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Healthy fasting: Nutrition tips for Ramadan

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During Ramadan, most people seek to observe the fast in a way that reduces fatigue and helps maintain energy levels throughout the day. In this context, nutrition specialist Marwan Al Sholi from Dr Nutrition Center Muscat offers practical tips to help the body and regulate dietary habits during the holy month.



Balanced eating pattern

Al Sholi advises limiting simple sugars such as sweets, juices and soft drinks, and reducing fried and fast foods. Instead, he recommends increasing protein intake through foods such as eggs, chicken, fish and legumes, which promote satiety and support muscle mass. Choosing complex carbohydrates - including oats, wholegrain bread and brown rice - is also important, along with combining protein with healthy fats like olive oil, nuts and avocados.

Hydration is key

He stresses the importance of drinking water regularly be
tween iftar and suhoor rather than waiting to feel thirsty, targeting around 2-3 litres daily depending on body weight and activity level. He also advises reducing salt and pickles to minimise thirst and fluid retention, while maintaining a balanced fluid intake
without excess.

Digestive health

To avoid digestive discomfort during Ramadan, Al Sholi recommends cutting down on fizzy drinks and chewing gum, incorporating natural probiotics such as laban and yoghurt, and consuming adequate fibre to prevent constipation. Eating slowly and chewing food well are equally important.

Better sleep, better appetite control

Gradually adjusting sleep schedules, avoiding late nights where possible, and getting seven to eight hours of sleep daily help regulate hormones and control hunger. Lack of sleep, he notes, can increase appetite and cravings for sugary foods.

Mental and behavioural readiness

Ramadan is neither a month of deprivation nor overindulgence, Al Sholi says. He encourages setting realistic goals to improve eating habits, practising mindful eating and avoiding overeating at iftar. Distinguishing between true hunger and emotional eating is also key to building a healthy relationship with food.

Moderate physical activity

Al Sholi recommends maintaining regular activity while choosing suitable options such as light walking, swimming or resistance training, depending on the fasting person's energy level and timing.

"Adopting balanced habits can make Ramadan a valuable opportunity to improve one's lifestyle, rather than merely a temporary change in meal times," he concluded.