

## **Advice and Guidance for NHS staff during the Holy month of Ramadan**

Ramadan is one of the most holy months in the Muslim calendar. During this period healthy adult Muslims fast for 30 days during daylight hours. The first fast is subject to the sighting of the new moon.

This year Ramadan starts approximately on 17 June 2015. Fasting commences at dawn and ends at sunset. Each fast will get later as the month progresses. You can refer to the Unified Islamic Prayer Timetable for London [w here](#). The East London Mosque Ramadhan timetable [can be found here](#).

During this month, fasting Muslims who suffer from chronic illnesses, who are pregnant, or are on medication, may face irregularities in their health such as dehydration, dizziness or other medical complications. If they do not take appropriate precaution there may face difficulty in administering medication, for example abandoning daytime medication or taking multiple doses of medication together. As a result, these patients may use NHS services more often during Ramadan.

NHS staff need to understand the following Islamic rulings and also give out the following messages in order to deal with these cases:

- If patients suffer from any chronic illness they must consult with their GP prior to fasting and find out if they can fast safely during Ramadan, given their health condition.
- If fasting is not recommended for the patient that you see on a permanent basis, the Islamic ruling is that they should not fast during Ramadan and instead should make a charitable contribution (fidyah).
- If a patient has an acute condition and will recover in due time, then the Islamic ruling is that they make up the fast when they are better at a later date.
- If a patient's health is at risk due to the Fast i.e. dehydration, pregnancy or injury they can break their fast as their health is more important. The Islamic ruling is clear on this matter and the fast will need to be made up when they are able to or when their health is better at a later date.