

2299 - Taking Medication While Fasting

the question

Is there any consensus amongst Muslim scholars as to which medicinal preparations are permitted whilst fasting? More specifically are: a) tablets/syrups b) inhalers for asthma c) suppositories and d) intravenous forms of treatment allowed?

The question of inhalers for asthma is very pertinent to us in the UK, as some 20% of young people now suffer from asthma.

I would appreciate a detailed response with reference to any conference proceedings, etc. if possible.

Summary of answer

Eye drops, ear drops, ear syringing, nose drops and nasal sprays do not invalidate the fast so long as one avoids swallowing any material that may reach the throat.

Detailed answer

There follows a list of a number of things used in the medical field, explaining what does and does not break the fast. This is a summary of Shar'i research presented to the Islamic Fiqh Council during its regular meetings:

The following things do not have any effect on the fast:

- Eye drops, ear drops, ear syringing, nose drops and nasal sprays – so long as one avoids swallowing any material that may reach the throat.
- Tablets or lozenges that are placed beneath the tongue for the treatment of angina pectoris etc., so long as one avoids swallowing any material that reaches the throat.
- Vaginal pessaries, douching, use of a speculum, or internal digital examination.
- Introduction of a scope or coil (IUD), etc., into the uterus.
- Introduction of a scope or catheter into the urethra (male or female), or injection of dyes for diagnostic imaging, or of medication, or cleaning of the bladder.

- Drilling of teeth (prior to filling), extraction or polishing of teeth, using a miswak or toothbrush, so long as one avoids swallowing any material that reaches the throat.
- Rinsing, gargling or applying topical treatment in the mouth, so long as one avoids swallowing any material that reaches the throat.
- Injections, whether subcutaneous, intramuscular or intravenous – with the exception of those used for purposes of nutrition.
- Oxygen.
- [Anaesthetics](#), so long as they do not supply nutrition to the patient.
- Medicines absorbed through the skin, such as creams, lotions and patches used to administer medication through the skin.
- Introduction of a catheter into the veins in order to examine or treat the vessels of the heart or other organs.
- [Laparoscopy](#) for the purpose of diagnosis or surgical treatment of the abdominal organs.
- Biopsies of the liver and other organs, so long as this is not accompanied by the administration of nutrients.
- [Gastroscopy](#), so long as this is not accompanied by the administration of nutrients.
- Introduction of medicine or instruments into the brain or spinal cord.
- Involuntary [vomiting](#) (as opposed to self-induced vomiting).

The Muslim doctor should advise his patient to postpone the above-described treatments and procedures until after he has broken his fast, if it is safe to do so and will not cause any harm (even if these procedures will not have any effect on his fast).