

5 ways

to support your pharmacy colleagues during Ramadan



Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It holds great significance as a month of fasting, prayer, reflection and community for Muslims around the globe. The exact timing of Ramadan changes each year as it follows the lunar Islamic calendar. Eid ul-Fitr marks the end of Ramadan and is a special occasion celebrated by the Muslim community worldwide.

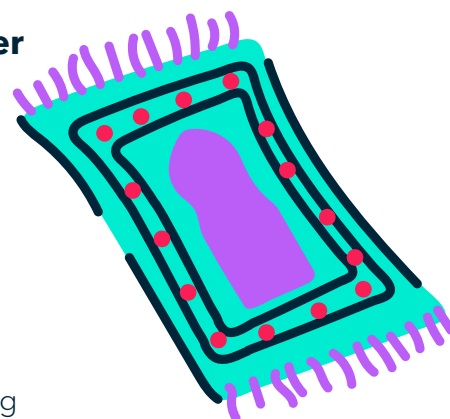
Here are some tips to support your pharmacy colleagues during this month:



Be mindful of work scheduling and if possible, offer accommodations for people observing Ramadan.

Some accommodations may include:

- Offering a quiet and clean space for prayer (e.g., counselling room or private area)
- Supporting time-off requests for Eid¹
- Enabling uninterrupted breaks during times of breaking fast (iftar)
- Scheduling shifts throughout the day rather than in the evening



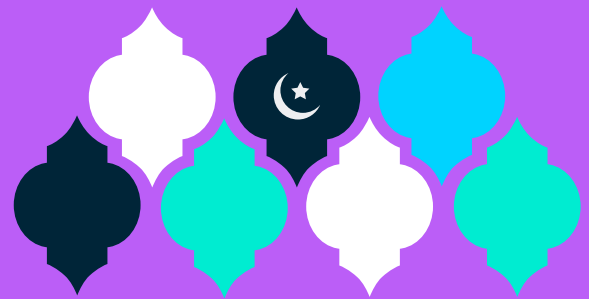
Respect privacy, avoid assumptions and show cultural sensitivity.

- One way to show support is by sending warm wishes and using the correct terminology. Tip: use the phrase 'Ramadan Kareem/Mubarak'² rather than Happy Ramadan!

Questions to avoid	Replace with this
You can't even drink water?	How has your Ramadan been so far?
Don't you find it difficult to concentrate while fasting?	Is there anything I can do to support you during this time?
I could never do what you are doing.	I admire your dedication to fasting during Ramadan.
Why aren't you fasting today?	Engage in respectful conversation without commenting on personal fasting practices*

* There are many reasons why someone may not engage in fasting. This could include travelling, health-related issues, menstruation, pregnancy/nursing, illness and frailty. This does not mean they are observing Ramadan any less than other members of the community.





Check in with your colleagues.

A great example of showing support is by seeing how your colleagues are doing.

- Typically, your colleagues will be aware of their own health needs but if you happen to spot any warning signs (e.g., excessive fatigue, signs of dehydration, dizziness, fainting), it's important to seek medical attention.



Celebrate with your colleagues!

Create a safe, warm and vibrant space for your colleagues to share their religion, culture and part of their identity with you

- This could be through small potlucks or inviting people, if comfortable, to share cultural snacks or desserts.
- Encourage time for team bonding and healthy conversations



Build community!

Get creative and find ways to immerse your pharmacy in the community! For many Muslims the month of Ramadan is a month of giving and charity, you can participate by:

- Joining or contributing to charitable initiatives (e.g., fundraisers).
- Setting up a booth at a Ramadan Bazaar to show support to the community and raise awareness about the pharmacy services you offer.
- Presenting safe fasting information sessions/or handouts at local mosques

Footnotes

1. Eid-ul-Fitr date differs each year and is reliant on sightings of the moon - please show understanding, consideration, and flexibility to your colleagues when they are requesting time off. Tip: ask your employees during the last week of the month or allow them to book 2 days off in advance.
2. Two Arabic greetings used during Ramadan are "Ramadan Kareem" which translates to "generous Ramadan" and "Ramadan Mubarak" which means "have a blessed Ramadan".

References

When Is Ramadan 2024 in Canada? (timeanddate.com) Available at: <https://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/canada/ramadan-begins>

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Muslim patients in Ramadan: A review for primary care physicians – PMC (nih.gov) Available at:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5525471/#:~:text=In%20Islam%2C%20there%20are%20several%20excuses%20for%20not,conditions%20%28e.g.%2C%20diabetes%29%20may%20still%20choose%20to%20fast>

How to Support a Friend or Co-Worker During Ramadan (thelatch.com.au)

Available at: <https://thelatch.com.au/how-to-support-someone-during-ramadan/>

Are you prepared to support fasting patients during Ramadan? – Alberta College of Pharmacy (abpharmacy.ca) Available at:

<https://abpharmacy.ca/news/are-you-prepared-support-fasting-patients-during-ramadan/>

