

Review Article

# The role of islamic lifestyle and healthy nutrition in accordance with the recommendations of islam and the holly quran by focusing on the risk of cancer incident

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## Abstract

**Background:** The Islamic religion has emphasized the importance of health and well-being, and Muslims have recognized the value of a good and healthy life based on Islamic recommendations. Health-oriented lifestyle is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that is the purpose of this study to investigate the Islamic lifestyle.

**Methods:** In this review study, we tried to explore practical strategies in Islam through access to credible sources in the form of a descriptive article on achieving a healthy lifestyle in nutrition. For this purpose, using keywords and electronic and manual searches in authentic Islamic and medical sources, information was searched and collected to answer the research question.

**Results:** Based on the results of the reviewed studies, the guidelines of Islamic religion and beliefs are mainly based on improving lifestyle factors and dietary habits. It has been emphasized that adherence to the Islamic dietary guidelines and lifestyle, may lead to less risk of diseases.

**Conclusion:** Given the availability of valuable nutritional resources and instructions in Islam to prevent and combat nutrition-related diseases, these theories can be applied and prevent from spreading and creating malnutrition-related diseases; the guidelines of Islam on healthy lifestyles in nutrition can be recommended to the world as a basic strategy.

## Introduction

Regarding the impact of lifestyle on the burden of diseases, it has been well recognized that more than 5% of the causes of death is related to lifestyle. Many health problems, such as obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and many types of cancer are associated with lifestyle changes, especially in developing countries and westernization of communities [1-5].

From the perspective of the Holy Qur'an, food is a means of experimentation, a factor for thought, reasoning, gratitude, reverence, oath and healing, and human dignity [6,7]. Some researchers stated that food and nutrition are directly related

to health, and have esoteric and spiritual implications in the field of ethics and human behavior education [6,8-10]. Other studies have also stated that people's lifestyles (sedentary lifestyle, obesity, smoking, unhealthy diet) are among significant health problems and they necessitate continuous intervention programs to change individual behaviors and lifestyles [11-14]. Healthy eating means having a healthy and complete diet that is high in vitamins, vegetables and fruits, as well as getting enough nutrients from foods such as meat, milk, cereals and beans. It enhances the strength of the human immune system and brings vitality and freshness to the skin as well [15-17].

## More Information

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A look at Iranian past and present lifestyles reveals dramatically changes in eating habits and life style factors that not only lead to many chronic diseases and cancers, but also make the body susceptible to other diseases [18,19]. High-fat, high-calorie and high-protein intake, low fruit consumption, low consumption of cooked vegetables, long-term cooking of foods and loss of minerals and vitamins in foods, long-term storage of vegetables in the freezer, use of smoked and grilled foods, increased consumption of canned foods and repeated use of oils, over-consumption of red meat, over-use of fried foods, consumption of hot tea and other nutritional habits of Iranians lead to the increase of gastrointestinal cancers in recent years. The role of incidence is becoming increasingly apparent nowadays, as more than 5% of cancer risk factors in developing countries is related to people's lifestyles [20-22].

The World Health Organization has put the issue of using religious doctrines to improve the lifestyles of various communities, especially Muslim countries [23]. The organization has proposed programs to reduce the risk factors of chronic obesity, diabetes, hypertension, osteoporosis and cancer. They emphasized to modify lifestyle based on religious teachings and to plan, design, and implement responsibility in Islamic countries. There have been limited studies on the effects of religious doctrines on various aspects of lifestyle in the world, but in our country, so far no comprehensive study has been conducted covering all aspects of Islamic lifestyle [24,25]. This study aimed to evaluate different roles of Islamic lifestyle based on recommendations of Islam and the Holy Quran. Regarding the importance of lifestyle changes, especially in nutritional habits, and relying to enhance life morally and spiritually, this study aimed to investigate Islamic lifestyle in nutritional dimension too.

## Results

Since the Holy Qur'an is a complete book and contains all the important instructions of life to live healthy and safe, nutrition has been given a particular importance in it the results of which are detailed in this section.

### The importance of healthy nutrition from the islamic perspective

Human's need for eating and food intake is his most important daily necessity, which accompanies him from birth to death, and even the prophets and divine authorities are no exception. God has given food to human for his health, life, and ability to perform his duties [26].

Precision in obtaining, consuming and choosing food, avoiding unclean and forbidden foods such as blood, dead animals and pork are highly approved in Islamic culture. However, eating vegetables and fruits, poultry and fish, cooked food, brief nutrition are emphasized. Also well chewing food, slow and calm eating, washing hands before and after meals and cleaning mouth and brushing teeth are strongly recommended [27,28].

Nowadays, in medical science there is also a great deal of interest in healthy nutrition because any deviation from healthy nutrition is a risk factor for most chronic diseases. Having healthy and natural nutrition and avoiding additives in human nutrition are among the ways to ensure that one's body is healthy throughout life style and is considered a sign of health that is of interest to Islam and medical science [28,29].

### Positive effects of healthy nutrition from the viewpoint of Islam

God has differentiated between feeding "the unbelievers and the believers". Explaining that animals feed without knowing where their foods have come from, is it legal or forbidden? The unbelievers also eat without paying attention to its lawfulness and forbearance, so they have a similar outcome. But believers who care about the moral and spiritual impact of food are bound to observe clean and absorbable food.

According to some narratives, the effects of some foods on human behavior and habits are as follows:

- 1) Moderation in eating will bring about morality, confidence and courage, and will lead to heart health.
- 2) Milk gives patience, kindness, calmness and more.
- 3) Honey enhances memory, purity and healing.
- 4) Grapes turn grief and depression into happiness and joy.
- 5) Dates cause patience, forbearance and satisfaction.
- 6) Olive helps to strengthen memory.
- 7) Fresh Fruits reinforce nerves and healthy skin.

Nutrition in accordance with Islamic standards plays a vital role in the health of the human body and soul, helping him along his evolutionary path [27,30,31].

Therefore, according to religious teachings, human beings can take any kind of food that is clean and solvent, including meat, protein and other foods, and avoid any forbidden foods that are harmful to the body. The Holy Qur'an blames the people forbidding certain foods:

Say: "Who has prohibited the embellishment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants and the good provisions?" [30-32].

Healthy Nutrition is taken into consideration in the Islamic religion from many other viewpoints too. One of the medical miracles of the Holy Qur'an that plays an important role in the mental and physical health of the community is the blame for extremism in eating and drinking. Having regular and healthy balanced nutrition not only contributes to live a long and healthy life, but also affects mental health. It also promotes maturity and intellectual growth. However, one of the most



important instructions of Islam about nutrition is to observe and abstain, because many diseases are caused by overeating. Imam Sadeq (AS) also says:

*"Eating less is commendable in every situation and among all tribes, for it has an intrinsic benefit and it is beneficial to physical appearance as well" [33].*

As we know, many diseases and illnesses can be prevented by keeping an eye on healthy nutrition.

Imam Sadeq (AS) said to the Hindu physician:

*"I carry a better stuff than yours ... I use what the Prophet (PBUH) has said, and I know that the stomach is the home of every pain and avoidance is the only cure" [34].*

### Important nutrition recommendations and considerations

1) *"Don't eat when you are nervous"*. Anger causes the dysfunction of central nervous system, which leads to dysfunction of the digestive system. When a person is angry, gastrointestinal digestive system does not perform well and digestive juices and enzymes are not secreted properly.

So what is very much emphasized is to try to relax while eating and eat in a relaxed environment and avoid stressful environments and conditions that direct vital strengths to the brain rather than digestive tract. As a result, we do not have the opportunity to chew food well, so we should try to think of a time to spend in the quietest time of the day [35].

2) *Take time to eat*. Eating time is very important to our body, because it is by eating that our needs are met, so we need to take the time to relax and not try to eat as fast as we can. Let's say that this will have a lot of damage to the body. Islamic teachings also emphasize that one should eat slowly and allow time to eat.

3) *Chew food well*

4) *Sit down at a table and take a meal* [36].

### Another recipe for eating

The point is that we should chew the food well. While chewing is one of the most important factors in digestion, we are mostly oblivious to it and have become accustomed to eating fast unintentionally, causing many problems for our body. If we chew the food slowly and well and smear it with the saliva of the mouth, "so that the food is fully blended and softened", in addition to taking a big step towards improving our digestion and absorption, we have provided the health of the teeth because good chewing effect makes the teeth impermeable to germs and prevents their decaying and rotting [37].

Another point to consider is the number of meals per day. Since the Holy Qur'an refers to the number of people in Paradise eating in the morning and in the evening, it can

therefore be inferred that two main meals of mankind can be eaten twice a day:

*"And for them is the morning and evening"*

It is noteworthy that the physicians and practitioners of Iranian traditional medicine have also paid great attention to the type of nutrition and its quality and quantity in the health and nutrition and sometimes referred to the number of times necessary for human consumption. Mohammed bin Zakaria Razi, one of the important medical figures in the third and fourth century, who has written important notes and books on nutrition, quotes Abu Hualal Homsī (a medical figure in the second century), for his view of the number of necessary meals [38].

- Divide your food into two meals, one-third "for daytime and two-thirds for nighttime, because it is better suited to staying true to nature, and digestion is perfect for the liver and organs.
- Lighter volume of food should be available for the day so that it can only maintain strength and power, and that the heat is not agitated and the stomach is light and that the more concentrated volume should be kept for the evening meal, although it is necessary that all of the food consumed in two meals reach the amount that is not burdensome on the body.

### Fasting and its importance in nutritional health

Fasting means abstinence and abandonment in the absolute sense. One of the related instances is in eating and drinking. A person who constantly eats food, sometimes has an accumulation of nutrients in the body, and cleansing the body is done through food scraps and fasting is the remedy in such cases. God the Almighty says in the Holy Quran:

*"And that fasting is better for you, if you know"*.

Healthy fasting helps to dry out excessive moisture in the body, remove obstacles in the digestive tract and bloodstream and so on, purifying blood and helping the stomach and digestive tracts, and contributing to the health and well-being of many. It reduces the deposition of fat in the arteries, prevents atherosclerosis and removes toxins and dense waste [39,40].

### Discussion and conclusion

Iran is the second-largest nation in the Middle East. It is a large and diverse country, comprising several different religious and ethnic groups. In Iran, as a middle-income country, cancer is the third common cause of death, but as the burden of cancer incidence and mortality are recently increasing in most of Asian countries and in Iran as well, we will interface with more incidence and mortality rates of most cancers in the next future. This is because of population growth and aging,



development of western life style, and environmental/genetic interactions due to several risk factors [20].

Nutrition health has a high place in the Holy Quran as the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Imams and other Islamic scholars in the field of health in general and nutritional health in particular have made valuable recommendations in this regard [23]. The Holy Quran has very valuable guidelines in the field of nutritional health including the use of the lawful and clean daily provisions, and avoidance of unlawful and unclean ones, and adherence to them keeps the human on the path of monotheism. In this regard, it is necessary for human beings to pay close attention to their qualitative and quantitative structure of nutrition which improves their material and spiritual life [1-5].

Fasting and exercise are also two of the essential factors for maintaining healthy and healthy nutrition management [6].

The role of adherence to the Islamic instructions in preventing physical, mental and social illnesses has been explicitly explored in the available Islamic sources, so that it can be seen that simple and clear guidelines are in place. The instructions of Islamic religion have a positive role in controlling and preventing the problems of the life in the present age [39,40].

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### Authors' contributions

1) PJ, and RD: made substantial contributions to the conception and design of the work; the acquisition, and interpretation of data;

2) PJ, and RD: drafted the work and revised the manuscript critically for important intellectual content;

3) MHS, and AR: revised the manuscript critically for important intellectual content;

4) All the authors approved the final version to be published; and

5) All the authors agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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