Nutrition Recommendations for Ramadan

During the month of Ramadan, a person's eating pattern endures a major change. Proper nutrition is very important to help prevent any health problems that may arise from inappropriate food choices or as a consequence of over-eating. There are no special dietary rules for Ramadan, just a balanced healthy approach.

Here's a list of tips to help get you started on a healthier Ramadan:

1. **Let your predawn meal be the largest one!**

Include complex carbohydrates to give you sustainable energy throughout the long fasting hours and to give you healthy bowels.

Carbohydrates such as:
- Multigrain and wholemeal breads
- All bran, porridge, oats
- Basmati rice
- Lentils and other legumes
- Semolina.

Include protein rich foods such as meat, chicken, fish, dairy and legumes to help maintain your muscle mass and metabolism. For example:
- Cooked lean meat or chicken or fish
- Eggs
- A handful of nuts or seeds
- A cup of lentils/beans.

2. **Break your fast with a ‘sunset snack’ of 2-3 dates, a cup of water and a bowl of soup.** This is a Prophetic tradition and will provide an instant boost of sugar and hydration to help settle your hunger and prevent overeating at the main meal.

3. **Give yourself at least 10 minutes between the sunset snack and your dinner meal; the food is not going to run away!**

4. **Eat slowly and chew very well to help pace yourself.**

5. **Hydration, hydration, hydration!**

A good technique to help you remember your fluids is to “drink 2 by the hour” – meaning 2 cups of water (250 mls = 1 cup). From sunset (~5 pm) to 10 pm, you would have consumed 2.5 L of fluid keeping you very well hydrated.
6. The healthy plate model should be applied to your dinner meal to help you maintain a good balance of carbohydrates, protein and vegetables.

7. Two hours after the dinner meal, it is likely you will feel hungry. It is important you initially appease your hunger with a healthy choice prior to indulging in the traditional sweets. Healthy choices could be:
   - A 100-200g of low fat yoghurt
   - A wholegrain salad/cheese/tuna sandwich
   - 1-2 pieces of fresh fruit
   - A cup of low fat milk
   - A handful of nuts
   - Popcorn (unsalted and unbutted)  
   - Fresh fruit juice
   - Vita-brit biscuits with low fat cheese
   - Hummus dip with vegetable sticks.

8. Avoid as much as possible:
   - Fried foods which can make you feel sluggish and fatigued
   - Salt and high salt foods
   - Foods high in refined sugars, which do not provide sustainable energy.

9. If you have a chronic disease and/or regularly take medication it is very important you discuss your Ramadan plans 1-2 months before with your doctor.

Your Ramadan Health Goals:

Dietitian
Phone number