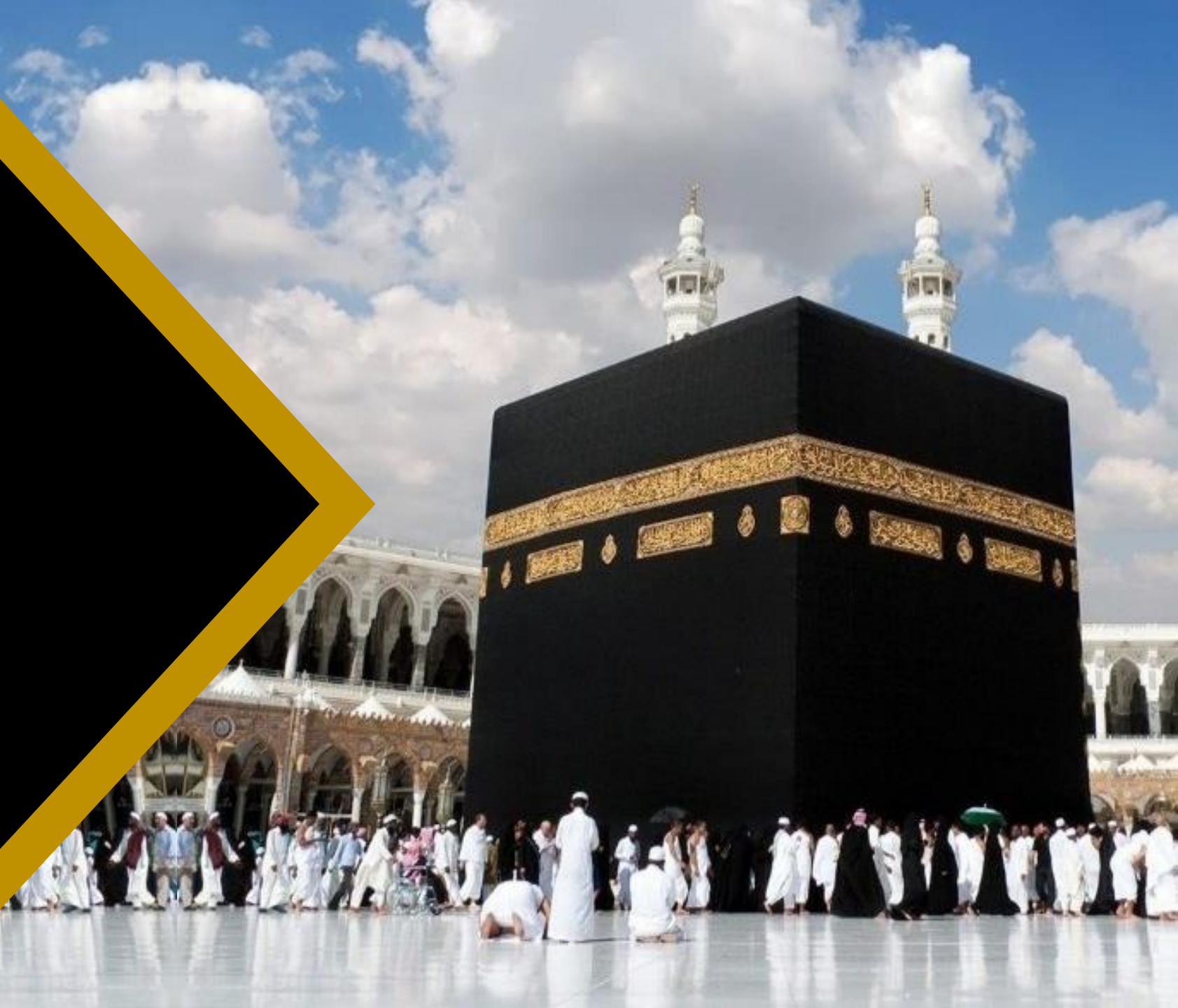


A basic guide to Islam



Overview of Islam



The word Islam means 'submission to the will of Allah (Arabic for God)'.



Followers of Islam are called Muslims.



Muslims believe there is only one God (Allah).



Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH)) is the final Prophet.



All Muslims are members of one community known as the Ummah.



There are five pillars of Islam.



Islam was revealed over 1,400 years ago in Makkah, Saudi Arabia.



Allah sent a number of Prophets to mankind. Jesus, Moses and Abraham (Peace be upon them) are respected as prophets of Allah.



The holy book for Muslims is called the Qur'an.



Muslims follow the Sunnah, which are the practical examples, traditions and practices of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).



Muslims can only consume Halal food and drink.



Islam is the second largest religion in the UK. The 2021 census recorded 3.9 million Muslims - 6.5% of the population in the UK.



Five pillars of Islam

There are five pillars of Islam that every Muslim must adhere to.

These pillars are shown below:



Shahada
Faith



Salah
Prayer



Sawm
Fasting



Zakat
Almsgiving
(Charity)



Hajj
Pilgrimage



Shahada (Faith)

Becoming a Muslim requires a very simple act, but the meaning behind it is very deep, as follows:

- Muslims recite a specific verse in Arabic, which is a declaration to their faith, which is known as the Shahadah, translated below:

"There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad (PBUH) is his final messenger."

- This is the basic statement of the Islamic faith.
- When a Muslim recites this they proclaim:
 - ❖ That Allah is the only God.
 - ❖ Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the final prophet.
 - ❖ That they personally accept this as true.
 - ❖ That they align to all the commitments of Islam in their life.
 - ❖ Allah solely created the entire universe, and everything within it.
- If someone becomes a Muslim by converting (known to some Muslims as "reverting") to Islam, your fellow Muslims will accept you as if you had been born a Muslim.



Salah (Prayer)

- Muslims offer five specific prayers daily, known as Salah.
- Salah is **obligatory** for all eligible Muslims.
- Allah ordered Muslims to pray at five set times of the day, as follows:
 - ❖ **Fajr**: dawn, before sunrise.
 - ❖ **Zuhr**: midday, after the sun passes its highest peak.
 - ❖ **Asr**: the late part of the afternoon.
 - ❖ **Maghrib**: just after sunset.
 - ❖ **Isha**: night, after Maghrib time has ended until the time for Fajr sets in.
- Praying is highly spiritual, connects Muslims to their creator, and also to other Muslims all around the world.
- Muslims must be clean before they pray, therefore they perform ritual washing, called wudhu.
- Muslims face the Qibla (direction of Mecca) when they pray.
- Muslim children as young as seven are encouraged to pray.

Allowable exception to praying:

- Those with physical and mental disabilities.
- Women who are menstruating or experiencing postnatal bleeding.
- Muslims who are sick.

The NHS Muslim Network has developed an Islamic Prayers Guidance for NHS staff and managers, which can be accessed [here](#).



Sawm (fasting)

- Muslims fast during the month of Ramadan (Sawm).
- Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, based on the lunar calendar.
- During the 29/30 days of Ramadan all adult Muslims must give up the following during the daylight hours:
 - ❖ Food or drink of any sort.
 - ❖ Smoking or vaping.
 - ❖ Sexual activity.
- The following are some reasons why Muslims fast:
 - ❖ Obeying Allah.
 - ❖ Learning self-discipline.
 - ❖ Becoming spiritually stronger.
 - ❖ Appreciating Allah's gifts to us.
 - ❖ Sharing the sufferings of the poor and developing sympathy for them.
 - ❖ Realising the value of charity and generosity.
 - ❖ Giving thanks for the Holy Qur'an, which was first revealed in the month of Ramadan.
 - ❖ Sharing fellowship with other Muslims.

Allowable exception to fasting:

- Physically or mentally unwell.
- Children who have not reached puberty.
- Very old/frail people.
- Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, menstruating or experiencing postnatal bleeding.
- Muslims who are sick.
- Travelling.

The NHS Muslim Network has developed a Ramadan and Eid Guidance 2023, for NHS staff and managers, which can be accessed [here](#).



Zakat (Charity)

- Muslims (who are able to give charity) will give 2.5% of their savings once a year to the poor known as Zakat.
- Zakat is compulsory and is regarded as a type of worship and self-purification.
- Zakat does not refer to charitable gifts given out of kindness or generosity, but to the systematic giving of 2.5% of one's wealth each year to benefit the poor.
- The benefits of Zakat, apart from helping the poor, are as follows:
 - ❖ Obeying Allah.
 - ❖ Helping a person acknowledge that everything comes from Allah on loan and that we do not really own anything ourselves.
 - ❖ Since we cannot take anything with us when we die, we do not cling to wealth or material goods.
 - ❖ Acknowledging that whether we are rich or poor is Allah's choice, so we should help those in need.
 - ❖ Learning self-discipline.
 - ❖ Freeing oneself from the love of possessions and greed.
 - ❖ Freeing oneself from the love of money.
 - ❖ Behaving honestly.



Hajj (Pilgrimage)

- Makkah is located in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and is a place that is holy to all Muslims. Muslims will undertake a pilgrimage to Makkah (if they can afford to) at least once in their lifetime, which is also known as Hajj.
- Once a year, Muslims of every ethnic group, social status, and culture gather together in Makkah and stand before the Kabah praising Allah together.
- Hajj occurs in the month of Dhul Hijjah which is the twelfth month of the Islamic lunar calendar. It is the journey that every sane adult Muslim must undertake at least once in their lifetime if they can afford it and are physically able.
- It is a ritual that is designed to promote the bonds of Islamic brotherhood and sisterhood by showing that everyone is equal in the eyes of Allah.
- Hajj makes Muslims feel the real importance of life here on earth, and the afterlife, by stripping away all markers of social status, wealth, and pride. When performing Hajj all are truly equal.
- The Hajjis (pilgrims) wear simple white clothes called Ihram. During the Hajj the Pilgrims perform acts of worship and they renew their sense of purpose in the world.



Eid celebrations



Eid Al-Fitr:

- Muslims Celebrate Eid Al-Fitr at the end of Ramadan.
- The celebration is also a form of thanking Allah for the help and strength provided throughout Ramadan to help them practise self-control.
- Eid is announced at the sight of the new moon that is seen in the sky. Muslims in most countries rely on news of an official sighting, rather than looking for the moon themselves.
- The celebratory atmosphere is increased by everyone wearing their best or new clothes, and decorating their homes.
- Muslims celebrate Eid Al-Fitr by attending special morning prayers outdoors or in mosques, and subsequently gather with loved ones for a special celebratory meal.
- Eid is also a time of forgiveness, and making amends.

Eid ul Adha:

- Eid ul Adha is celebrated in the 12th and final month of the Islamic lunar calendar, to remember the prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son when Allah ordered him to.
- Ibrahim's complete obedience to the will of Allah is celebrated by Muslims each year.
- Each Muslim reflects and reminds themselves of their own submission to Allah, and their willingness to obey Allah.
- During the festival, Muslims who can afford to, sacrifice domestic animals, usually sheep, as a symbol of Ibrahim's sacrifice.
- The meat is distributed among family, friends and the poor, who each get a third share.

Story of Prophet Ibrahim (PBUH) :

Allah appeared in a dream to Ibrahim (PBUH) and told him to sacrifice his son Isma'il. Ibrahim (PBUH) and Isma'il set off to Mina for the sacrifice. As they went, the devil attempted to persuade Ibrahim (PBUH) to disobey Allah and not to sacrifice his beloved son. But Ibrahim (PBUH) stayed true to Allah, and drove the devil away. As Ibrahim (PBUH) prepared to kill his son Allah stopped him and gave him a sheep to sacrifice instead.

Diet

Halal: This is an Arabic term which means permissible or lawful in Islam

Halal Animals (fit for Muslim consumption):

- All domestic birds
- All cattle
- Sheep
- Goats
- Camels
- All types of buck
- Rabbits
- Fish
- Locusts

Haram: This is another Arabic term which means impermissible or unlawful in Islam.

Haram Animals (unfit for Muslim consumption – including any ingredients/by-products/contaminated):

- Meat of swine (pig)
- Meat of an animal that was not slaughtered according to the above guidelines
- Meat of dead animals (carrion)
- Meat of animals that were strangled/beaten/fell/gored/devoured to death
- Animals killed in a manner which prevents their blood from being fully drained from their bodies
- Carnivorous animals with fangs, e.g. lions, dogs, wolves, tigers, etc...
- Birds of prey e.g. falcons, eagles, owls, vultures, etc
- Reptiles, snakes, crocodiles
- Mules and Asses
- Pests' e.g. rats and scorpions
- Insects excluding locusts

Slaughtering guidelines:

- The slaughter must be carried out by a Muslim.
- At the time of slaughter, the name of Allah must be invoked upon the animal to be slaughtered.
- The slaughter must occur without any delay.
- The knife must be extremely sharp so the slaughter is efficient and the animal suffers minimal discomfort.

Haram Fluids

- All types of alcohol
- Blood
- Intoxicants of all types, including alcohol and drugs



Thank you

For more information please visit our website:

nhsmuslimnetwork.co.uk

For further support, please contact the NHS Muslim Network via email –

england.muslim1@nhs.net