

Fasting In Ramadhan

What is fasting?

It is to abstain from food, drink and sexual intercourse from true dawn (*sub'h sadiq*) till sunset with the intention of fasting.

What exempts one from fasting?

Factors	Explanation	Ruling
Immaturity	a child who is not <i>baligh</i> yet	The children and the insane are exempted from fasting per se.
Insanity		
Travelling [in Shari'ah]	on the condition that the <i>shar'i</i> journey is undertaken <u>at</u> the time of dawn only and not during the day It is preferable for a traveller to fast if he feels that he will not experience difficulty by doing so.	In general, a person who may not fast for any of these reasons must keep count and make up for those missed or broken fasts after Ramadhan.
Menses or lochia	It is prohibited for a woman to fast in these states	A person who cannot fast at all due to very old age or chronic illness (i.e. such that he has no hope of getting better and making up for the missed fast) does not need to make up for them but must give <i>fiyah</i> . (Contact a local scholar for the-then <i>fiyah</i> rate)
Pregnancy	If a pregnant or breastfeeding woman fears for her child's life or her own by fasting	
Breastfeeding		
Excessive hunger or thirst	It is such that it is unbearable for the fasting person	
Illness	It is such that it would worsen or recovery would delay by fasting	
Old age	due to which one is unable to complete a fast	

Disliked whilst fasting

Applying toothpaste, mouthwash or flavoured *miswak*, Lighting incense sticks or benzoin, Gargling or emphasising in drawing the water up the nose, Kissing and cuddling [if fear of sexual intercourse], Tasting or chewing unnecessarily, Collecting saliva in the mouth and swallowing it, Excessive physical activity, Swimming.

The above [on their own] do not nullify the fast but are disliked due to the great likelihood of something entering into the throat or nose, or engaging into sexual intercourse, or becoming excessively tired and thus breaking the fast. Also, it is severely detested to sin and backbite whilst fasting.

Desirable acts

To delay in *subhur* (but before true dawn) and to hasten in *iftar* (after having certainty that the sun has set).

To begin and end the fast with dates or [if not,] water.

For other desirable acts, please see our article on *Ramadhan*

What does NOT break a fast?

Principle:

The fast will not break in ANY of the following cases:

The substance consumed does not have a discernible (visibly present) body

It does not have an independent stay in the digestive system (but attached to something outside)

It is swallowed or inhaled forgetfully

An unavoidable substance (e.g. dust, smog) is not deliberately swallowed or inhaled

The substance consumed does not reach the throat, stomach or intestines [i.e. the digestive system]

The substance consumed enters the body from other than the mouth, nose, anus or a deep abdominal injury [i.e. from the ears (unless there is a hole in the eardrum), eyes, vagina, urinal passage, a deep head injury (unless the basal skull is fractured), or pores of the body.]

Ejaculation occurs without physical stimulation

There is intimacy that does not entail intercourse or swallowing something.

Examples of what does not break the fast:

Acupuncture, Antimony (*surmah*), Blood from gums [if swallowed when less than saliva and no taste of blood], Balm, Blood tests and bloods taken (intravenous or thumb prick), Blood transfusions, Bugs and flies [4], Concentrated oxygen, Contact lenses, Creams (moisturising) and lotions, Cupping, Deodorant [4] [unless the visible fumes are deliberately inhaled], Dust [4] [unless it is deliberately inhaled], Ear drops or any medication into ear [if the eardrum is imperforated], Ejaculation [only if involuntarily without any physical stimulation], Endoscopy (which is not oral)- gynecology, laparoscopy and arthroscopy [whether with lubricant or not], Epidural analgesia, Eye drops or any medication to the eye, Glucose or saline drip, 'itr (fragrance) or any homeopathic medicine [without visible particles entering the throat] if inhaled whether intentionally or not, Food, drink or sexual intercourse [if **forgetfully**], Food stuck in between the teeth from before starting the fast [if swallowed **and less than** a chickpea in size], Forgetfulness [in eating or drinking anything], Injections (intracardiac, intradermal, intravenous, intramuscular, intraosseous and subcutaneous), Intravenous drips, Kidney dialysis, Kissing and touching [8] [upon the condition that ejaculation does not occur and the spit of the partner is not swallowed intentionally], Lighting incense [unless the visible fumes are deliberately inhaled], Lip balm [unless the lips are immediately licked and it is swallowed], Makeup, Medicine [which is inhaled but has no visible particles entering the nose or mouth], *Miswak* [unflavoured], Mucus Oil [applied to the head and body], Oxygen or air [inhaled through a mechanism] if not mixed with anything else, Saliva, Smoke [4] [if inhaled unintentionally], Smog due to traffic [4], Smelling food [1] [unless the steam from cooking is deliberately inhaled], Smelling perfume [1], Tooth extraction [providing no blood or medicine is swallowed], Transdermal patches [including nicotine patches], Ultrasound [internal pelvic ultrasound] and other device entered into the vagina [whether with or without lubricant], Urethral infusion, Vaginal pessaries, Vaginal examination, Vomit [if happened unintentionally [and perhaps even thereafter swallowed it unintentionally] or happened intentionally [without swallowing it] but less than a full mouth], Vicks [1], Water (i.e. moisture) that remains in the mouth from *wudhu* [4], Wet dream [or in the state of impurity from the previous night]

What breaks a fast?

Principle:

The fast will only break if ALL the following conditions are met:

The substance is discernible

It has an independent stay in the digestive system

It is not swallowed or inhaled forgetfully

It is deliberately swallowed or inhaled [if it is an unavoidable substance]

It reaches the throat, stomach or intestines [i.e. the digestive system]

It enters the body from the mouth, nose, anus or a deep abdominal injury [i.e. an entry point connected to the digestive system]

The fast will also break in the following cases:

Ejaculation occurs with physical stimulation, There is intimacy that entails intercourse or swallowing something.

Examples of what breaks the fast:

Requiring a *kaffarah* too:

Food, drink or sexual intercourse (through either passage) [if **deliberately**] if one does them deliberately and in a state in which one knows/believes that he is fasting

Without requiring a *kaffarah*:

Asthma pump, Any drink or food including toothpaste, mouthwash or water swallowed **accidentally or mistakenly** [remember that to do anything **forgetfully** is overlooked], Blood swallowed [if equal to or more than saliva or taste of blood is found in mouth], Endoscopy [since solution is sprayed into the throat], Endotracheal intubation, Gastrostomy, Inhaler [However, consult a mufti in severe cases], Jejunostomy, Smoking [since fumes enter from the mouth], Smoke [if inhaled intentionally whether from cigarettes or incense sticks etc.], Saliva from someone else e.g. of spouse [if swallowed], Ear drops or any medication in the ear [if the eardrum is perforated], Nasal medication, Nasal spray [if it passes through the throat], Nebuliser, Masturbation [should be avoided], Oral medication, Pills and tablets, Rectal pessaries, Suppository [if entered from the anus], Vomit [if deliberate and mouthful or it is unintentional vomit which is a mouthful and is then swallowed intentionally], Any device entered down the throat, or up the anus [if it has any lubricant on it], Enema, or any medication, or suppositories up the rear passage [and the substance must have reached a fingers length into the anus, and that happening is rare], Menstruation or post-natal bleeding