

Look after yourself during Ramadan and know where to go for local healthcare services this Ramadan

GPs in Tower Hamlets are urging people to help the NHS by using local healthcare services wisely over the Ramadan period. This year, Ramadan is due to start around Friday 26 May and as it is the summer, the longer, warmer days can increase the risk of dehydration.

By choosing the right place for treatment and advice, you will get the help you need more quickly. Remember, the following people do not have to fast:

- All those who are ill (physical or mental illness) or frail
- Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or menstruating
- Diabetics who are on insulin therapy
- People who are travelling

Anyone with a long-term condition or taking regular medication, who is thinking about fasting this Ramadan, is strongly recommended to discuss their options with their GP, specialist nurse or healthcare professional. To stay healthy, it is important to:

- avoid long periods of time in the sun
- drink plenty of water during non-fasting hours
- cut back on all types of caffeinated drinks
- Eat a balanced diet during non-fasting hours to keep your body functioning properly during the day. Foods that release energy slowly, including carbohydrates and protein, will help you to maintain your energy levels.

For healthy meal ideas, visit www.nhs.uk/LiveWell

People with diabetes are advised by GPs to avoid fasting, particularly those with significant kidney, eye or heart problems.

People who require health services during Ramadan have a number of options – and it is important to make it clear if you are fasting or if you have any underlying health conditions:

- **NHS 111 service** – If you need medical help quickly, but your condition is not life threatening, you can call NHS 111. Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the freephone number is staffed by trained advisors and experienced clinicians who can assess you, offer advice and direct you to the right place to get the medical care you need as quickly as possible.
- **Pharmacy** – Many common illnesses such as coughs or colds can be best and most easily treated by visiting your local pharmacy and you can speak to a pharmacist without having to make an appointment. There are a number of pharmacies open in Tower Hamlets a full list is available on the Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) website [here](#).

- **GP out of hours service** – If you are unwell outside your GP's normal opening hours, you can call the Tower Hamlets out of hours GP service on 020 7377 7151. The service is open 6.30pm to 8am, Monday to Friday, and 24 hours a day during weekends and bank holidays. A call handler will take your details and a GP will then return your call.

- **Walk-in services** – These can treat most minor injuries that are urgent, but not life threatening, including suspected broken bones, cuts and rashes, minor burns, bruises, bites and stings. There are two GP-led walk-in services in Tower Hamlets and both are open 8am to 8pm every day of the week, including bank holidays:
 - The Barkantine walk-in service, 21 Westferry Road, Isle of Dogs, London E14 8JH. Phone: 0207 510 4000

 - St Andrews Health Centre, 2 Hannaford Walk, London E3 3FF. Phone: 020 8980 1888

- For more information about the local healthcare services available in Tower Hamlets, you can search for details via myhealthlondon on the CCG's website [here](#) or visit <http://www.nhs.uk/service-search>

Dr Osman Bhatti, a local GP and member of the Governing Body at Tower Hamlets CCG, said: "It is important to continue to take your medicines during Ramadan. If you have diabetes and normally monitor your blood glucose levels, you should continue to do so.

"It is also really important that you eat healthy over Ramadan. Make sure the Suhoor pre-dawn meal is wholesome and provides slow digesting foods such as wholegrains and drink lots of fluids.

"The importance of maintaining a healthy, balanced diet is made clear in the Qur'an (20:81) which states 'Eat of the good and wholesome things that We have provided for your sustenance, but indulge in no excess therein'."