

MARCH

RAMADAN

IN 2024, RAMADAN is expected to begin the evening of Sunday, March 10, or Monday, March 11, depending on when the crescent moon is sighted. It will last 30 days.

Over 1.8 billion Muslims around the world follow the Islamic calendar (also known as the Hijri or Muslim calendar) in some form. Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and is known as the holy month of fasting. Islamic tradition states that God revealed the Qur'an (Islam's holy book) to the Prophet Muhammad as a "guidance for the people" on the "Night of Power," commemorated on one of the last 10 nights of Ramadan.

For Muslims, Ramadan is a period of reflection, communal prayer and reading the Qur'an. One of the pillars of Islam is known in English as "to refrain." This is practised during Ramadan through an obligation to refrain from food, drink and immoral behaviour between dawn and dusk. After sunset prayer, Muslims gather in their homes or mosques to break their fast with a meal called "Iftar," which is often shared with friends and family.

The end of the Ramadan fast is celebrated as Eid al-Fitr or the "Feast of Fast-breaking." Eid al-Fitr is a large celebration filled with family, food and prayer. Eid al-Fitr does not begin until the new moon is seen, which means it starts at different times around the world.

Connection to Doctors Nova Scotia's work

Many of our physician members may be celebrating Ramadan and engaging in the act of fasting. Religion and spirituality are important components of the social determinants that affect patients' health behaviours. To ensure the delivery of culturally competent care by Doctors Nova Scotia (DNS) members, it is important for physicians to have a basic understanding of how Islamic teachings, including intermittent fasting, shape their Muslim patients' health. By understanding Muslim culture and values, both DNS staff and members can build trust and improve experiences and outcomes in the health-care system.



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Resources

[University of Waterloo Department of Science: Helping Health Care Providers Understand Ramadan: Helping health care providers understand Ramadan | Science \(uwaterloo.ca\)](#)



Find more EDIA resources, videos and tools in the DNS SharePoint EDIA Hub.