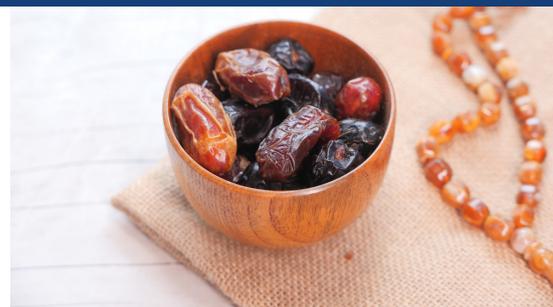


Blood donation and Ramadan

During the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, observers may fast from dawn to dusk. As a result there could be times when there are less eligible blood donors available. During Ramadan there are important donor safety and messaging considerations with regards to fasting and blood donation, in addition to COVID-19.



Why is this an issue? Fasting and donor safety

Blood donation during Ramadan is encouraged but donating blood during the hours of fasting is not recommended. There is an increased risk of donor adverse events due to lack of adequate hydration and sustenance from food. Not only does this compromise donor safety, it also influences donor retention and recruitment rates since the donor may not feel comfortable returning to donate blood again, and could share their experience with those around them.

Considerations for blood programs during Ramadan

Adjusting blood collection hours to accommodate 'breaking fast': Adjusting the opening times, mobile collection times and staff rosters for Ramadan supports blood donation during non-fasting hours. The blood service may also consider partnering with local businesses to offer traditional desserts as donor refreshments, in alignment with the customs of Ramadan.

Increasing blood inventory before Ramadan commences: The blood service may consider conducting campaigns or appeals in the weeks prior to Ramadan to ensure blood fridges are well stocked. (note: some blood components such as platelets have a short shelf life and require ongoing donations throughout Ramadan to ensure sufficient stock).

Consider **inviting other community groups** to supplement or increase blood donation during this time, if needed.

Conduct education and awareness campaigns (ie. mass and social media, or promotion by religious leaders and in clinical settings prior to Ramadan), including the following messaging:

- **Blood donation during the 28 days of Ramadan is safe, however donating during fasting hours is not recommended.**
- Any adjustments in blood centre hours, or evening collection events, and how to donate during Ramadan when lockdowns are in place (ie. consider residential mobiles, if possible).
- Blood is a gift, and blood donation is a form of increased charity and generosity, in alignment with Ramadan's values.
- Blood and blood components have a shelf-life, so all blood donors are encouraged to continue to donate before and during Ramadan to ensure patients have access to blood during this time.

COVID-19 and blood donation

Regular donation is important to ensure a sufficient blood supply during this pandemic. It is important that donors and staff understand the extra measures in place to ensure their safety (ie. social distancing, number limits, extra sanitation etc). Any local restrictions in holding events or travelling need to be understood and carefully considered as the situation can rapidly change.

There is no evidence to date to suggest COVID-19 is transmissible via blood.* **Information current as at March 2022*

Also refer to WHO document "Safe Ramadan practices in the context of the COVID-19: interim guidance, 7 April 2021" for more information on managing gatherings safely during this time.



More resources are available. Go to our GAP website for the full list:
<https://globaladvisorypanel.org/resources/covid-19-resources>

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on Corporate Governance and Risk Management of Blood Services in Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

