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BOOK

Health & Nutrition in Islam

SECOND EDITION

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Islam's approach to health includes treating our bodies with respect and nourishing them with not only faith but with lawful and nutritious food. A major part of living life according to Allah's instructions is implementing a suitable diet; choosing wholesome food and avoiding the unwholesome is essential to good health.

Allah says in the Qur'an:

“ **...eat from the good [i.e., lawful] things which We have provided for you..”**

[Qur'an 2:172]

“... eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good...”

[Qur'an 2:168]

The Qur'an contains many verses of advice about healthy eating that relate to physical and spiritual health. Encouragement to eat only good and pure food is often combined with warnings to remember Allah and avoid bad practices. Healthy eating not only satisfies hunger but also has an effect on how well we worship.







“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”

[Qur'an 2:168]

If one becomes obsessed with food or chooses an unhealthy lifestyle he or she may become physically weak or distracted from his primary purpose of serving Allah. On the other hand, if one concentrated only on spiritual activities and neglected their health and nutrition then the resulting weakness, injury or illness would inhibit even the obligatory worship. The guidance found in the Qur'an and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) advises us to maintain a balance between these two extremes. A healthy diet is balanced with a mixture of all the foods that Allah has provided for His creation. The variety satisfies all the body's needs for carbohydrates, minerals, vitamins, proteins, fats and amino acids. Numerous verses of the



Qur'an mention the foods that Allah has provided for us to nourish and maintain our bodies. It is not an exhaustive list of dietary requirements but rather a general idea of the types of food that maintain a healthy body and prevent illness.

"And the grazing livestock He has created for you; in them is warmth and [numerous] benefits, and from them you eat."

[Qur'an 16:5]

"... it is He who subjected the sea for you to eat from it tender meat..."

[Qur'an 16:14]

"It is He who sends down rain from the sky; from it is drink and from it is foliage in which you pasture [animals]. He causes to grow for you thereby the crops, olives, palm trees, grapevines, and from all the fruits..."

[Qur'an 16:10-11]

"And indeed, for you in grazing livestock is a lesson. We give you drink from what is in their bellies – between excretion and blood – pure milk, palatable to drinkers."

[Qur'an 16:66]

“And He it is who causes gardens to grow, [both] trellised and untrellised, and palm trees and crops of different [kinds of] food and olives and pomegranates, similar and dissimilar. Eat of [each of] its fruit when it yields... And be not excessive...”

[Qur'an 6:141]

“And a sign for them is the dead earth. We have brought it to life and brought forth from it grain, and from it they eat.”

[Qur'an 36:33]

Allah has also provided us with a list of foods that are forbidden and apart from these everything else is considered lawful.

“Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah, and [those animals] killed by strangling or by a violent blow or by a head-long fall or by the goring of horns, and those from which a wild animal has eaten, except what you [are able to] slaughter [before its death], and those which are sacrificed on stone altars...”

[Qur'an 5:3]

“... intoxicants... are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.”

[Qur'an 5:90]





“... There emerges from their [bees’] bellies a drink, varying in colours, in which there is healing for people. Indeed in that is a sign for a people who give thought.”

[Qur'an 16:69]

While sweets and junk food are not forbidden they must be eaten sparingly as part of a balanced diet designed to maintain optimum health. Many of the most common chronic illnesses today are caused by unhealthy eating habits. Coronary hearth disease, hypertension, diabetes, obesity and depression have all been linked to inadequate diets. The traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) praise moderation as a way of maintaining good health and the Qur'an stresses the need to strike a balance between any two extremes. True believers need healthy bodies and minds in order to worship God in the correct way. To maintain a sound mind, a pure heart and a health body, special attention must be paid to health. The heart and the mind are nourished by remembrance of Allah and worship performed in a lawful way, and the body is nourished by partaking of the good and lawful food Allah has provided.

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