

Healthful Diets during Ramadan
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Chapter 20 verse 81 of the Qur'an states:

"Eat of the good things We have provided for your sustenance, but commit no excess therein" .

The month long fasts during daylight hours provides an opportunity for spiritual enhancement and wellness of the body. Ramadan gives us an opportunity to have self-control to eat less and eat healthfully

In the Quran, healthful foods are mentioned in a number of verses and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) praise moderation as a way of maintaining good health.

The key to achieving and maintaining a healthy weight and lowering risk for chronic disease is about a lifestyle that includes enjoyable and healthful foods, regular physical activity, and balancing the number of calories you consume with the number of calories your body uses.

The following guidelines should be used to plan for the pre-dawn meal (suhoor) and for breaking the fast:

- Address weight management (reducing abdominal fat) with calorie control
- Decrease intakes of refined carbohydrates
- Increase intake of omega-fatty acids
- Decrease intake of saturated and trans fatty acids and cholesterol
- Increase intake of fruits and vegetables
- Decrease intake of sodium

- Decrease carbohydrate intake particularly refined carbohydrates
 1. Whole grain flour (millet (bajra), whole wheat to make breads like chappatis and naan)
 2. Brown rice to prepare pilaf and other rice dishes.
 3. Oat and whole wheat breakfast cereals for breakfast to prepare savory snacks.
 4. Sugarless drinks such as non-fat yogurt drinks with fresh mint or cilantro instead of juices and soda.
- Increase intake of omega-3 fatty acids,
 5. Flax seed powder in curries like dhal (lentil soup), vegetables, chappatis,
 6. Fenugreek leaves (methi) as a vegetable
 7. Fatty fish like salmon if you enjoy fish
 8. Canola oil and walnuts in food preparation
 9. Chia seeds in a refreshing hibiscus, lemon and mint cold drink in place of juice and soda.
- Decrease intake of saturated fat, trans fatty acids and cholesterol
 1. Canola oil, extra light olive oil in place of butter, ghee, partially hydrogenated fat and margarine.
 2. Almond paste and or non fat yoghurt in place of cream and butter for the buttery "makhani" curries; almonds and unsalted pistachios as part of the "iftar" with dates.
 3. Low fat milk (1% fat) to prepare yogurt cheese "panir".
 4. Egg white substitutions for egg yolks in omelet and desserts.
- Optimize protein intake
 1. Soybeans- fresh or frozen prepared as savory snacks ("chole", "chat", and in combination with vegetables like spinach, zucchini instead of fried "iftar" snacks.
 2. Non-fat yogurt as "raitha" or "lassi" .
 3. Chicken without skin, eggs, low fat or non-fat cheese
- Increase intake of fruits and vegetables
 1. Fruits as snacks and dessert. Enjoy a couple dates (source of fiber and potassium)
 2. at both meals. Green leafy vegetables in place of potatoes with legumes.

- Decrease intake of salt
 1. Herbs such as cilantro and mint can decrease need for salt.
 2. Spices such as cumin, black pepper, cardamom and cinnamon will enhance food flavors.

- Drink plenty of water between the breaking of the fast and pre-dawn. Limit caffeine at the pre-dawn meal.