

COVID-19



FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH



NIGERIA CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL

Advisory for Ramadan



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The holy month of Ramadan is marked by the observance of fasting from sun rise to sun set, increased religious and social gatherings where Muslim communities unite to break their fast together (*iftar*), and increased attendance at mosques for congregational prayers and listening to sermons (*tafsir*). It is also customary for some muslim ummah to spend consecutive days and nights in worship at the mosque during the last 10 days of Ramadan. These religious practices are observed yearly, however this year, the month of Ramadan falls at the same time that the world is facing a global COVID-19 pandemic.

As you may already know, COVID-19 is spread primarily through respiratory droplets expelled when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. Transmission of the diseases occur when a person comes in contact with respiratory droplets from an infected person and/or with contaminated surfaces.

To mitigate the public health impact of increased spread of the disease, the Nigerian Government has implemented physical distancing measures aimed at interrupting transmission by reducing physical interaction between people. These measures are fundamental control mechanisms to stop the spread of infectious diseases, particularly respiratory infections, such as COVID-19, associated with large gatherings of people.

Due to wide spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in Nigeria, the Nigerian Government has called for all places of worship, including mosques, to remain closed. We acknowledge that this is very difficult for all of us with our hearts attached to worship in the mosques especially

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during the month of Ramadan where thousands of us observe *Asham* and *Taraweeh*. However, it is important for all Muslims to help with the fight against coronavirus by adhering to the Government's guidance and following the latest health advice by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC).

Therefore, the NCDC advises everyone to take responsibility to protect themselves and their loved ones at this time of Ramadan by doing the following:

General Public

- Stay at home; Avoid large gatherings of people especially during *iftar*
- Practice physical distancing by strictly maintaining a distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet) between people always
- Use non-contact greetings, such as waving, nodding, or placing the hand over the heart
- Elderly people and anyone with pre-existing medical conditions (such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer) should not attend gatherings and should avoid receiving non-essential guests at this time.
- Wash hands frequently with soap under running water. Where soap is not available, use ash or a hand sanitizer
- Use proper respiratory etiquette by coughing and sneezing into a tissue; discard the tissue immediately in a covered waste bin. If a tissue is not available cough or sneeze into your bent elbow

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- Clean all surfaces frequently with soap or disinfectants especially before and after the *iftar* meal
- When leaving home for essential services wear a face mask; Ensure proper disposal of single-use masks and regular washing of reusable masks.

Religious Leaders

- Obey national and state directives requesting the cancellation and avoidance of large gatherings, including places of worship.
- Arrange to hold sermons via broadcast through television and radio stations, or online platforms to avoid the mass gathering of people
- Encourage the use of personal prayer rugs to place over carpets
- Encourage washing of the hands with soap and water before ablution
- Food items meant for charity (*sadaqa*) should be pre-packaged and distributed without allowing crowd convergence
- Enjoin all Muslims to adhere to guidelines put in place by the authorities in order to protect themselves and their loved ones and to help bring an end to the COVID-19 outbreak in Nigeria