

# HEALTHY IFTAR MEALS

Iftar is the daily meal at sunset during the holy month of Ramadan. Having a nutritious iftar meal is important to replenish the energy stores as well as sustaining fasting on the following day. It should be a balanced meal that provides our body with its needs without adding unnecessary calories.

- Start your iftar with hydration: One cup of water/low fat milk/labani to provide essential fluids lost throughout the day. Avoid sugary drinks and carbonated beverages
- Have two to three dates to boost natural sugar and energy after long fasting hours
- Soup helps prepare your stomach to receive the rest of the meal as well as replenishing body fluids. Lentil soup or mixed vegetable soup are great options. Avoid ready made soups as well as creamy soups

## DIVIDE YOUR DISH INTO THREE PORTIONS:

$\frac{1}{4}$  Carbohydrates       $\frac{1}{4}$  Protein       $\frac{1}{2}$  Vegetables

### CARBOHYDRATES:

Consume complex carbohydrates such as brown rice, whole grain pasta/bread, burghoul, freekeh and potatoes.

### PROTEIN:

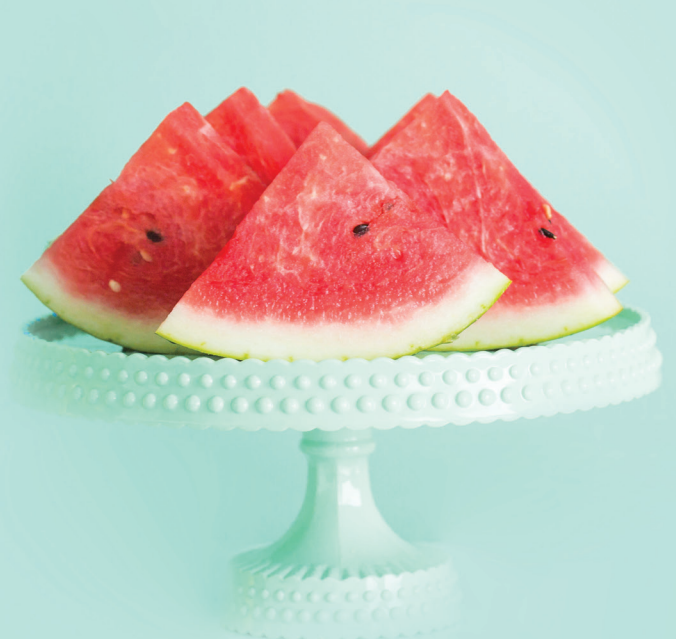
High quality protein includes fish, lean meat, skinless chicken, turkey, low fat dairy products and eggs. Vegetarians can have legumes and beans as a source of protein.

### VEGETABLES:

Consume more of the hydrating vegetables such as tomato, cucumber, celery, lettuce as well as a variety of colourful vegetables. They are high in fibre which will greatly help in satiety as well as in preventing constipation.

### GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- It is highly recommended to have water, dates and a bowl of soup, take a short break before starting with your salad and main dish
- Avoid heavy meals, salty foods as well as simple sugars
- When preparing your meals, use stewing, baking, roasting or grilling instead of deep frying
- Add herbs instead of salt for flavouring your meals
- Avoid consuming heavy desserts like kunafa or baklava and have instead healthy homemade desserts
- Do not be in a hurry to finish your food since overloading will lead to indigestion and gastric problems
- Drink one cup of water hourly after iftar
- Have two portions of fruit or one cup of fresh fruit salad, limit juices
- Remember that your meal should not exceed the amount that you would eat at a typical lunch or dinner meal



# HEALTHY SUHOUR MEALS

Suhour is the pre-dawn meal. It should be a wholesome, moderate and balanced meal that is filling and provides enough energy throughout the day. Its importance is no less than the iftar meal. A healthy suhour will help prevent headaches by regulating blood sugar levels as well as reducing thirst during the long, hot fasting hours.

## DIVIDE YOUR DISH INTO THREE PORTIONS:

$\frac{1}{4}$  Carbohydrates     $\frac{1}{4}$  Protein     $\frac{1}{2}$  Vegetables

## HEALTHY CARBOHYDRATES INCLUDE:

One cup of spaghetti or one cup of oats or two slices of brown bread or one small Arabic brown bread.

## PROTEIN:

60 grams of chicken or two slices of low fat cheese with one boiled egg or one small plate of low fat labneh or one cup of legumes.

## VEGETABLES:

Mixed sliced fresh vegetables (unpeeled).

**Healthy fats:** raw nuts (not to exceed a handful), one teaspoon of olive oil or seven to 10 olives

**Dairy:** one cup of low fat milk or homemade pudding

**Fruit:** two to three dates or dried apricots or one small banana

## AVOID:

- Salty foods such as pickles, chips, salted nuts since it will make you feel more thirsty during the day
- Simple sugars, donuts, chocolates since it will last only two to three hours in your body and will not stabilise your blood sugar levels for long
- Caffeinated drinks which are diuretics and promote faster water loss through urination and thus can lead to dehydration

*Please note that these are general guidelines. If you are suffering from any chronic diseases please consult your medical team to obtain their advice*

