Al-Asr International Research Journal of Islamic Studies
Vol 6 Issue 2 | February 2026
ISSN E: (2790-7694)
ISSN P: (2790-7686)
Published:
February 28, 2026

# Fasting In Islam and Its Impact on Health

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## Abstract

**Background**: Fasting is of utmost importance in Islam. It is observed every year during the month of Ramadan. It has been made a compulsory act of worship for Muslims all over the world. It involves abstaining from food and water along with certain acts such as smoking, drinking and sexual activity. It includes two major meals Suhur (before sunrise) and Iftar (after sunset). Research in nutritional science shows positive impacts of fasting on human health mainly digestive and gut health.

**Methodology:** This article adopts a descriptive and literature review-based methodology. Islamic sources included Quranic verses and Hadiths while Scientific evidence supporting positive impacts of fasting was deducted from relevant studies.

**Results:** Study shows that fasting results in structured periods of gut rest that helps in gastrointestinal regulation, proliferating beneficial bacterial number, reducing inflammation and hence inflammatory bowel disease incidence. Islamic guidelines such as moderate and mindful eating, while maintaining portion sizes, align closely with the the current nutritional principles for maintain gut health. Moreover, dietary practices during suhoor and iftar also proved to be of utmost importance against this backdrop.

**Conclusion:** Fasting during Ramadan portrays a holistic approach. Religiously it elevates the rank of an individual spiritually and morally. On the other hand, in context of human health, particularly gut health, it contributes positively.

**Keywords:** Ramadan Fasting, Islamic Dietary Guidelines, Gut Health, Gastrointestinal Health, Gut Microbiota, Beneficial Bacteria, Inflammation, Suhur and Iftar, Nutritional Science

## Introduction

Fasting is defined as the abstinence from consuming food and/or beverages for different periods of time.(Zouhal, Saeidi et al. 2020). Fasting is the one of the five pillars of Islam (Rahman 2022) and hence has an integral importance in Islam. Its significance can be depicted by Quran and Hadith. In Islam it is compulsory for Muslims to keep fast for a whole month every year. Main aim of fasting is to attain spiritual growth and God


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consciousness. Other than its religious importance, it has profound effects on human health, particularly digestive functions. Fasting in Ramadan is a type of intermittent fasting.(Tibi, Ahmed et al. 2023). Gut health is of immense importance in context of human health and any disruption in normal functioning of gut can lead to chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and Inflammatory bowel diseases. Recent researches have shown that fasting contributes in digestive rest, reducing inflammation and improve gut microbiota(Tibi, Ahmed et al. 2023). Moreover, Ramadan has a positive impact on certain biochemical factors, specifically high-density lipoprotein (HDL) levels and liver function test . (Nasiri, Kheiri et al. 2016)These researches align with the Islamic guidelines regarding moderate eating and fasting. Moreover, This article explores fasting in Islam and its impacts on Gut health.

**Literature Review**

**Islam and fasting**

Fasting has been made a religious obligation on Muslims. Allah says in Quran:

"Oh you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you many learn piety and righteousness" (Q 2:183)

Another Quranic verse also highlights the importance of fasting. Allah says in Surah Al Baqarah'

"And it is better for you that ye fast, if ye only knew." (Q 2:184)

Moreover, various Hadiths also underscore the religious significance of fasting. Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"Whoever stands (in the voluntary night prayer of) Ramadan out of faith and in hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven."

Sunan an-Nasa'i 5025

Fasting does not only result in spiritual purification of an individual but also has a positive impact on society as a whole. (Hussain, Ahmad et al. 2026). This can be depicted by following Hadith,


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Abu Hurairah reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

"Fasting is a shield; so when one of you is fasting, he should neither indulge in obscene language nor raise his voice in anger. If someone attacks him or insults him, let him say: 'I am fasting!'"

Anas ibn Malik reported that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said,

“Have the pre-fasting meal (Suhoor), for there are indeed blessings in it.”

Sahih al-Bukhari: 1923

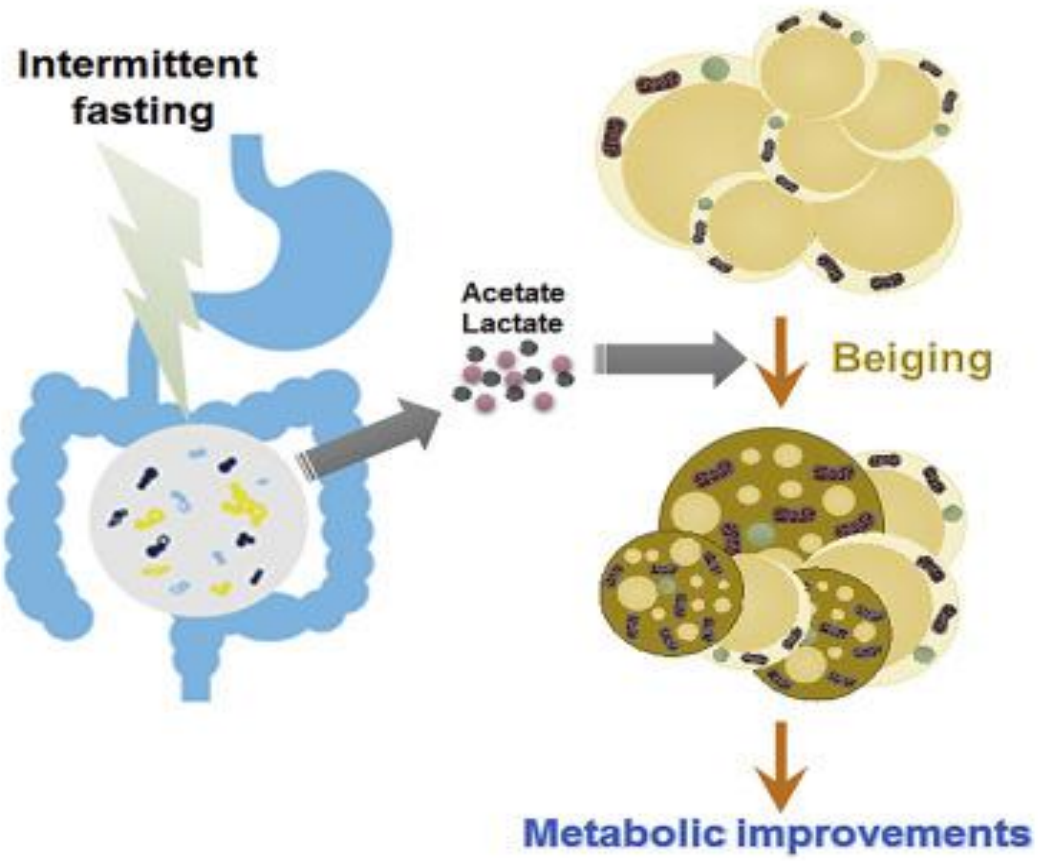
**Science and Fasting**

1. **Health and Metabolic Benefits of Ramadan Fasting:**
   **(Rahman 2022)** highlighted multiple benefits of fasting. These include reduced LDL, metabolic stress markers, inflammation and oxidative stress. It has also explored the positive effect of fasting on mental health and behavioral regulation.
   **(Trabelsi, Ammar et al. 2022)** proves that religious fasting can improve dietary patterns and promote sustainable lifestyles that eventually contribute to improved metabolic health and environmental protection.
   **(Ilyas, Padhiar et al. 2025)** shows that fasting positively impacts the metabolism, cardiovascular and mental health of individuals. The article suggests fasting as a lifestyle intervention for improving overall health in humans.
2. **Impact of Ramadan Intermittent Fasting on Gut Hormones and Obesity management**
   **(Zouhal, Bagheri et al. 2020)** studied the effects of fasting on appetite controlling gut hormones and boy composition in males with obesity. Improvements in satiety hormones were observed while ghrelin remained unchanged. These hormonal changes underscore the importance of fasting in controlling appetite and obesity.
   **(Tibi, Ahmed et al. 2023)** highlights that Ramadan is a special type of intermittent fasting which may improve inflammatory markers, Gut microbiota and lipid profile.
   **(Li, Xie et al. 2017)** Shows that daily fasting encourages the development of beige adipose tissue within fat droplets that leads to improvement in obesity, insulin resistance and hepatic steatosis. All this phenomenon is mediated by gut microbiota composition. This results in metabolites such as acetate and lactate and increased expression of monocarboxylate transporter 1 in beige adipocytes. These findings underscore gut–microbiota–adipose tissue nexus through which fasting exerts its metabolic benefits and improves gut health as well.


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3. **Spiritual and Immunological Dimensions of Fasting in Islamic Perspective (Hussain, Ahmad et al. 2026)** explored the positive impacts of fasting on spiritual and




physical health. Islam highlights the importance of fasting as a tool for self-discipline and spiritual growth while modern scientific research depicts its significance as a source of improving immune system and health of an individual as a whole.

**Effects of Time-Restricted and Islamic Fasting on Gut Microbiota Composition (Özkul, Yalınay et al. 2019)** investigated the impacts of fasting on gut microbiota. The study found out an increase in the number of beneficial bacteria such as Akkermansia muciniphila and Bacteroides fragilis. Moreover, improvements in the metabolic health indicators have also been observed after fasting.


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**Research Questions/Objectives**

The article aims to

- examine the Islamic teachings related to fasting
- analyze impacts of fasting on gut health
- alignment between Islamic fasting guidelines and positive impact on gut health

**Research Methodology**

The study uses a descriptive and literature-based review methodology to understand the importance of fasting in Islam and its impacts on human gut's health.

**Data sources**: For Islamic references, Quranic Verses and Hadiths were consulted. For studying the impacts of fasting on gut health various research articles from google scholar were reviewed.

**Search Strategy:** Relevant literature was reviewed using specific keywords such as gut health, Ramadan, Fasting and digestive health.

**Analysis Approach:** Thematic and comparative analysis was used to examine the importance of fasting in Islam and in contemporary research.

**Discussion**

The literature review on the concerned topic found out that there is strong alignment between Islamic fasting guidelines and contemporary research on gastrointestinal health. Islamic teaching stress over the consumption of whole foods and moderation. Maintaining portion size is also an integral part of Islamic teachings on fasting. This habit improves gut and digestive health, backing current research on concerned topic.

Findings suggest two types of benefits. One is the moral and spiritual uplifting of oneself. Ramadan fasting not only emphasizes refraining from eating and drinking only, but training in improving faith, mental coaching, morality(Kuswara and Sumayana 2020). There is growing moral crises in the world and religion, in this regard, provides a tool to uplift this declining morality and in Islam it is Ramadan.(Kamal and Abbas 2024).


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Other is the improvement in certain health indicators mainly digestion. Fasting has positive role in improving cardiovascular heath indicators, Insulin sensitivity, promoting weight loss, reducing inflammation and improving immunity (Mackieh, Al-Bakkar et al. 2024) that will eventually lower the chances of Inflammatory bowel diseases and other gut related disorders. Fasting has also resulted in increasing beneficial microbes' diversity. These changes are associated with improved metabolic health markers, lipid profiles and reduced inflammation.(Ashique, Debnath et al. 2025). Moreover, fasting also plays a huge role in managing obesity by increasing number of beneficial bacteria. Ramadan fasting also results in weight and blood pressure regulation and improved lipid profile. (Nofal, Elmor et al. 2025).

The intersection between Islamic teachings and scientific evidence highlights the significance of religious guidelines against the backdrop of dietary practices in promoting health. Most of the research is focused on metabolic or general health outcome and limited study have been done on linking fasting with human digestive health. More research is needed on the concerned area.

In summary, fasting in Islam does not only ensure spiritual benefits but also results in the improvement in physical health. By having balanced meals and well-planned fasting schedules with limited overeating, gut health can be significantly improved. This showcases the wisdom hidden behind Islamic principles and guidelines.

**Results**

The thematic interpretation of various Islamic teachings and scientific research reveal the following findings:

**Digestive Rest and Gastrointestinal Regulation**

The article explores that fasting provides period of rest for gastrointestinal system. This intersects with the science backed evidence that time restricted eating pattern gives gut rest period to avoid it from stress.


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**Modulation of Gut Microbiota**

Moreover, modulation of gut bacteria is also another positive result of fasting. Fasting increases the number of beneficial gut bacteria that as a result improves digestion and intestinal health.

**Reduction in Inflammation**

In addition to this, reviewed evidence depicts that fasting reduces general and gut related inflammation hence reducing the incidence of having inflammatory bowel diseases.

**Role of Dietary Practices During Suhoor and Iftar**

Other than abovementioned positive attributes, moderate and sophisticated dietary practices during suhoor and iftar also support gut health. Hence, this way Islamic teachings promote moderation and mindful eating.

**Conclusion**

This literature underscores the significance of fasting in Islam and its impacts on gut health and associated functions demonstrating a strong alignment between Islamic fasting practices and improved human health particularly gut health. Fasting in Ramadan prevents human from committing sins in order to uplift him in his spiritual journey. On the other hand, research in nutrition shows that fasting results in structures periods of gut rest that eventually supports gut regulation, reducing inflammation and promoting healthy proportion of gut bacteria. All these factors highlight the wisdom behind Islamic teachings. Moreover, the dietary practices adopted during Suhoor and Iftar along with the food choice also contribute to the positive impacts of fasting. As a whole, fasting integrates spiritual growth with physical wellbeing. More research needs to be done on Islamic guidelines on fasting and its impacts on health and then incorporating these findings into various public health initiatives to improve digestive and overall health of population.

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