



American Muslim
Health Professionals



Joint Statement from the National Muslim Task Force on COVID-19 (NMTF) and the National Black Muslim COVID Coalition (NBMCC) on Ramadan 2021 and COVID-19 Vaccines
April 6, 2021 / Sha'ban 24, 1442 AH

As we approach Ramadan 2021/1442 H, we recognize the difficulties of the past year, including the loss of loved ones across the United States and the world. As of this week, more than 555,000 Americans and 2.7M individuals in other parts of the world have tragically lost their lives due to COVID-19. While there is great news with the vaccine roll-out, we must still be cautious and alert. The COVID-19 virus is still here and there are new, emerging strains. Therefore this Ramadan, the NMTF and the NBMCC are providing updated guidance on having a #SafeRamadan and the COVID-19 vaccines.

The Task Force and Coalition strongly recommend:

1. **Health Safety Practices:** All individuals, families, households, and community organizations **continue to follow** public health and government guidance for **social distancing, wearing masks in public spaces and limiting mass public gatherings** for a #SafeRamadan.
2. **Safe Community Space and Mosque Use:** Careful implementation of safe practices in the community and mosques, especially during Ramadan. A cautious approach to reopening is necessary for maximizing preservation of human life. **(Attachment 1)**
3. **COVID-19 Vaccine Promotion:** Getting the COVID-19 vaccine in consultation with your healthcare provider.

Safe Ramadan:

Mosques (including Islamic centers, schools, etc.) play important roles in religious and communal life, especially during the month of Ramadan. We recognize that local mosques have faced difficulties and challenges because of the pandemic. **Mosque leadership bear an important moral responsibility to ensure safety of their congregants.** They should comply with local guidance and implement safe protocols to protect community members, **especially during taraweeh and jum'uah prayers. (See Attachment 1).**

COVID-19 Vaccines:

All the vaccines approved in the US have been deemed permissible to use ([halal](#)). They have not been compared to each other yet, but all are effective at fighting severe COVID-19 infections.

- The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines **DO NOT** contain pork products or alcohol and were **NOT** made using aborted fetal stem cells. They are made using novel mRNA technology. According to health experts, they are not expected to have negative long-term health impacts. This **DOES NOT** change your DNA.
- The Johnson & Johnson vaccine works similarly to older vaccines. They do not have pork products, but have been manufactured using cell lines from aborted fetal stem cells. However, many juridical authorities have deemed them permissible to use ([halal](#)) given the societal and individual health needs to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.
- The [CDC](#) states that **fully vaccinated** individuals can be indoors unmasked **with other fully vaccinated individuals.**

The NMTF and the NBMCC stress that although COVID-19 cases are on the decline, **we have not reached herd immunity yet.** We must continue to respect public health guidance. We pray that Allah (SWT) facilitates our lives and practices in Ramadan, protect our communities, and reward those working on the frontlines of this

pandemic. We also pray that He accepts our fasts, acts of worship and prayers during this blessed month, and grants success over this pandemic.

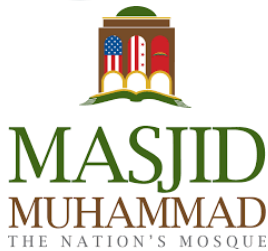
***Recommendations are based on consultations with public health and religious experts, guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), federal and state authorities, and are in accordance with the Islamic moral tradition's views on the sanctity and preservation of life.**

Respectfully,

National Muslim Task Force on COVID-19 (NMTF) and National Black Muslim COVID Coalition (NBMCC)

Signatories:

American Muslim Bar Association
American Muslim Community Foundation (AMCF)
American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP)
Association of Muslim Chaplains
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
Eid Holiday Coalition
Fiqh Council of North America (FCNA)
ICNA Relief USA
Imamia Medics International (IMI)
Institute for Muslim Mental Health
Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA)
Islamic Networks Group (ING) and Affiliates
Islamic Relief USA
Islamic Schools League of America (ISLA)
Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)
KARAMAH: Muslim Women Lawyers for Human Rights
Masjid Muhammad
Mercy Without Limits
Muslim American Society (MAS)
Muslim Health Consortium (MHC)
Muslim Wellness Foundation
MuslimARC
North American Imams Federation (NAIF)
Penny Appeal USA
Stanford Muslim Mental Health and Islamic Psychology Lab
The Initiative on Islam and Medicine (II&M)



Ramadan 2021 tips for Mosques and Islamic Centers: #SafeRamadan

Approved by the National Muslim Task Force on COVID-19 and the National Black Muslim COVID Coalition, including Fiqh Council of North America, Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America, Chicagoland Ulema, and the Initiative of Islam and Medicine.

Mosques (including Islamic centers, schools, etc.) play many important roles in religious and communal life. We know they have faced difficulties and challenges because of the pandemic. We recognize that each Mosque will have a different plan based on available human and financial resources and local/state guidance. We strongly encourage mosques to conduct outreach, community education, and plan ahead for Ramadan.

Here are some reminders, tips and a checklist any mosque/Islamic center can use:

Before coming to the mosque (Prevention)

- Individuals at high-risk of death from COVID-19: age 65+, those with high blood pressure, heart disease, obese (BMI > 35), diabetes, lung disease, cancer and immunocompromised state.
- Individuals who are sick (have fever, cough, runny nose, diarrhea, etc.) should be counseled that the Friday prayer obligation is lifted from them and should avoid spreading any illness.
- Wudu should be performed at home. Public Wudu areas should be kept closed due to the high risk of respiratory droplets. Individual restrooms can be kept open for dire needs and once used must be thoroughly cleaned.

Before entering the mosque

- Create signage and notices reminding individuals of the guidelines/restrictions near entrances and exits.
- Employees and volunteers should also be screened for any cold-like symptoms before coming into the Mosque.
- Monitor the number of individuals entering the Mosque, check temperature and implement screening protocols at the entrances.

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The National Muslim COVID-19 Taskforce and the National Black Muslim COVID Coalition pray that Allah (SWT) continue to protect our communities, healthcare/frontline workers, and vulnerable populations from this pandemic, and accepts our fasts, duas, and prayers during this blessed month of Ramadan.

Ramadan 2021 tips for Mosques and Islamic Centers: #SafeRamadan

While in the mosque

- While in the Mosque, everyone should continue to observe social distancing and maintain 6 feet of separation between one another. In addition to distancing, face coverings with masks, cleanliness, and sanitation should be practiced regularly.
 - Individuals should wear face masks during the entirety of the prayer services. Provide facial masks to those who do not have one.
 - Adequate distance between prayer rows and individuals **MUST** be implemented. Thus every other row can be filled and individuals within rows can be spaced 6 feet apart.
 - Provide hand sanitizing stations (alcohol-based hand sanitizers with greater than 60% alcohol content)
 - Each individual should bring their own prayer rug. Centers can make arrangements to provide sheets of paper to accommodate those who don't bring their own rug.
- Have a dedicated cleaning and disinfection team that uses EPA-approved disinfectants to clean doors, doorknobs, tables, chairs, and restrooms on a routine schedule.
- Allow fresh air/ventilation into the mosque. Air purifiers or HEPA filters can be used.
- Where practical and possible, Friday prayers can be performed outside on the grounds of the Mosque or parking lot spaces, with 6 feet of separation, to lower transmission risks.
- The current CDC guidelines regarding social practices have good evidence to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- The recent CDC guidance on allowing people to be in the same room **ONLY** applies to people who are fully vaccinated. This means people who are more than two weeks out from their vaccine (either after the 2nd shot for Pfizer/Moderna and after the single J&J vaccine). This guidance does **NOT** apply to those who are not fully vaccinated yet and should not be used as a reason to open up mosques.

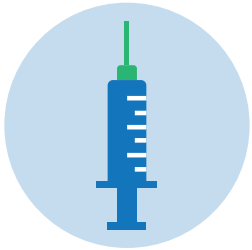
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The National Muslim COVID-19 Taskforce and the National Black Muslim COVID Coalition pray that Allah (SWT) continue to protect our communities, healthcare/frontline workers, and vulnerable populations from this pandemic, and accepts our fasts, duas, and prayers during this blessed month of Ramadan.

Mosque/Islamic Center Reopening Checklist

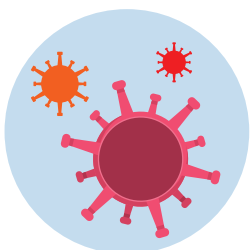
CATEGORY	TASK	COMPLETED/ AVAILABLE	NEED TO COMPLETE	COMMENTS/ NOTES:
Reopening Plan and Strategy	Develop a detailed reopening plan with review and feedback from Imam, mosque leadership and local public health experts.			
	Secure human and financial resources, and develop the educational messages, to enable a safe and limited re-opening			
Logistical and Administrative Plan	Designate a dedicated cleaning staff with required training and protocols			
	Plentiful hand sanitizing stations for strategic locations in the center			
	Carpet cleaning disinfectants (dry cleaning powders or liquid cleaning)			
	Check functioning and cleanliness of in-house water systems and ventilation systems			
	Design and post signs and placards regarding the phased opening conditions and guidelines			
	Develop a plan for lottery system, as needed, and education for Friday prayers			
	Adequate PPE (e.g. masks) for staff and potential congregants			
Employees/ Volunteers	Designate a screening team to perform temperature checks and protocols to assure limits and conditions for Friday prayer are met			
	Ensure that staff and volunteers are healthy and asymptomatic (without symptoms)			
	Educate employees/volunteers on symptoms, hygiene, and cleaning protocols			
	Educate employees/volunteers on reopening protocols			
Community Members	Inform community of reopening plans, including lottery protocols, areas of the mosque that will be opened or kept close (e.g. the wudu area)			
	Inform community of screening practices that will be implemented as well as lottery protocol. Individuals at risk for infection or that are sick will be asked to stay at home. See statement above for details.			
	Inform community of protocols for salah as cited by the Fiqh councils			

Covid-19 Vaccine Tips



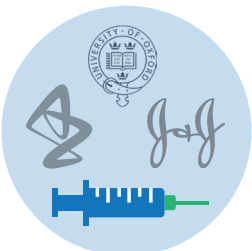
What is a vaccine?

Previous vaccines contain **safe** amounts of weakened or killed virus (unable to replicate) so your own immune system can make antibodies against a virus.



What is this new method being used for the COVID-19 vaccine?

Pfizer and Moderna are using a new method to make vaccines: using messenger RNA (mRNA), something the body uses everyday, that is specially coded for the COVID-19 virus (spike protein, also known as an antigen). This does **not** change your DNA.



Updates on vaccines

The J&J vaccine was made using viral-vector technology, that uses another weakened virus (**not** SARS-CoV-2) so that your body will produce the spike protein and fight off the COVID-19 virus. It does not contain any pork products. "Oxford-AstraZeneca and the J&J vaccines are **halal** and permissible for use although other vaccines without ethical issues (e.g, mRNA vaccines) are preferable when available."



What happened in the vaccine trials?

In all three trials, there were ~100,000 participants who did NOT have COVID-19 (ages 18+). Some were high-risk patients and from diverse ethnicities. All vaccines decreased the risk of severe infection and death. There are some differences in effects, dosing schedule and side effects.



*Long term safety data and effectiveness will continue for the next 2 years.



Who is at risk of death from COVID-19?

Age 65+, those with high blood pressure, heart disease, obese (BMI > 35), diabetes, lung disease, cancer and immuno-compromised state.



What are the side effects of the vaccine?

Fatigue, fever, headache and redness at the injection site (these usually happened after the second injection). These side effects resolve fairly quickly and are also seen with other vaccines.



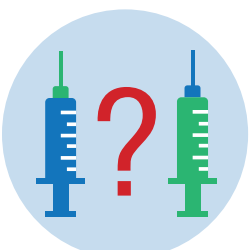
How does a vaccine get approved?

It goes through intense medical review, data safety monitoring boards, vaccine project monitoring boards, and the CDC advisory committee. They are an independent group of scientists with no connections to government or drug companies. The COVID-19 vaccines have been approved under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA).



Is the vaccine halal?

It is the majority opinion that the Pfizer, Moderna, J&J and AstraZeneca vaccines **are Halal**.



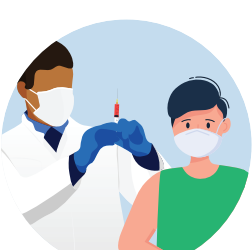
Which vaccine is better?

None of the vaccines have been compared to each other, so it's unclear which is better. All are effective at preventing severe COVID-19 infection.



Can I stop wearing a mask and stop social distancing?

While we are still collecting information on the vaccines, you still have to practice prevention measures to stop the spread of the disease: wear a mask, wash your hands and social distance.



How can I get the vaccine?

Now that the first phase is completed, vaccine access is state-dependent. Please visit your [local state public health department](#) or [vaccinefinder.org](https://www.vaccinefinder.org) for more information on how to get the vaccine.



CAN MUSLIMS TAKE COVID VACCINES IN RAMADAN?



YES, YOU CAN!

Taking Covid-19 vaccines currently authorized in this country **does not invalidate the fast during Ramadan** as per the opinion of the majority of Islamic scholars (e.g, Fiqh Council of North America, Assembly of Muslim Jurists of America).

This is general information only. Please refer to your local Islamic Scholars & healthcare professionals. For detailed information, please visit imana.org/covid-19

ISLAMIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE HEALTH PROFESSIONALS COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL MUSLIM TASK FORCE ON COVID-19

FASTING & COVID VACCINATIONS



Can I take the Covid-19 vaccine while fasting?

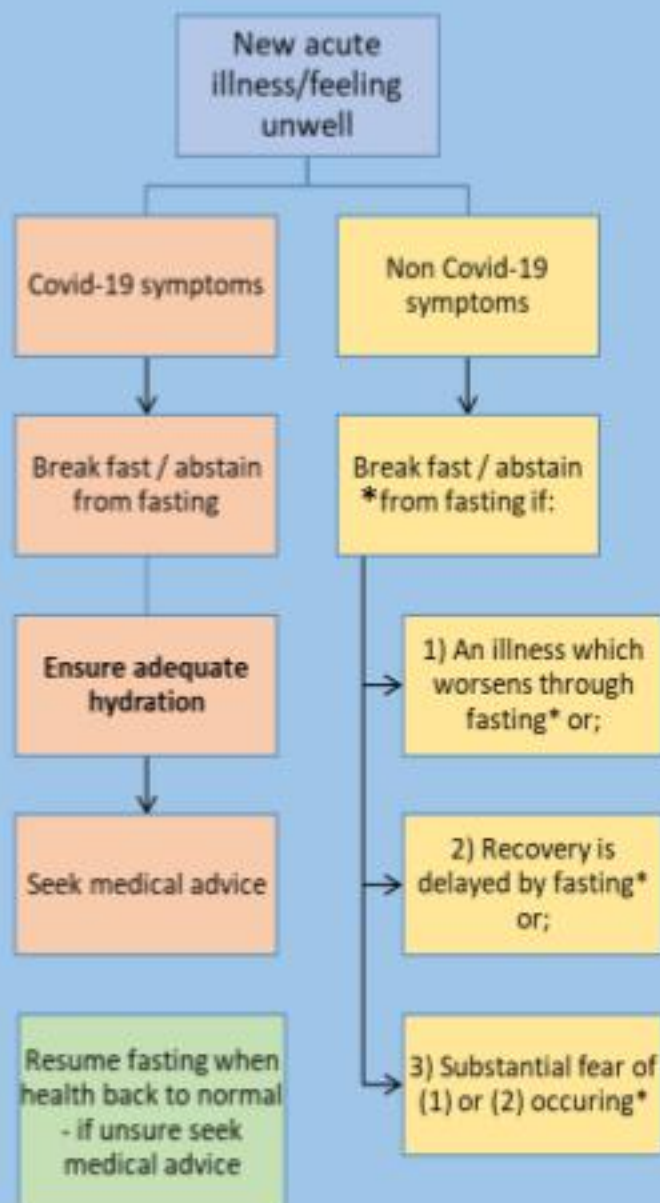
Taking the Covid-19 vaccines does not invalidate the fast, as per the opinion of most Islamic scholars. Individuals should not delay their Covid vaccinations on the account of Ramadan.

Subcutaneous, subdermal, intramuscular, interosseous, or intra-articular injections for non-nutritional purposes whilst fasting do not invalidate the fast, regardless of the injected content entering the blood circulation.¹



What if I experience intolerable side effects?

Most side effects are mild, last a few hours and self-limiting. However, should an individual become unwell after receiving the vaccine, then the general principles pertaining to illness and fasting apply. These have been described in detail²⁻⁴ and outlined in the figure below which is adapted from the British Islamic Medical Association's Rapid Ramadan Review & Recommendations.



* Determined by any of the following:

- Prior experience of fasting with such an illness
- Common knowledge
- The advice of an appropriate healthcare practitioner

References:

1. Rashid R. What Invalidates Fasting Related To Body Cavities. Al Balagh Academy. 2020. https://www.academia.edu/43158103/PART_2_WHAT_INVALIDATES_FASTING_RELATED_TO_BODY_CAVITIES2020. Accessed 28 Jan 2021
2. <https://www.sistani.org/english/book/48/2263/> Ruling 1555
3. Ghouri N, Hussain S, Mohammed R, Beshyah SA, Chowdhury TA, Sattar N, et al. Diabetes, driving and fasting during Ramadan: the interplay between secular and religious law. *BMJ Open Diabetes Res Care*. 2018;6(1):e000520
4. Waqar S, Ghouri N. Managing Ramadan queries in COVID-19. *BJGP Open*. 2020;4(2).
5. British Islamic Medical Association. Ramadan rapid review and recommendations. 2020. <https://britishima.org/ramadan-rapid-review>. Accessed 28 Jan 2021

American Muslim Health Professionals and Islamic Medical Association of North America in collaboration with Health Professionals Committee of the National Muslim Task Force on COVID-19.

Source: British Islamic Medical Association

This is generic information. Please consult your local scholars & healthcare professionals.



#SafeRamadan tips during COVID-19...again!

Ramadan is a month filled with blessing and joy and we wish to share that celebration with our fellow American Muslims. Below are recommendations to have a safe and healthy Ramadan.

Households, community organizations, and individuals should continue to follow public health and state authority guidance.

- Wear masks
- Limit mass public gatherings
- Socially distance (at least 6 feet)

Individuals upon whom Ramadan fasting is obligatory should fast, and those who have legitimate exemptions to or face credible hardship should exercise the appropriate option of feeding others or making up fasts based on their personal circumstances and in consultation with Islamic authorities.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: always practice physical distancing and proper hand hygiene even during any exercise activity. There are many outdoor activities that can be safely done. Indoor physical movement and online physical activity classes are encouraged to avoid large gatherings.



HEALTHY DIET AND NUTRITION: Eat a variety of fresh and unprocessed foods every day and drink plenty of water. Consider buying locally grown foods too.

*This pandemic has highlighted the reality of food insecurity throughout the country. For those who are able, please donate to your local food bank: www.feedingamerica.org



PROMOTING MENTAL AND PSYCHOSOCIAL HEALTH: It is important to reassure the faithful that they can still reflect, improve, pray, share, and care – all from a healthy distance. Offering special prayers for the sick, alongside messages of hope and comfort, are methods to observe the tenets of Ramadan while maintaining public health. This pandemic has really impacted mental health and for more resources, please visit: Family Youth Institute, Khalil Center, American Muslim Wellness Foundation, and others.



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: incidents of domestic violence, particularly against women, children, and marginalized people, increased during the pandemic. Religious leaders and community members can actively speak out against violence and provide support or encourage victims to seek help.



RACIAL JUSTICE/EQUITY: This pandemic has highlighted the long history of racism and racial injustice in our country. We all can play a part in improving the lives of others and promoting equity amongst our different cultures and races that make Islam a vibrant religion. Please visit the Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative and the American Muslim Wellness Foundation for more information.

Individuals and corporations can donate their obligatory and non-obligatory alms (zakat and sadaqah) to organizations that are working to support those impacted, directly or indirectly, by the pandemic both within the United States and abroad.

The National Muslim COVID-19 Taskforce and the National Black Muslim COVID Coalition pray that Allah (SWT) continue to protect our communities, healthcare/frontline workers, and vulnerable populations from this pandemic, and accepts our fasts, duas, and prayers during this blessed month of Ramadan.