionate to yourself. It is ok if things do not go to plan, do not give up. Learn from the experience and think about what can be done differently the next day.

*"Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest" (Surah Ar-Ra'd vs 28)*



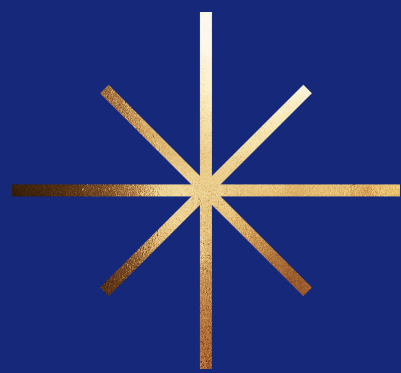
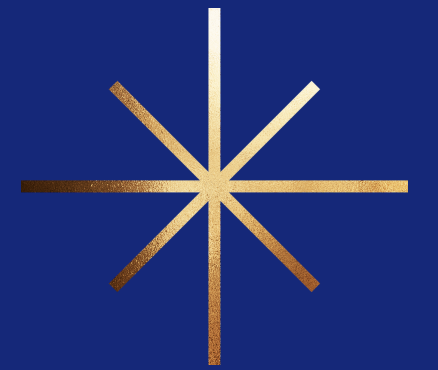


# How to support people with Eating Disorders during Ramadan



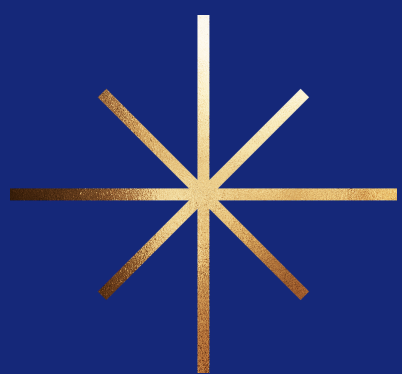
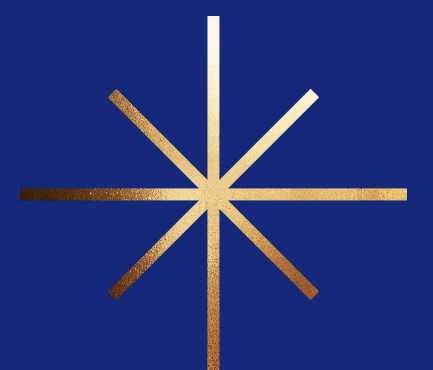
Eating disorders can have a significant impact on the life of the young person struggling with an eating disorder, and their family. So it is important for carers to understand how best to help the young person during the month of Ramadan. Here are a few tips:

Tip 1: Remind family and the young person that they are exempt from fasting due to illness (even if they appear to be at a healthy weight, they may still continue to struggle and be unwell with their Eating Disorder). "Fast a prescribed number of days. But whoever of you is ill or on a journey, then let them fast an equal number of days (after Ramadan)". Surah Baqarah, vs 138.



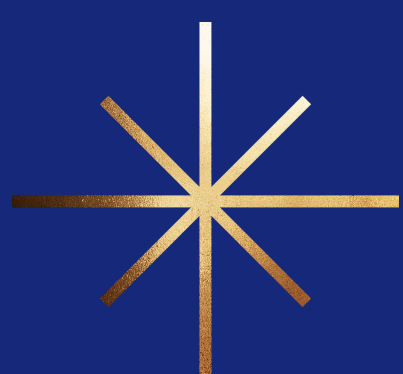
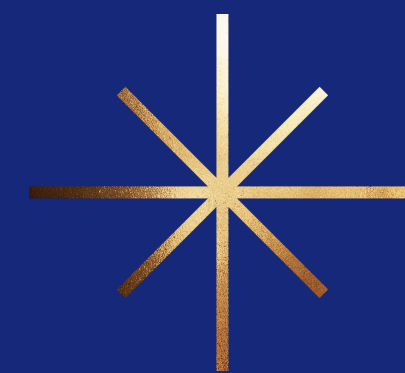
Tip 2: Help the young person to find alternatives to fasting. Remind them there are other ways to worship God during Ramadan other than fasting. Encourage them to read the Quran, give to charity, feed others and pray to Allah.

Tip 3: Avoid talking about/making diet/weight goals during Ramadan. Keep conversations neutral during iftar and suhur.



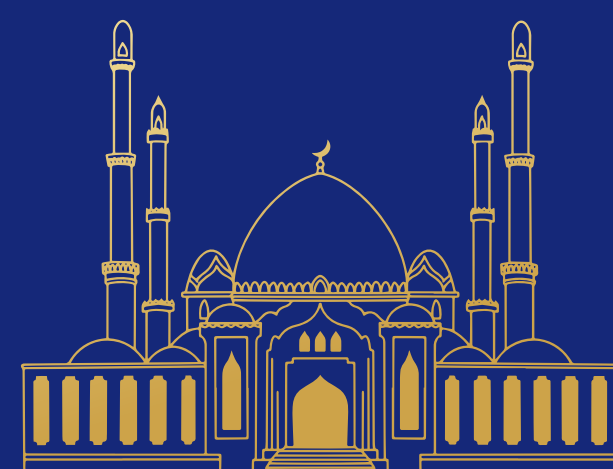
Tip 4: Continue to support mealtimes to ensure your young person eats regularly during recovery, even though others may be fasting.

Tip 5: Encourage the young person to sit together with the family during Iftar. This will continue to create a sense of belonging and participation during Ramadan.



Tip 6: Ask your young person what would be most helpful and how they would want to be supported throughout Ramadan. It may be that they would like you to help them to have difficult conversations with family about why they are not fasting.

Tip 7: Even though we may be social distancing this year try to find activities with the family that does not revolve around food.



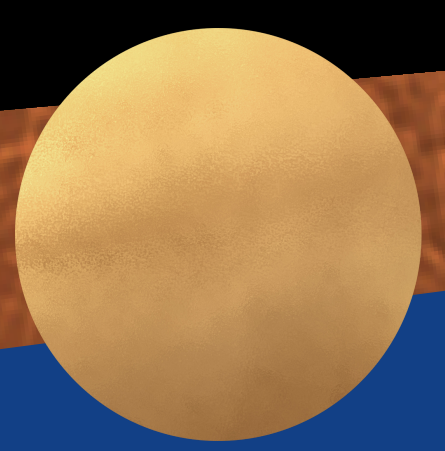


# Useful links & Resources

- <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/your-stories/ramadan-coronavirus>
- <https://waragainsteatingdisorder.com/>
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/navigating-ramadan-with-a-mental-illness/>
- <https://www.childline.org.uk/get-involved/real-life-stories/eating-problems-ramadan-aminas-story/>
- <https://www.maudsleyhealth.com/blogs/how-to-manage-your-eating-disorder-during-ramadan/>







Ramadan Kareem  
and Eid  
Mubarak to all

