

COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR RAMADAN 1441/2020

FOR U.S. MOSQUES & MUSLIM
COMMUNITY CENTERS



- This guidance is based on the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)'s Interim Guidance on Safe Ramadan Practices released April 15, 2020](#).
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ASALAM ALIKOOM AND RAMADAN MUBARAK

This year's Ramadan will be a challenging time for our global Muslim community due to the threat of COVID-19. The holy month of Ramadan is one that is normally filled with social and religious gatherings as people congregate for suhoor and iftar, as well as group prayers. However, considering that the conditions are different, we must take all measures and precautions to protect our communities from COVID-19.

*COVID-19 is transmitted by close contact between people when the virus spreads through droplets and contact with contaminated surfaces [1]. Some individuals can contract the virus but not show symptoms and can still spread the disease without their knowledge [2]. **Based on guidance from the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, our Muslim mosques and communities must continue to practice physical distancing measures during the month of Ramadan to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 between people.***

“Verily, with the hardship, there is relief.”
-Quran (94:6)

Together, we will get through this hardship.

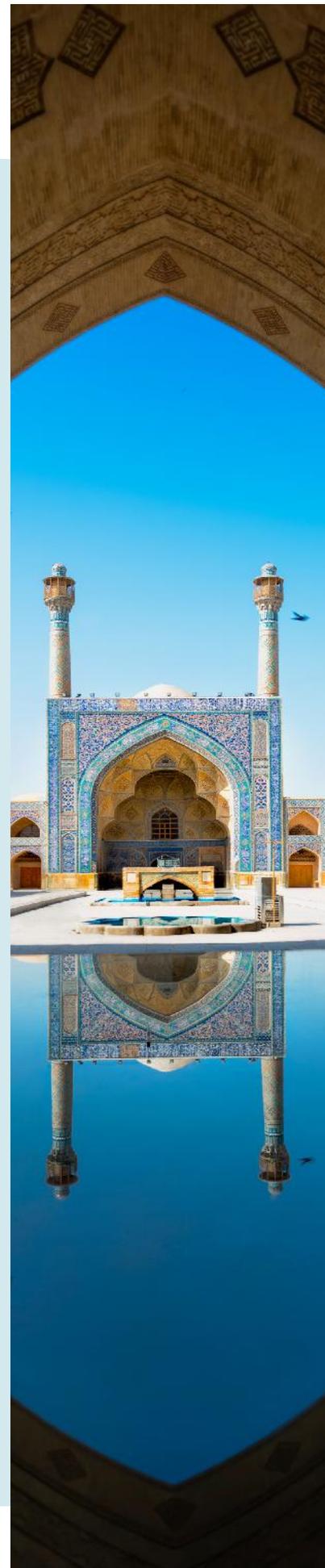
WHO IS AT RISK?

COVID-19 is a new disease and we are learning more about it each day. Based on current scientific studies, and information provided by the CDC [3], we know that some people in the groups listed below are at a higher risk of contracting the virus than others and developing severe symptoms.

- People 65 years and older
- People who live in nursing homes, long-term care facilities, or those who live in close proximity.
- People of ALL AGES who are living with the following medical conditions: compromised immune system, chronic lung disease, asthma, heart conditions, severe obesity, diabetes, chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, liver disease.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MOSQUES & MUSLIM COMMUNITY CENTERS

1. Suspend ALL congregations at mosques and community centers as recommended by the National Muslim Task Force on COVID-19 [4].
2. Consider utilizing online tools to broadcast prayer and worship services as well as offering comfort during this challenging time. You can also create a podcast of your sermons to publish online for your mosque members. See the Resources section below.
3. For mosques that offer food services or *iftars* to community members during Ramadan as a measure to tackle food insecurity during this difficult time, consider implementing drive-throughs to distribute individual, pre-packaged food and items to people who remain in their cars. Ensure the availability of personal protective gear (masks and gloves), provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 70% alcohol), and the maintenance of 6-foot distance between volunteers and organizers.
4. Frequently clean often-touched objects like doorknobs, light switches, and stair railings with detergents and disinfectant [5].
5. Promote mental and psychosocial health by reassuring people and providing prayers and *duas* for those who are distressed and on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response. See the Resources section below.
6. Encourage people to distribute their *sadaqa* and *zakah* to help individuals who are negatively impacted by the pandemic such as the [Clarkston Community Health Center](#), [Clarkston Community Center](#), or the [Atlanta Community Food Bank](#).
7. As the Prophet Mohamad (*pbuh*) taught, encourage people to maintain cleanliness and take care of their bodies (e.g. maintain proper nutrition and hydration, avoid smoking, and follow the recommendations given by health experts).
8. Speak out against domestic violence in your sermons at a time when movement is restricted and incidents of domestic violence against women, children, and marginalized people increase. Provide support and encourage victims to seek help [6]. The [National Domestic Violence hotline](#) offers 24/7 advocates at 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) in more than 200 languages. All calls are free and confidential.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS

1. There are no scientific studies yet on fasting and the risk of COVID-19 infection. **Healthy people should be able to fast Ramadan [7].** People who fall under the at-risk categories outlined above, should consult their doctors before fasting [8].
2. **Individuals who have contracted COVID-19 may consult their doctor and speak with an imam** to receive religious license to break the fast [9].
3. **Continue to self-isolate at home with your immediate family. Do NOT congregate at mosques or community centers. Please eat *suhoor* and *iftar* and worship at home with your immediate household only. Do NOT congregate in your houses.**
4. **Educate your community elders and at-risk individuals** and urge them to follow the recommendations because they are at a higher risk of contracting the virus.
5. **Avoid smoking** as it reduces the lung capacity and increases the risk of serious COVID-19 illness. **Maintain proper nutrition and hydration**, and follow the recommendations given by health experts.
6. **Maintain a 6-foot distance between people** when leaving the house to do your essential grocery shopping.
7. **Wear a face mask. Do NOT touch your face. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20-seconds.**
8. **Do NOT greet people with handshakes**, but instead wave or place your hand over your heart.
9. **Use personal prayer rugs, prayer beads, and the Holy Quran and limit the exchange of them between family members.**
10. **Continue to receive evidence-based updates** through the [WHO](#) and [CDC](#), and avoid information received from WhatsApp and other unverified sources.
11. **Speak with a Muslim mental health counselor** if you're feeling distressed. See the Resources section below.



WAYS TO CELEBRATE & HONOR THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN AT HOME

Celebrating and honoring the holy month of Ramadan is possible while maintaining physical distancing. Focus on celebrating the month with your immediate family at home with these suggestions.

- Pray together as a family. Create a special space in the home specifically for prayer/worship.
- Eat *suhoor* and *iftar* at the same time every day with your immediate household. This will help build a routine and sense of community among the family to get through this tough time together.
- Hold a Quran reading contest for family members and use small prizes for winners.
- Teach your kids family or cultural recipes.
- Read themed children's books to your children focused on values taught in the Quran and by the Prophet (*pbuh*) such as courage, honesty, and resilience to help them build their coping mechanism.
- Celebrate the coming and ending of the month and break fast with family/friends via video calls.
- Decorate the house with lights and hand-made ornaments.
- Create a 30-day journaling and reflection challenge as you fast the month.
- Attend online prayers held by your mosque or by organizations such as the Muslim American Society's nightly Zoom gathering.
- Keep a list of potential webinar lectures, classes, *thikrs*, and other virtual events to do during the day.

RESOURCES

- [How to go live on Facebook](#)
- [How to go live on YouTube](#)
- [How to go live on Instagram](#)
- [How to broadcast & host a channel on Periscope](#)
- [How to create a podcast on Anchor](#)
- [How to host a Zoom webinar \(with subscriptions for large groups\)](#)

Organizations offering mental health services for Muslims:

- **Online Helplines:** [Naseeha](#), [AMALA](#), [Khalil Center](#), [Stone To Bridges 3](#)
- **Mental Health Directory:** [National Muslim Mental Health Professionals Directory](#), [SEEMA 4](#)
- **Direct Services (including video therapy):** [Khalil Center](#), [National Muslim Mental Health Professionals Directory](#)