Staying Safer during Ramadan 2021

4/1/2021

Requirements and Recommendations to Slow the Spread of COVID-19 While Observing Ramadan

Ramadan in 2021 will again require Muslim families and friends to adjust their social and religious gatherings to reduce the spread of COVID-19, just as they did successfully in 2020. Restrictions in Minnesota are fewer this year than last year, but people still need to be careful. COVID-19 is highly contagious and can lead to serious health complications, especially for older adults and people with certain health conditions.

This year, Ramadan may begin on April 13 and end on May 13. It is followed by the Eid al-Fitr celebration. The month of Ramadan in the Islamic calendar is a time of prayer, reflection, and fasting. It is marked by social and religious gatherings, during which Muslim families and friends unite to break their fast together. Many Muslims increase their attendance at mosques during the month and congregate for longer prayers, especially at night.

Muslim faith leaders and Imams across Minnesota collaborated with the Minnesota Department of Health to discuss the requirements all Minnesotans must follow at this time and developed additional recommendations for observing Ramadan safely this year. We all play a role in reducing the spread of COVID-19. These guidelines apply to everyone in the household, even children.

Requirements

- All mosques must have and follow a COVID-19 preparedness plan that has requirements and guidance for keeping your staff, congregation members, and visitors safe. See more information:
  - Stay Safe Guidance for all Business Entities (staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp)
  - Stay Safe Guidance for Places of Worship (staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/places-of-worship.jsp)
  - Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues (staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp)
- Face coverings (masks) must be worn indoors, and also outdoors where people cannot stay at least 6 feet away from each other at all times.
- Face coverings must be worn by participants during group prayers.
- Stay home if you: have COVID-19 symptoms; have tested positive; are waiting for test results due to symptoms or exposure; or have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.
- If you test positive or have symptoms of COVID-19, stay home and away from others (isolate) for at least 10 days AND until you have not had a fever for at least 24 hours and you feel better.
If you have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 (for example, someone you live, work or go to school with), stay home and away from others (quarantine) for 14 days.

For more information, see: [Close Contacts and Tracing: COVID-19](www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/close.html).

- **Wash or sanitize hands** often. Make sure you have supplies for people to do this at your facility.
- **Limit occupancy as follows**, based on the type of activity that is occurring in your setting/mosque:
  - For **services, ceremonies, and prayer** times that are stationary or seated events:
    - Reduce building occupancy, so people from different households or groups can stay 6 feet apart.
    - Members of the same household (regardless of household size) and groups of up to six people who attend a service or event together are not required to stay 6 feet away from members of their own household or group.
  - For **gatherings, receptions, or celebrations** that allow people to move around, mingle or interact with each other, or that offer **food and beverages**:
    - Reduce occupancy to allow people to keep 6 feet of distance between households or groups (social distancing). Occupancy must be limited to no greater than 50% capacity and may not exceed 250 people.
    - If your venue has self-contained spaces that have individual occupant capacities, the number of people in each space must follow capacity limits listed above and the total capacity of your entire venue cannot exceed 1,250 people (indoors and outdoors).
    - If your space capacity is greater than 500 people in one indoor area, you will be able to increase the overall capacity, beginning April 1, 2021. See information about calculating occupancy in the Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues section of [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues](staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp).
    - In addition, at gatherings, receptions, or celebrations with **food and beverages**:
      - People must be seated while eating and drinking – do not roam about.
      - Table size is limited to six people.
      - Keep masks on except when actively eating or drinking.
      - Food and beverage service must end by 11 p.m.
  - For **social gatherings** in homes and other locations, follow information on the [Stay Safe in Social Gatherings](staysafe.mn.gov/individuals-families/social-gatherings.jsp).
    - Indoor gatherings are discouraged but are permitted up to a maximum of 15 people from any number of households.
    - Outdoor gatherings may have a maximum of 50 people from any number of households.
    - Fully vaccinated people may gather without masks with other fully vaccinated people or people at low risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, as long as they stay 6 feet apart. For more details, see: [When You've Been Fully Vaccinated](www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html).
    - Indoors and outdoors, maintain 6 feet of distance from members of different households.
Recommendations

- Ramadan is about coming together, but coming together in person this year still puts people and families at risk of getting the virus and spreading it in the community. Continue to connect by phone, text, video chats, and letters and notes, and in other ways instead of in person, when possible.

- It is very important to prepare and share food safely. Families often prepare food to share with each other and deliver to elders. Many mosques are preparing iftar dinners to share on-site or 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 are sick.
  - Follow the guidance above about sharing meals in person. Limit the number of people at a table and wear masks when not actively eating. Masking, distancing, spending shorter periods of time together, and having good ventilation all reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

- People older than age 65 and others who are at high-risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 (people with health problems, heart or lung disease, or diabetes) who have not been vaccinated should not attend in-person services or meals and should not be the ones delivering or going out to pick up food.

- Anyone in your household who has symptoms of a cold or flu (such as cough, fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches, headache, or sore throat) should not socialize or eat with anyone, even family members. Set up a separate area in your home for them that is away from others.

- Limit the risk for you and your family of coming into contact with COVID-19. The risk of coming in contact with someone who has COVID-19 increases for children in school or sports, family members working in jobs where they interact with other people, and during other necessary activities outside the home. Try to limit unnecessary contact with others if you plan to gather for Ramadan prayer and breaking the fast.

- If you or your family members are attending prayer services and other gatherings routinely and are also routinely interacting or gathering with other people through work or school, you are encouraged to get tested for COVID-19 every one to two weeks. This testing helps to identify people who may be carrying the virus, which helps to limit the possible spread to others.

Vaccination concerns and recommendations

- It is permissible to get a COVID-19 vaccine when fasting for Ramadan. The vaccine does not have any nutritional value; therefore, it in no way affects or breaks your fast. You can get a COVID-19 vaccine when you are fasting.

- Minnesotan imams strongly encourage you to get your COVID-19 vaccine even while you are fasting. They support vaccination and many of our imams have been vaccinated already or are getting vaccinated as soon as they can.

- The vaccine helps prevent severe illness and death from COVID-19. It preserves and protects life, which follows Islamic values.

- The COVID-19 vaccines do not contain pork products, gelatin, animal products, human tissue, or the live COVID-19 virus.

- COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, and you are encouraged to get your vaccine. Protection from COVID-19 through vaccination far outweighs the possible side effects of the vaccine. Saving lives is the most important thing, and COVID-19 vaccines will save lives.
When you get your COVID-19 vaccine, you may have side effects for a short time, such as having pain where you got the shot, feeling achy or tired, or having a headache. Some people may have chills or a fever. These are signs that your immune system is responding effectively. Some people will not have any side effects. Each person reacts differently to the vaccine, and that is OK.

If you have side effects from a vaccine, you are allowed to break your fast to take care of yourself. People who are ill are exempt from fasting and may break their fast to take care of themselves. Do what you would usually do when you feel ill.

Eid al-Fitr celebrations will need to follow current guidance. These celebrations may not be the same as they were before COVID-19, because we must continue to be careful until the pandemic is behind us. Start planning now for ways you can celebrate safely this year.

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. Ramadan is an opportunity to be in service to Allah by being even better in caring for ourselves and others.”

Learn more

- National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants (NRC-RIM), Translated Materials Library (nrcrim.org/health-education/translated-materials-library)
  Materials library where you can search by language.
- Imam Wazir on Vaccinations in Islam, a video in different languages:
  - Amharic: Imam Wazir on Vaccinations in Islam (https://youtu.be/YXRT5owwRXg)
  - Harari: Imam Wazir on Vaccinations in Islam (https://youtu.be/hyrR2M4WeFg)
  - Oromo: Imam Wazir on Vaccinations in Islam (https://youtu.be/T0tZuq2D3xE)
  - Somali: Imam Wazir on Vaccinations in Islam (https://youtu.be/ZmJR4_jiwEE)
- Why I got my COVID-19 vaccine videos:
  - Somali video English translation: Transcript: Why I got my COVID-19 Vaccine (Somali) (nrcrim.umn.edu/sites/nrcrim.umn.edu/files/2021-02/Somali%20Transcript.pdf)
- You should get a COVID-19 vaccine...here’s why! videos:
- Imam Magid talks about COVID-19 vaccines with Surgeon General:
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- Full video: Imam Magid talks about COVID-19 vaccines with the Surgeon General (https://youtu.be/zrE6aLtFKSg)
- Clip: Can we trust the COVID-19 vaccines? (https://youtu.be/UE-0CBIrPrE)

- Imam Sharif Mohamed answers questions about the COVID-19 vaccine (Somali):
  - Full: Imam Sharif Mohamed answers questions about the COVID-19 vaccine [FULL] (https://youtu.be/qOYxU1Dkw8s)

Get current and reliable information on COVID-19


- Wear a mask. 🍂 Wash your hands. 🙋 Stay 6 feet from others. 🏠 Stay home if you feel sick.

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Contact health.communications@state.mn.us to request an alternate format.