

*Safe Medication  
Use During  
the Holy Month  
of Ramadan*

نحن نهتم  
We Care

مرکز جونز هوبكنز  
أرامكو الطبي  
Johns Hopkins  
Aramco Healthcare

As the holy month of Ramadan draws near, special considerations regarding medication compliance and appropriate diet can be anticipated. The pharmacist plays a key role in providing a personalized, person centered counseling to ensure that patients are fully informed about treatment options and dose timing changes.

*Disclaimer: This information is designed to provide practical advice about safe medication use during the holy month of Ramadan to ensure a healthy and safe fasting and provide general tips. Any lifestyle or medication change must be discussed first and approved by the clinician.*

## General Patient tips for safe medication use during the holy month of Ramadan

- Drugs with single daily dose at evening time do not need modification.
- For drugs with single daily dose at morning time, the dose can be switched to the evening. However, you should discuss these changes with your clinician and pharmacist as they will assess any risks that might occur from shifting the dose to the evening time.
- For medications that are taken twice daily, you can take the usual morning dose at the predawn meal (Suhoor) and the second dose at the sunset meal (Iftar).
- For medications that are taken three times a day or more, you may discuss with your clinician the potential to switch to different medications such as sustained release formulas that are taken once or twice a day.

## Safety tips for Diabetic patients

- **Seek Help:** You should break fasting and seek emergency assistance if you experience symptoms of hypoglycemia or any of the following:
  - Low blood sugar – blood glucose less than 70 mg/dl.
  - High blood sugar – blood glucose higher than 300 mg/dl.
  - Sign of low or high blood sugar ( Frequent urination, Fatigue, Sweating, dry mouth)
- It is very important to monitor your blood sugar level closely during Ramadan and consult your healthcare professional immediately if you have problems with managing your condition.
- Avoid exercise before sunset meal (Iftar)



# General recommendations for management of Diabetes medications

\*Discuss changes with clinician first\*

Patients on oral Diabetes medications		
Before		During the holy month of Ramadan
Metformin	once daily	No dose modification required
	Twice daily	Take it with sunset meal ( Iftar) and at predawn meal (Suhoor)
	Three times daily	Combine the morning and afternoon dose with sunset meal (Iftar) and dinner dose to be taken with predawn meal
Sulfonylureas e.g. Glibenclamide, Glimepiride, Glipizide	Once daily	Take before sunset meal (Iftar), if blood glucose well controlled dose may be reduced
	Twice daily	One full dose to be taken before the sunset meal (Iftar) and half of the dose before predawn meal ( Suhoor)
Pioglitazone, Linagliptin, Empagliflozin, Dapagliflozin		No change needed, but the dose should be taken with sunset meal (Iftar)
Dulaglutide , Liraglutide, Semaglutide injections		For patients already active on the Once daily or once weekly formulations – no change needed.

Patients on insulin (Ensure adequate fluid intake)		
Before		During the holy month of Ramadan
Insulin	Basal- Bolus insulin	Basal Insulin: Dose should be reduced by 20% and to be given before the sunset meal (Iftar)  Rapid acting insulin with meals : Usual pre-lunch dose should be SKIPPED Same morning dose with sunset meal (Iftar) Half of dinner dose with predawn meal ( Suhoor )
	Mixtard Insulin	Mixtard Insulin Twice daily: Use the usual morning dose at the sunset meal (Iftar) and half the usual evening dose at predawn (Suhoor)

## Safety tips for patients using antibiotics

- For antibiotics with single daily dose, the dose can be taken after the sunset meal (Iftar). Follow the label instructions as some antibiotics may be taken with food while others need to be taken on an empty stomach.
- For antibiotics that are taken twice daily, you can take the usual morning dose at the predawn meal (Suhoor) and the second dose at the sunset meal (Iftar).
- For antibiotics that are taken three times a day or more, you may discuss with your clinician the potential to switch to different therapies that can be used twice daily.
- Ensure to take the full course. Do NOT stop therapy once you feel better.



## Safety tips for patients using blood pressure medications

- Avoid foods rich in salt such as pickles, to ensure blood pressure control.
- Most blood pressure medications are used once or twice daily and therefore the timing can be adjusted accordingly. Periodic blood pressure monitoring using home devices is advised.
- Diuretics should to be taken with sunset meal (Iftar).



## Safety tips for patients using anticoagulants medications

- Discuss your condition with your health care provider and religious advisor to ensure the best regimen for you. They can determine if you are eligible to fast.
- **Warfarin : Instructions to avoid INR fluctuation:**
  - Warfarin should be taken at the same time.
  - Do not change the amount of green vegetables consumed during Ramadan.
- Rivaroxaban should be taken after sunset meal (Iftar).

## Safety tips for patients using Levothyroxine

- Discuss your condition with your health care provider and religious advisor to ensure the best regimen for you. They can determine if you are eligible to fast.
- Levothyroxine absorption is impacted by food , therefore it is advisable to take Levothyroxin as follows:
  - Take the dose, wait for 30-60 minutes then start the Iftar meal or
  - Take the Iftar meal , then do not take any food for three hours , take the Levothyroxine dose, wait another 60 minutes before taking any additional food.