

## News release

22 April 2020

### **Advice on how to stay healthy during Ramadan and the COVID-19 pandemic**

Ahead of Ramadan starting this week, people living in Birmingham and Solihull are being encouraged to take care of their health during the fasting period; and to ensure that they continue to practice social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ramadan is due to start on 23/24 April and runs until around 23/24 May, and with the current Coronavirus lockdown measures in place, the Muslim Council of Britain has published online guidance to help Muslims adapt to the changing circumstances of the holy month, including using virtual methods, which can be read [here](#).

Dr Asad Zaman, a Birmingham GP based at Shah Zaman Surgery, said: “Normally Ramadan is a time of fasting during the day, and communal prayers throughout the day and late at night, with extra blessings of Sahoor and Iftar. This year Ramadan will be a bit different.

“While we continue to benefit from the blessings of this Holy month, we need to act responsibly and follow the Government’s current COVID-19 (Coronavirus) guidelines; ensuring that social distancing is observed in order to help save lives and protect the NHS.

“It is also important that people take care of their physical and mental health, and make themselves aware of changes in NHS services in response to COVID-19.

“Diet in Ramadan is very important. As tempting as they are, try to avoid samosas, pakoras and other fried food. Instead try to eat foods that will release energy slowly, such as basmati rice, wholemeal flour, wheat, oats and lentils.

“If you are diabetic and using insulin, you must consult your doctor or diabetes specialist nurse before deciding on fasting. If you take regular medication, speak to your doctor or pharmacist about changing your regime to suit the needs of Ramadan.”

He added: “My top advice for the current situation is to maintain a healthy diet during Sahoor and Iftar, and stay at home and only go out if it is absolutely necessary. Stay safe, keep others safe.”

Helpful resources:

- [NHS Birmingham and Solihull CCG – access local health services during COVID-19](#)
- [NHS Birmingham and Solihull CCG - mental health support offer](#)
- [NHS website – COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) advice](#)
- [Diabetes UK – Fasting during Ramadan](#)
- [Diabetes UK – Fasting and managing your diabetes during Ramadan \(English\)](#)
- [Diabetes UK – Fasting and managing your diabetes during Ramadan \(Arabic\)](#)
- [Diabetes UK – Fasting and managing your diabetes during Ramadan \(Bengali\)](#)
- [Diabetes UK – Fasting and managing your diabetes during Ramadan \(Urdu\)](#)
- [Muslim Council of Britain – Ramadan at home guidance](#)
- [Birmingham Central Mosque – Ramadan timetable](#)

**ENDS**

**Media enquiries:**

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**Note to editors:**

NHS Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group became the largest clinically-led commissioning organisation in England on 1 April 2018.

We were created following approval by NHS England for a merger between Birmingham CrossCity, Birmingham South Central and Solihull CCGs.

We look after a population of around 1.3 million people and our budget is around £2 billion. We are a membership organisation, with 164 GP practices, as well as a clinically-led Governing Body.

We are responsible for planning and commissioning health services for people living in Birmingham and Solihull and work as part of a large, complex system of health and social care which includes local authorities, providers, the independent sector and GP practices.