

Pregnant women's health during Ramadan

PROF. DR. SAMY ISMAIL

Health of the pregnant women during the Holy Month of Ramadan is very important. Here are the answers to some questions many have in relation to pregnancy and fasting:

1. Is pregnancy a disease?

The answer surely is that pregnancy is not a disease. It is a special physiological and healthy situation characterized by a cascade of physiological, physical and emotional changes that occur once the pregnancy occurred within the body of the pregnant mother.

2. Is the pregnant mother considered a patient?

The answer is no, she is not. The pregnant mother is a healthy woman with top healthy performance on its top its capabilities to get pregnant.

3. Do we advise the pregnant mother to fast during Ramadan?

Generally, we do not advise the pregnant mother to fast especially during the first 4 months as during this period, the lady tends to have physiological changes affecting all her body systems especially to her digestive system usually. The pregnant women develop excessive vomiting, nausea, difficulty with digestion and absorption. They are at risk of losing a lot of body fluid to the degree of developing dehydration (Hyperemesis Gravidarum). These changes can affect all system of the pregnant mother and the developing embryo which may jeopardize her and her baby.



• During the second trimester of pregnancy the fetus needs regular supply of nutrition to start and continue his growth. Any disturbance of nutrition supplement from the mother to the baby may affect his growth. The same regarding the continuation of growth during the last trimester of pregnancy.

• Any pregnant lady suffering from any medical disorders with pregnancy like Diabetes Mellitus, hypertension, thyroid dysfunction indicates the decision to avoid fasting as her baby is at great risk.

• Pregnant mothers are advised to report any alarming signs like hypertension, headache, blurring vision and decreased amount of urine output.

• After all the above advice, the final decision to fast is the responsibility of the pregnant women.

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Saudi Arabia's city of roses blooms in Ramadan

AFP | Taif

Every spring, roses bloom in the western Saudi city of Taif, turning pockets of the kingdom's vast desert landscape a vivid and fragrant pink.

In April, they are harvested for the essential oil used to cleanse the outer walls of the sacred Kaaba, the cubic structure in the holy city of Mecca towards which Muslims around the world pray.

This year, the harvest falls during the



Roses from the Saudi city of Taif are harvested for oil to clean the sacred Kaaba in Mecca



holy fasting month of Ramadan, which observant Muslims devote to prayer and reflection.

Workers at the Bin Salman farm tend rose bushes and pick tens of thousands of flowers each day to produce rose water and oil, also prized components in the cosmetic and culinary industries.

The perfumed oil has become popular among the millions of Muslims who visit the kingdom every year for pilgrimages.

Patterns of plants and flowers have

long been part of Islamic art.

Known as the city of roses, with approximately 300 million blooms every year, Taif has more than 800 flower farms, many of which have opened their doors to visitors.

While workers pick flowers in the fields, others labour in sheds, filling and weighing baskets by hand.

The flowers are then boiled and distilled.

"We start boiling the roses on high heat until they are almost evaporated,

and this takes around 30 to 35 minutes," Khalaf al-Tuweiri, who owns the Bin Salman farm, told AFP.

"After that we lower the heat for around 15 to 30 minutes until the distilling process starts, which lasts for eight hours."

Once the oil floats to the top of the glass jars, the extraction process begins.

The oil is then extracted with a large syringe to fill different-sized vials, the smallest going for 400 Saudi riyals (\$106).

Ramadan cooking

Ingredients

For the garlic starter

- 2/3 cup (104 grams) plus 1/2 cup (70 grams) regular semolina flour (pasta flour)
- 3/4 cup (85 grams) all-purpose flour
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled

For the bread

- 2 cups (400 grams) extra-fine semolina flour
- 1/2 teaspoon (1 1/2 grams) dry yeast
- 2 1/2 teaspoons (15 grams) fine salt
- 1 cup (52 grams) regular semolina flour or all-purpose flour, for handling the dough
- Moroccan Almond-Argan Butter, for serving

Preparation

For the garlic starter

1. Make the starter: In a glass or ceramic bowl, combine 2/3 cup semolina flour with the all-purpose flour. Gradually stir in 3/4 cup water to make a wet dough. Mix in garlic, cover, wrap in a towel and leave in a warm place, like an unheated oven, for a day.

2. Uncover the starter, add 1/4 cup water and the remaining 1/2 cup semolina flour, and mix. Cover, wrap in a towel, and leave for 12 to 24 hours. The starter will get a crusty top and blossom underneath. Scoop out 1/2 cup starter and discard the rest, including garlic cloves (otherwise, as it continues to ferment, the smell would drive you out of your home).

3. Make the bread: In a food processor fitted with the metal

Berber Skillet Bread



blade, combine extra-fine semolina flour, the 1/2 cup of starter, the yeast and salt. Pulse once or twice. Add 1 cup warm water and process for 15 to 20 seconds to knead. Let rest 10 minutes. Pulsing food processor, trickle in another 1/4 cup water. Sprinkle a work surface with flour and turn dough onto it. Cover with an upside-down bowl for 10 minutes. Cut 4 1-foot squares of waxed or parchment paper and sprinkle with flour. Divide dough in four and put each piece on a piece of a floured paper, turning to coat. Press each into an 8-inch circle. Cover with kitchen towels and let rise 1 hour.

For the bread

1. When ready to cook, gently flatten each disk, then prick the tops all over with a fork. Heat an 8- or 10-inch nonstick skillet or griddle (or two, if you have them) over medium-high heat. Sprinkle the pan's surface with flour, then pick up a dough round and flip it into the pan, paper side up. Peel off the paper and adjust the heat so that the bread sizzles gently. When it is browned and blistered on the bottom, about 5 minutes, flip the bread out onto a plate, then slide it back into the pan to cook the other side. Cook about 2 minutes, shaking the skillet often to prevent sticking. When browned, firm and fragrant, slide onto a platter and serve immediately, or cover with a towel to keep warm while you cook the remaining breads. Serve with Moroccan almond-argan butter.