

Health

The Prophet (Peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Ask Allah (swt) for forgiveness and health, for after being granted certainty, one is given nothing better than health."



THE MESSAGE

Spreading the Light of Knowledge
Special Health Issue

Free of charge

ISSUE 1 - April 2009

Islam and Health

In the name of Allah, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful.

Welcome to a special issue of the Message dedicated to health. Many people may ask what does health have to do with Islam.

Firstly our bodies are a trust from Allah and therefore we have a responsibility to look after them and maintain them in the best manner without going overboard or to excess. After all Islam is about balance. We are also told that our bodies have a right over us as well.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stressed to us that one of the best blessings Allah can bestow upon us is good health. If we have good health it means we can strive to do more good deeds and hopefully gain a better place in Paradise. How often do we see people in later life who because they have neglected their health in earlier life now find it difficult to pray due to ill health. Yet praying five times a day is a mandatory pillar of Islam we have to fulfill even when ill. Of course Islam accommodates for illness so that if we are too ill to pray standing then we pray sitting and if we are too ill to pray sitting then you can even pray lying down. Despite this dispensation how much nicer would it be if we could pray standing up.

Islam also encourages us not to go to excess in our eating and drinking. We are asked to eat in moderation. The Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be up him) said that it is enough for a person to have a few morsels of food to keep up his strength, yet how often do we all overeat and slip into gluttony. The Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be up him) advised that when eating to leave one third of our stomach for food, one third for drink and the remaining third for air, i.e empty. Clear advise not to overfill our stomachs especially as constant overeating can lead to other health problems.

Lastly it is NEVER too late to improve our health. Recent research has shown that if we were to start exercising regularly then it helps to undo some of the previous years of neglect from before. This does not mean we have to join the local gym. Just walking to the shops instead of driving everywhere can count as exercise. Doing housework regularly is also exercise. Even praying five times a day is exercise.

All good that comes from this magazine is from Allah and any mistakes are ours so please forgive us for any shortcomings. - The Message Team.



Contents

- 2 Islam and Health**
From the Islamic Perspective, why health is great blessing.
- 4 Heart Care**
Advice on how to take care of our heart and to ensure it continues to serve us well throughout our busy lives.
- 5 Living with Diabetes**
General advice on how to live with diabetes.
- 6 Stress**
Managing and coping with stress.
- 7 Healthy Eating**
Why healthy eating can have a positive impact on our health.

This special issue of The Message has been produced as part of the NHS Mid-Life LifeCheck

Try the Mid-Life LifeCheck for yourself on line at the address below:



Mid-Life LifeCheck

www.midlifelifecheck.co.uk



Email us with your comments and feedback and please let us know what you think.

Email the editor directly on: riz160@yahoo.co.uk

Please put "The Message" in the subject heading when emailing us.

PLEASE NOTE: The information in this publication is intended for general guidance only and not intended to take the place of professional medical advice. If you are affected by any of the health conditions discussed in the publication or any other health condition you should seek advice from your Doctor or other suitably qualified professional.



Islam & Health

From an Islamic perspective health is viewed as one of the greatest blessings that God has bestowed on mankind. It should be noted that the greatest blessing after belief is health, as narrated in the following Hadith: The final messenger of God, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) mounted the pulpit, then wept and said, "Ask Allah (swt) for forgiveness and health, for after being granted certainty, one is given nothing better than health." - Related in Tirmidhi

Health is indeed a favour that we take for granted. We should express gratitude to God for bestowing us with health, and we should try our best to look after it. God has entrusted us with our bodies for a predestined period of time. He will hold us to account on how we looked after and utilised our bodies and good health.

No one will be allowed to move from his position on the Day of Judgement until he has been asked how he spent his life, how he used his knowledge, how he earned and spent his money and in what pursuits he used his health" Related in Tirmidhi

The preservation of this blessing can only be achieved through taking good care of one's health and taking every measure to maintain and enhance it. With this in mind every Muslim should make sure they undertake all necessary actions which are conducive to the preservation of good health. Healthy living is part and parcel of Islam, introduced with the inception of Islam more than 14 centuries ago. Furthermore, the Quran and the Sunnah outline the teachings that show every Muslim how to protect his health and live life in a state of purity. Numerous examples in Islam instruct its followers to live a healthy life, a selection are summarised below.

Daily Prayer

Any health benefits derived from prayer or any other worship (fasting) are secondary in importance. The Salah or Islamic prayer comprises both physical movement and mental concentration. Performed five times a day at specific times of the day, the obligatory prayers provide a good means for the circulation of blood, breathing and general suppleness of joints. Though it is not physically over-demanding, we know that anything done moderately and consistently is far better than sudden over-exertion at infrequent periods.

Ablution Before Prayer & Ghusl

Before a Muslim performs their prayers, they must perform the ablution which comprises thorough washing of the hands, mouth, nose, face, arms (up to the elbow) and the feet (up to the ankle). This ritual of self-purification when carried out five-times a day, leaves the worshiper clean, refreshed and ready to face his creator. Muslims are also required to clean themselves with water after urinating or defecating. Another act of worship which

also helps to maintain good health is taking a shower, or ghusl. This is compulsory when one is in the state of ritual impurity, and is compulsory at least once a week before attending the weekly Friday prayer.

Diet & Nutrition

Various verses and texts within Islam promote the eating of healthy wholesome food and eating in moderation. God clearly states in the Quran:

Eat of the good things which We have provided for you. (2:173) Eat of what is lawful and wholesome on the earth. (2:168)

A healthy nutritious diet must also be balanced, in order to maintain the balance that God has established in all things, this is addressed in the Quran when God says:

And He enforced the balance. That you exceed not the bounds; but observe the balance strictly; and fall not short thereof. (55:79)

As we know, eating excessively causes harm to our systems. Many ailments are related to uncontrolled eating habits such as, diabetes, vascular diseases, stroke, heart attack etc. It has been said that the 'stomach is the home of ill health' and is usually responsible in some way to ill health. Islam teaches us to eat moderately:

Eat and drink, but avoid excess. (20:81)

Over indulgence and wasting of food are further dissuaded in the Hadith of the Messenger of God:

'No human being has ever filled a container worse than his own stomach. The son of Adam needs no more than a few morsels of food to keep up his strength, doing so he should consider that a third of his stomach is for food, a third for drink and a third for breathing'
Ibn Majah

Fasting

Fasting during the month of Ramadan from dawn till dusk, is undertaken to seek the pleasure of God and to practise self control and restraint in all aspects of living, with the idea being to continue this state of God consciousness and piety after Ramadan is over. It is an ideal time to remove the impurities and shortcomings in ones life.

'O you who believe fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you so that you can learn Taqwa (God consciousness)'

Fasting in Islam is not like crash dieting, it is adequate in calorie intake and involves no malnutrition. All foods are permissible to eat in moderation, once the fast is over. Many processed foods we eat contain chemicals which over-time can be stored by our bodies as toxins within cells. Fasting can assist our body to purge these toxins while also allowing our body and digestive system to rest. Research has indicated that fasting can lower blood sugar levels and cholesterol, suggesting it may be advisable for moderate, stable, non-insulin diabetes, obesity and essential hypertension.

Prohibition of Intoxicants

Islam strictly forbids indulgence in intoxicants such as alcohol and drugs for good reason. The limited pleasure of such vices causes immense long-term damage to both mind, body and the social fabric of society. Particular schools of thought include smoking within the list of prohibitions because of its harmful effects on the body. It seems that if Muslims adhere to the teachings of Islam, they would automatically lead a healthier lifestyle. God says in the Quran:

Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you with intoxicants and gambling and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer, will ye not then abstain? (5:90).

Article courtesy of Muslim Health Network.
www.muslimhealthnetwork.org

Heart Care



The heart is a fantastic organ; it pumps blood around our body with each heartbeat, at rest our heart beats about 100,000 beats per day increasing with exercise supplying oxygenated blood to our muscles and organs.

We must take care of this fantastic organ to ensure it continues to serve us well throughout our busy lives, there are many factors that will affect the function of the heart and there are many factors we can take into account to ensure our heart remains healthy.

Heart disease or cardiovascular disease is very common within the UK. For the South Asian community this is a major cause of illness and even death.

Statistics show South Asians have a 50% higher chance of developing heart disease and also a far higher chance of this being fatal.

It is important we develop a healthy lifestyle not only for our selves but also to be able to transfer these good habits to our children.

♥ Key Lifestyle Changes

- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables, the recommended five a day.
- Take 30 minutes of exercise at least 3 times a week.
- Stop Smoking.
- Cook healthy meals using different techniques for example avoid deep frying, cook with Olive oil or Sunflower oil, eat more fish and chicken and reduce red meat consumption.
- Reduce stress, have fun, enjoy your life.

Other areas to consider are: maintain your blood sugar levels if you have diabetes and also controlling high blood pressure and high cholesterol if these have been diagnosed.

♥ What can go wrong?

If the arteries providing the blood supply become blocked with fatty deposits these can cause a Heart Attack it is important that help is accessed early to avoid permanent damage to the surrounding muscle in the heart. The best treatment for this is primary angioplasty this can only be provided within the first few hours of a heart attack so it is important to seek help early NEVER DELAY

The symptoms of a heart attack vary from one person to another. They can range from a severe pain in the centre of the chest, to having mild chest discomfort that makes you feel generally unwell.

The common symptoms of a heart attack include:

- Central chest pain.
- The pain can spread to the arms, neck or jaw.
- Some people can feel sick or sweaty as well as having central chest pain.
- Some people can feel short of breath as well as having central chest pain.

The less common symptoms of a heart attack include:

- A dull pain, ache or 'heavy' feeling in the chest.
- A mild discomfort in the chest that makes you feel generally unwell.
- The pain in the chest can spread to the back or stomach.
- Some people say that the chest pain feels like a bad episode of indigestion.
- Some people can feel a bit light-headed or dizzy as well as having chest pain.

There is further guidance on the British Heart Foundation website at www.bhf.org.uk.

♥ Heart Rhythm Disease

Sometimes the heart beat can become too slow or too fast and there can also be symptoms of feeling missed beats.

There are a number of treatments provided to regulate the rhythm these vary from simple medication, specialist techniques and also the use of some mechanical devices like pacemakers.

♥ Where to go for help

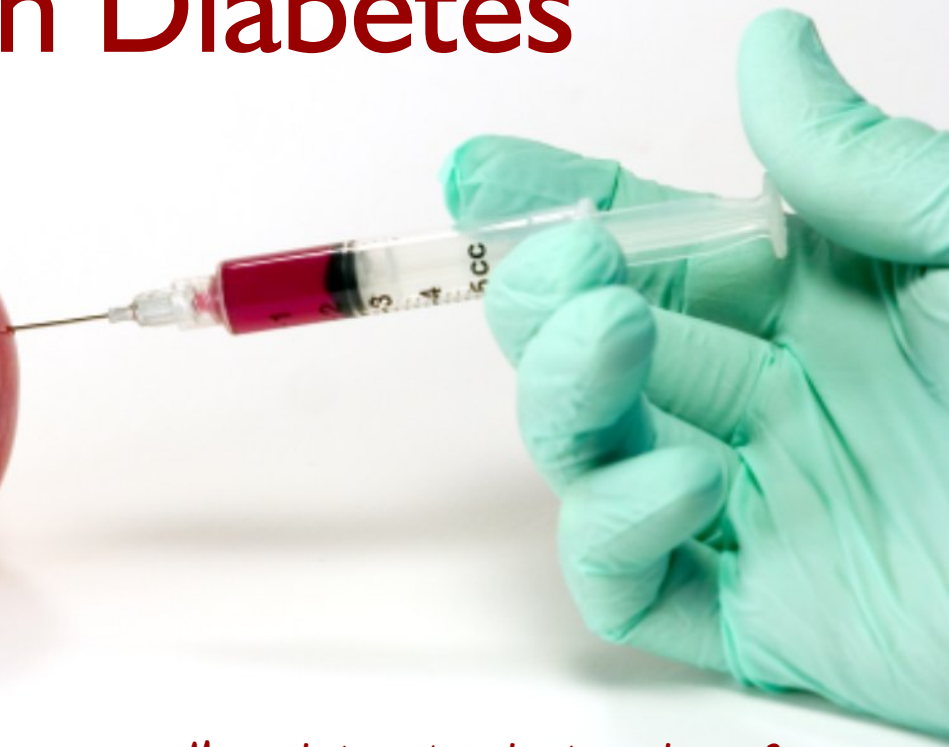
GP can provide routine advice for non urgent issues and manage blood pressure diabetes and cholesterol.

Specific Specialist care is provided within the hospitals North Bristol Trust and also the New Bristol Heart Institute which is due to open in May 2009.

All services can be provided with translation support and you can request a chaperone if this is required.

♥ For further information you can go to the British Heart Foundation at www.bhf.org.uk or The Muslim Health Network at www.muslimhealthnetwork.org.

Living With Diabetes



What is diabetes?

Diabetes means that there is too much glucose (sugar) in the blood. Your body usually produces glucose when you digest your food, and a hormone called insulin takes the glucose from your blood and helps it enter your cells where it is used. As the insulin takes the glucose, your blood glucose level reduces. Diabetes develops when your body doesn't produce enough insulin, which leads to the level of glucose in your blood becoming too high.

Are there different types of diabetes?

Yes, there are two types:

Type one diabetes: your body cannot make insulin. This type usually affects children and young adults.

Type two diabetes: this is more common, and occurs when you can't produce enough insulin or it doesn't work properly. Type two diabetes tends to develop gradually as people get older - usually after the age of 40. It is closely linked with being overweight and not being physically active. People are also more likely to develop this condition if there is a family history of diabetes.

Almost two million adults have been diagnosed with diabetes in the UK, but this number is rising. Worryingly, type two diabetes is now being diagnosed in younger people. It is estimated that by 2010 about three million people will have been diagnosed with diabetes. Some ethnic groups have a much higher rate of diabetes - particularly people of Afro Caribbean and South Asian origin.

How is diabetes linked to heart disease?

Diabetes increases your risk of developing cardiovascular disease. High glucose levels can affect the artery walls, encouraging fatty deposits (atheroma) to develop. If you have diabetes, you are more likely to have high cholesterol levels and high blood pressure. Diabetes also increases the effect of some of the other risk factors for cardiovascular disease such as smoking and being overweight.

What can I do?

If you don't have diabetes, you can greatly reduce your risk of developing it by controlling your weight and doing regular physical activity.

If you do have diabetes, it's very important to make sure that you control your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol. This will help to keep your risk of cardiovascular disease as low as possible. You can also:

- Do more physical activity
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- Control your weight and body shape
- Give up smoking

If you are diagnosed with diabetes, you may also need to take medication such as statins (a cholesterol-lowering medicine) to help protect your heart.

For further information contact: Diabetes UK Tel: 0845 120 2960
Article courtesy of the British Heart Foundation (www.bhf.org.uk).

There is an excellent new website for Muslims living with Diabetes, full of information on diet, fasting in Ramadhan and how to manage the condition, all from an Islamic perspective. It is called Maslaha and you can view it at: www.diabetesintowerhamlets.org.



Stress

Managing & Coping

We all find different things stressful and experience different symptoms of stress. While we all crave a stress-free life, a degree of stress is necessary to keep us motivated and enthusiastic. Getting the balance right helps us lead a healthy, active lifestyle and cope with stress in a positive way.

How does stress affect the heart?

Stress is not a direct risk factor for cardiovascular disease, but it's possible that stress may contribute to it depending on your coping mechanism for stress. Some people cope with stress with destructive behaviour such as smoking, drinking too much alcohol and overeating. These increase your risk of cardiovascular disease.

There is no evidence to suggest that stress causes coronary heart disease or heart attacks, but if you have coronary heart disease and experience feelings of anxiety or are under lots of stress, it may bring on symptoms like angina.

What you can do?

Changing your lifestyle in a positive way can help you feel physically fitter and better able to cope with some of the demands put on you. A balanced diet and regular physical activity will help you cope with stress.

If you often feel stressed or anxious, it is important to learn how to relax. Some people find that physical activity or other relaxation techniques can help. You could make a list of things that help you to relax and schedule one every day.

There is plenty that you can do to manage stress or anxiety. You may need to identify situations that make you feel stressed at home or at work and try to avoid them if you can.

You may find it helpful to learn about techniques for managing stress. If you think you are stressed or very anxious, talk to your GP who will be able to help you decide on the best way to deal with it.

The above information only is courtesy of the British Heart Foundation (www.bhf.org.uk).

In Summary

Stress can lead to anxiety, panic attacks as well as affecting everyday life. There are many ways to help look after your mental wellbeing and cope with stress and anxiety.

- Exercise - this can be a ten minute walk around the park
- Eat well - fruit and vegetables.
- Complimentary therapies - massage, herbal products
- Support / Community Groups.
- Friends and family - keep in touch with them.
- Take a break.
- Find a hobby or re-start one - from gardening to sewing to sports; having time out for your self is important.
- The GP can help with medication and/or referral to talking therapies.

Spend time in the remembrance of God (Dikhr), Prayer (Salaah) and reading the Qur'an, these will bring ease to your heart and Insha 'Allah make it easy for you to cope.

"With every hardship there is always ease,. Indeed with every hardship there is always ease." (Qur'an 94:5-6)

"It may well be that Allah brings about ease after hardship. (Qur'an 65:7)

"Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest". (Qur'an 13:28)

Active Choices

If you have low to medium risk health problems, such as controlled diabetes, depression, weight problems, joint problems and mild blood pressure you can use the Active Choices Scheme. Your GP can refer you and trained instructors help you develop an exercise programme that suits you and support you to get started and keep going with low-cost exercise. For more information contact Craig Hyslop on 0117 922 4719 or e-mail: sport@bristol.gov.uk. Their website is: www.bristol.gov.uk/active-choices

Healthy Eating



Eating healthily can have a dramatic and positive effect on your health

What is a Healthy Diet?

Prevention is better than cure and a healthy diet can not only reduce your chances of developing heart disease, but also protect your heart from further problems if you've already been diagnosed. It's never too late to start eating healthily, and a good diet can also protect against some cancers and diabetes.

Eating healthily can help you keep your weight, cholesterol and blood pressure under control and prevent blood clots and fatty deposits building up in your arteries. Make sure you include plenty of fruit, vegetables and starchy foods, like wholegrain bread, pasta and rice, and reduce the amount of saturated fat, salt and sugar that you include in your diet. It's easy to eat properly and healthy food is delicious try our heart healthy recipes and munch your way to a healthier you.

Fruit and vegetables

Eating at least five portions of fruit and veg a day there's good evidence that they help lower the risk of coronary heart disease. They can be fresh, frozen, dried or tinned and cooked or raw.

Fats

Eating too much fat, especially saturated fat, can have a bad effect on your cholesterol, which can increase your risk of coronary heart disease. Help your heart stay healthy by cutting back on the total amount of fat you eat and replace saturated fats with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.

Oily fish

Eat at least two portions of fish a week, and make one portion an oily fish, such as mackerel, trout or salmon making this small change to your diet could improve your chances of survival after a heart attack. You can find a list of oily fish on the Food Standards website.

Salt

Reducing salt will help you maintain a lower blood pressure, which in turn may reduce your risk of coronary heart disease time to bin the salt grinder and use herbs to season your food instead.

Alcohol

Too much alcohol can increase your blood pressure and may make you pile on the pounds and can also damage your heart muscle.

Article courtesy of the British Heart Foundation (www.bhf.org.uk).



Health Trainers In Your Area

Did you know the NHS now has Health Trainers in the community who:

- Encourage and support adults of all ages to lead a healthier lifestyle
- Provide relevant health advice
- Help people access the right local services
- Work with individuals to set and maintain realistic achievable goals
- Support people with learning difficulties

Health Trainers work in Easton, St Paul's, Lawrence Hill, Hartcliffe, Withywood, Bedminster, Knowle and Southmead.

To find out more contact Mandy Shute on 0791 751 7584 or go to the website on: www.bristolhealthtrainers.co.uk

NHS Mid-Life LifeCheck programme

A new online health service to help you assess and better manage your health

If you are aged between 45 and 60 years, NHS Mid-life LifeCheck is for you.

What is the NHS Mid-Life LifeCheck?

If you are aged between 45 and 60 years, NHS Mid-life LifeCheck is for you.

NHS LifeCheck is an online health service that will help you to assess and better manage your health. Just answer a few simple questions about your lifestyle and NHS LifeCheck will give you personal advice based on your results.

Topics include: stopping smoking, healthy eating, alcohol, physical activity, and emotional wellbeing.

NHS Mid-life LifeCheck lets you know what you are doing well and flags up possible problems for the future. It will help you to make small changes in your life that could have a big impact on your health and wellbeing. You can set goals and ask for email and text reminders to support you with your plan.

All NHS LifeChecks are confidential. No-one can see or read through your answers. You can print off your results if wish to show them to a health professional or someone you trust.

NHS Mid-life LifeCheck has been developed by the Department of Health in consultation with members of the public, doctors, health professionals and researchers.

How can I try out the NHS Mid-Life LifeCheck?

If you are between 45 and 60 years old you can either try out the LifeCheck at the Muslim Health Event or you can go to one of the participating mosques throughout Bristol and try it out there. There will be a trained Muslim volunteer on hand to help you create your own LifeCheck Health plan. They will also answer any questions you may have about how to use the LifeCheck. Or you can go to www.midlifelifecheck.co.uk and try out the MidLife LifeCheck for yourself.

Participating Mosques in Bristol in the NHS Mid-Life LifeCheck

Al-Baseera Mosque
20 Wade St, St. Jude's
Bristol, BS2 9DR
Tel: 0117 941 3331

Easton Islami Darasgah (Mosque)
2 Roman Rd, Easton
Bristol, BS5 6DH
Tel: 0117 951 0156

Masjid As-Sahaba
300 Gloucester Road
Bristol BS7 8PD
Tel: 0780 223 7529

NHS
Mid-Life LifeCheck 

Fully supported by all Mosques in Bristol

Al-Huda Mosque
60 Fox Rd, Easton,
Bristol, BS5 0YA
Tel: 0117 952 2033

Easton Jamia Masjid (Mosque)
66 St. Mark's Rd, Easton
Bristol, BS6 6JH
Tel: 0117 951 0317

Shah Jalal Jame Mosque
468 - 470 Stapleton Rd,
Easton, Bristol, BS5 6PA
Tel: 0117 951 9988

This special issue of The Message has been produced as part of the NHS Mid-Life LifeCheck

Try the MidLife LifeCheck for yourself on line at the address below:

www.midlifelifecheck.co.uk

NHS
Mid-Life LifeCheck

Bristol Central Mosque
Owen St, Easton,
Bristol, BS5 6AP
Tel: 0786 137 7709

Hosseinieh Foundation (Mosque)
Apsley Street, Eastville
Bristol, BS5 6SP
Tel: 0790 192 5126

Please contact mosque beforehand to arrange a suitable time and check availability for the NHS LifeCheck.

Bristol Jamia Mosque
Green Street, Totterdown
Bristol, BS3 4UB
Tel: 0771 195 7425

Islami Darasgah (Mosque) Bristol
109 Lower Cheltenham Place,
Montpelier, Bristol, BS6 5LA
Tel: 07970 394 011