Ramadan 2020 and COVID-19

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OBSERVING RAMADAN WHILE SLOWING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

The month of Ramadan in the Islamic calendar is a time of prayer, reflection, and fasting. Ramadan is marked by social and religious gatherings during which Muslim families and friends unite to break their fast together, at sunset during *Iftar* or before dawn during *Suhour*. Many Muslims increase their attendance at mosques during the month and congregate for longer prayers, especially at night. This year Ramadan begins on April 24 and ends on May 23. It is followed by the Eid al-Fitr festival on May 24.

After consulting with imams from across Minnesota, we strongly recommend that mosques cancel all social and religious gatherings and that Muslim families and friends adjust their social and religious gatherings to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This virus is highly contagious and can lead to serious health complications or even death. We all play a role in slowing the spread of COVID-19. We hope you will help slow the spread.

Recommendations for Observing Ramadan Differently This Year

Muslim leaders across Minnesota collaborated with the Minnesota Department of Health to develop the following recommendations for observing Ramadan safely this year.

- **Pray at home** instead of at mosque.
- Break the fast with **just your family at home** instead of with visits, socializing, and sharing food with extended family and friends. Do not invite or welcome anyone into your household who does not already live there.
- **Do not visit extended family** during Ramadan this year to contain the spread and keep elders safe.
- It is very important to **prepare and share food safely**. Families often prepare food to share and deliver to elders. Many mosques are preparing *Iftar* dinners to pick up and take home. Here are some ways to ensure you prepare and share food safely:
  - Do not prepare or handle food for others if you have cold- or flu-like symptoms (such as cough, fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches, headache, or sore throat).
  - Drop off or pick up prepared food without directly interacting with others.
  - People who are elders (over 65) or in high-risk groups for COVID-19 (people with health problems, heart or lung disease, or diabetes) should not be the ones delivering or going out to pick up food.
- **If anyone in your household has cold or flu-like symptoms** (such as cough, fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches, headache, or sore throat), they should not socialize or eat with anyone, even your family. Set up a separate area in your home for them that is away from others.
- **Continue social distancing**. Ramadan is about coming together, but this year, coming together in person puts individuals and families at risk of getting the virus and spreading it in the community. Connect by phone, text, video chats, letters or notes, and do not plan any gatherings with people outside your immediate household – not even people in the apartments next to yours or in the same building.
During Ramadan, it is still important to follow the guidelines that call for going out only for essential reasons: shopping for essential items, doing work that is essential, receiving medical care, and spending time outside.

Consider having one or two people from the household not at higher risk do the shopping. When shopping, follow these guidelines:

These guidelines apply to everyone in the household. Even children should only be playing with and spending time with the people they already live with, to prevent exposure and avoid bringing the virus back home.

Following Ramadan, Eid celebrations will need to follow social distancing guidance as well. Start planning now for ways you can celebrate with those in your household while connecting by phone or video with your extended families and larger community.

As a Minnesota imam described the situation, “Remember, this will not last forever. However, during Ramadan this year, with the COVID-19 pandemic, even deep traditions must be altered. The first obligation of all Muslims is to protect human life. We are required to do all what we can to keep Allah’s creations safe. Our faith teaches us to follow the best advice we have of faith leaders and medical experts to keep ourselves and others safe.”

Learn more

Get the most current and reliable information on COVID-19 from these websites:


COVID-19 Hotlines

Interpreters are available for anyone calling these phone numbers who does not speak English.

**Schools and child care questions:**
651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504
Weekdays: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Weekend: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Health questions:**
651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3903
Weekdays: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Weekend: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Minnesota Department of Health
625 Robert St N
St. Paul, MN 55164
651-201-5414
www.health.state.mn.us

4/23/20
To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5414.