

The South Asian Health Foundation (UK) Guidelines for Managing Diabetes during Ramadan: 2020 Update

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Executive Summary

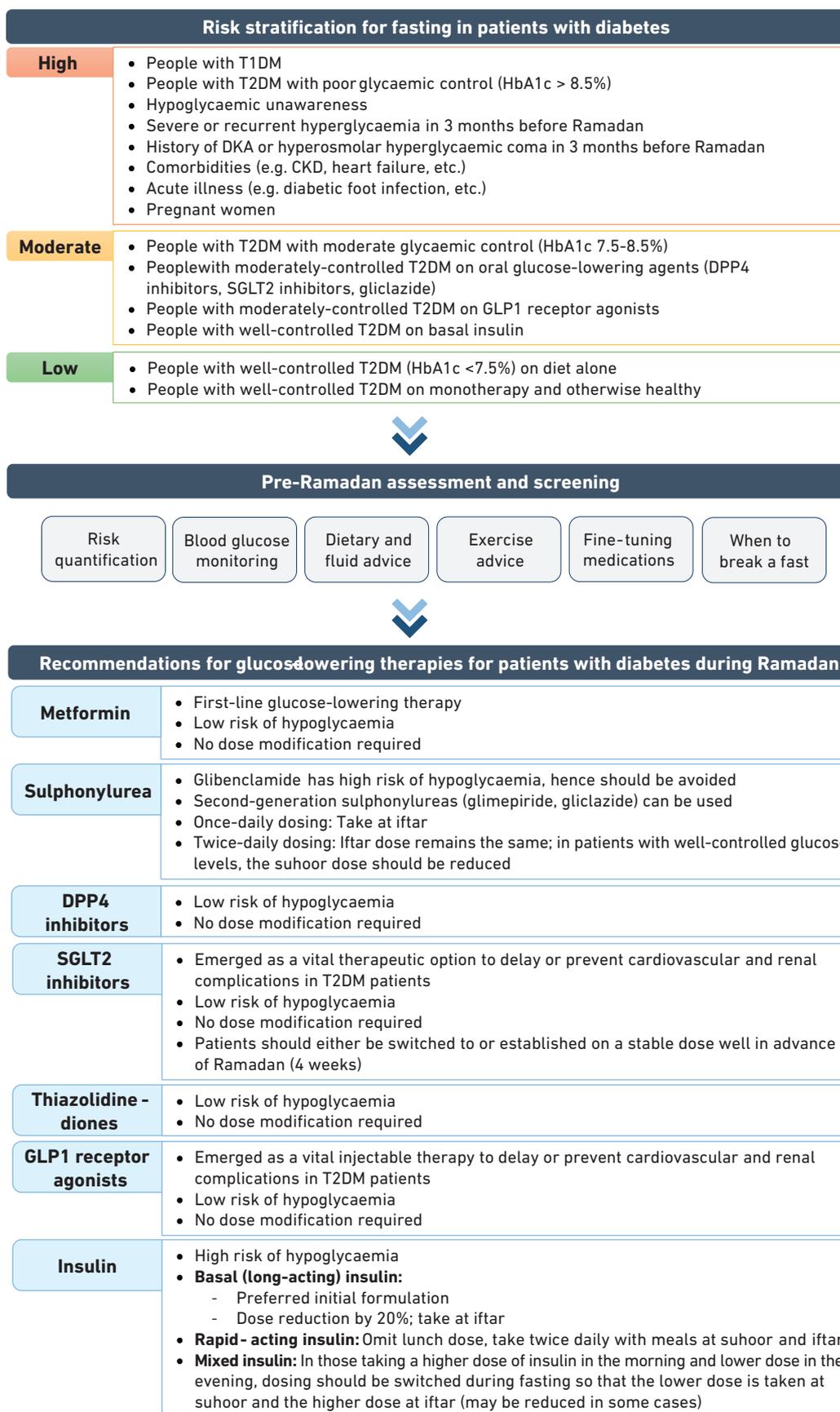
Fasting in the holy month of Ramadan is amongst the five pillars of Islam and is considered as a religious obligation by the Muslim population. People with diabetes observing the practice of fasts are at a higher risk of complications such as hypoglycaemia, hyperglycaemia and ketoacidosis due to changes in physiological parameters such as eating patterns and circadian rhythms. With the objective of mitigating these complications, the South Asian Health Foundation (UK) has developed the present guidelines based on robust evidence derived from epidemiological studies and clinical trials conducted during Ramadan. This guidance document highlights the role of pre-Ramadan risk stratification and counselling by healthcare professionals in people with diabetes with an emphasis on the need for advice on adequate dietary and fluid intake, blood glucose monitoring and awareness of when to break the fast.

We reviewed the current literature and have given clinically-relevant recommendations on lifestyle modifications and glucose-lowering therapies such as metformin, sulphonylureas, dipeptidyl peptidase-4 inhibitors, sodium glucose co-transporter-2 inhibitors, thiazolidinediones, glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists and insulin. An individualised patient-centric treatment plan is essential to not only achieve optimal glycaemic outcomes but also enable people with diabetes to observe a risk-free month of fasting during Ramadan.

A number of barriers to guideline implementation exist across Muslim communities, and span across patients, healthcare professionals, health-care systems to larger communities. Strategic solutions to overcome barriers include increasing awareness among healthcare professionals of the key issues involving management of diabetes during Ramadan, and offering effective, socio-culturally sensitive patient education.

Based on the recent evidence, the South Asian Health Foundation (UK) recommends clear guiding principles for appropriate management of people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes mellitus during Ramadan.

Algorithm for managing diabetes in Ramadan





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