

# Fasting with kidney disease during Ramadan

Information from Kidney Research UK in partnership with the British Islamic Medical Association.





Fasting is considered a religious obligation for Muslims. Those with health conditions such as kidney disease may be able to fast with medical supervision while others may be exempt. It is important to discuss the safety and suitability of fasting with a healthcare professional in plenty of time before commencing fasting.

## Choosing whether to fast

Before you fast, it is important to check in with your healthcare team. They can carry out a risk assessment to help you understand how fasting can affect you and your kidneys, they can guide you to reduce any risks to your kidney, in addition to advising on medication changes and any necessary monitoring to help you fast safely.

## Recommendations for kidney patients

Kidney experts in the UK along with Islamic scholars have developed the following recommendations.

Patient group	Risk level	Recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● People with chronic kidney disease stages 1, 2 or 3, with <b>stable</b> kidney function</li> <li>● Chronic kidney disease patients who get frequent <b>urinary tract infections</b> or <b>kidney stones</b></li> <li>● Kidney transplant patients with stable kidney function, optimized immunosuppression and not in the below categories</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Low-moderate risk</b></p>	<p><b>Listen to medical advice</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● People with chronic kidney disease stages 1,2 or 3, with <b>unstable</b> kidney function (usually rapidly declining eGFR, experience fluid overload and/or are frail)</li> <li>● Chronic kidney disease patients with <b>electrolyte abnormalities</b> (usually <b>high potassium</b> or <b>low sodium</b>)</li> <li>● Patients at risk of dehydration due to <b>fluid restriction</b> or are taking <b>diuretics</b> (<b>water tablets</b>)</li> <li>● Patients on specific medications such as: <b>ramipril, losartan, dapagliflozin</b> and <b>spironolactone</b> (these are some examples)</li> <li>● Kidney transplant patients with reduced kidney function (those with eGFR 30-60 ml/min.)</li> </ul>	 <p><b>High risk</b></p>	<p><b>Should not fast</b></p>



Patient group	Risk level	Recommendation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Patients on all forms of <b>dialysis</b></li><li>● Patients with chronic kidney disease stages 3-5 with a history of <b>cardiovascular disease</b></li><li>● Patients with chronic kidney disease stages 4-5 who are not on dialysis – except those who discussed risks and had counselling from their specialist taking into account how well their kidneys are functioning, their fluid balance, potassium level among other factors</li><li>● Kidney transplant patients who underwent a transplant in the last 12 months</li><li>● Transplant patients with unstable kidney function, recent rejection or atypical infections</li></ul>		<b>Must not fast</b>
<b>Notes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Risk of fasting needs to be individualised, some in the high-risk category may be able to fast with careful guidance and monitoring by a specialist</li><li>● Transplant patients on twice daily immunosuppression were considered very high risk in the peer reviewed paper written by the same authors of this guidance. This was based on fasting during summer months. Although fasting whilst on twice daily dosing is now possible, patients will need an individualised approach with their transplant specialist to avoid significant risk.</li></ul>		

**Fasting is a personal decision. Talking to your healthcare team can help ensure you make an informed decision about what is right for you.**

### Fasting safely

It is important to seek advice to help you fast safely.

- **Talk to your healthcare team**
- Consider a **short fasting trial** prior to the start of Ramadan with close monitoring to find out it is safe for you
- Remember, it's a **fast, not a feast!** When breaking your fast watch your portions, calories and potassium content, have a balanced diet
- **Space out your food and drinks** – have small meals including complex carbohydrates (whole grains like brown rice, starchy vegetables and non-starchy vegetables, beans and legumes like lentils, kidney beans and chickpeas)

- **Drink the recommended amount of water** (six- eight glasses) between sunset and dawn, if you have been advised a fluid restriction it is important to stick to it
- Don't forget your daily exercise, consider walking to the mosque for prayers

### Alternatives to fasting

- Fidyah (religious donation)
- If the duration of fast is not safe or feasible, consider a **winter fast**
- Consider **non-consecutive fasts** – such as alternate days or a one-day break after every two to four fasts

Speak to your local Imam, scholar or trusted religious authority for more advice on alternatives to fasting.

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