

Culture, Religion and Language

A practical guide to help staff care for patients from a range of faith groups.

Please note for all patients:

- Always ask “What do we need to know in order to care for you in the best way at this time?”
- All needs must be noted in the nursing notes/Trakcare. This should include the need for communication support such as BSL or spoken language interpreters.

Please use this guide in conjunction with the Faith & Belief Communities Manual which covers all major religious groups and is available at www.staffnet.ggc.scot.nhs.uk

This guide covers only six of the most frequently seen religious groups using NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Hospitals.

Although this guide has been designed to be used in an Acute setting it can also be adapted for Mental Health Partnerships and Community settings.

Please note for all religions:

- Facilities should be available for prayer.
- Staff should be aware of how to contact Chaplaincy services. When specific guidance is required in relation to spiritual care when planning patient care, please contact your local Chaplaincy Department via the hospital switchboard.
- If language needs are not addressed it could impact on safe, effective practice e.g. medication management.

Religion	Language	Diet	Special Requirements, Culture and Ablutions	Protocol on Death
Christianity	<p>Language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any known language depending on the patient's nationality <p>Family should not be used as interpreters. If patient insists then record this in case notes.</p> <p>Interpreter booking details are available on the booking system poster.</p> <p>Language identification cards are available to help identify the correct language.</p> <p>Some patients may not be able to read their spoken language.</p> <p>How to book an interpreter:</p> <p>Information available at: www.equality.scot.nhs.uk</p>	<p>Always ask the patient's preference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roman Catholic and Anglican patients may request the Sacrament of the Sick Occasionally, patients may request baptism <p>Gender Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal choice <p>Modesty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No particular guidelines <p>Blood Transfusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chaplaincy service must be informed if the patient is on the Liverpool Care Pathway. <p>Last Offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to Faith and Belief Communities Manual for guidance (see page 19) Staff must comply with the Infection Control Policy <p>Additional paperwork is required if a body is to be repatriated e.g. if the patient wished to be buried in country of origin. Airlines will not agree to transport the body without this.</p> <p>Post Mortem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions Personal choice Burial or cremation
	Language	Diet	Special Requirements, Culture and Ablutions	Protocol on Death
Hinduism	<p>Language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Punjabi Hindi Gujarati Urdu Bengali Other Indian languages Other languages may also be spoken depending on the patient's nationality 	<p>Always ask the patient's preference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many Hindus are vegetarian Fasting is a practice some Hindus follow but very few will insist Some eat eggs Some will not eat onions and garlic Dairy produce should be free from animal fat Even the use of utensils used for meat would be offensive 	<p>Prefer to wash in free flowing water. Water should be available in the same room as W.C. or with a bed pan when used.</p> <p>Many South Asians wash their perineal area with running water after using the toilet. A disposable urinal can be used as a water receptacle for this purpose and can be disposed of after use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chaplaincy service must be informed if the patient is on the Liverpool Care Pathway. <p>Last Offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to Faith and Belief Communities Manual for guidance (see page 19) Staff must comply with the Infection Control Policy
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Religion	Language	Diet	Special Requirements, Culture and Ablutions	Protocol on Death
Hinduism (continued)	<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p> <p>Family should not be used as interpreters. If patient insists then record this in case notes.</p> <p>Interpreter booking details are available on the booking system poster.</p> <p>Language identification cards are available to help identify the correct language.</p> <p>Some patients may not be able to read their spoken language.</p> <p>How to book an interpreter:</p> <p>Information available at: www.equality.scot.nhs.uk</p>	<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p> <p>Usually wash hands and rinse mouth before meals.</p> <p>Fasting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not an uncommon practice • Very few Hindus will insist on fasting when in hospital • May interfere with fluid balance and medication management 	<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p> <p>It is also customary to use the left hand for personal hygiene. The right hand is traditionally used for eating. This information should be taken into account when an intravenous infusion is required and should be discussed with the patient or carer.</p> <p>Gender Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer same gender practitioners when possible <p>Modesty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital gowns may not be appropriate. An alternative may be a Shalwar Kameez (tunic and trousers) or paper pyjamas. <p>Blood Transfusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no objections • Personal choice 	<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p> <p>Additional paperwork is required if a body is to be repatriated e.g. if the patient wished to be buried in India or another country of origin. Airlines will not agree to transport the body without this.</p> <p>Post mortem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No restrictions • Personal choice • Cremation
Religion	Language	Diet	Special Requirements, Culture and Ablutions	Protocol on Death
Judaism	<p>Language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English • Hebrew • Other languages may also be spoken depending on the patient's nationality <p>Family should not be used as interpreters. If patient insists then record this in case notes.</p> <p>Interpreter booking details are available on the booking system poster.</p>	<p>Always ask the patient's preference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kosher meals • May request vegetarian. Pork is forbidden. • No milk and meat at same meal. No animal rennet or gelatine, e.g. cheese, jellies. <p>Fasting:</p> <p>Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).</p>	<p>Gender Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer same gender practitioners when possible • Most Jewish women, except the ultra-orthodox, are usually prepared to be examined and treated by male doctors and attitudes are probably indistinguishable from those of the majority of the female population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chaplaincy service must be informed if the patient is on the Liverpool Care Pathway. <p>Last Offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to Faith and Belief Communities Manual for guidance as there are specific Dos and Don'ts (see page 35) • Staff must comply with the Infection Control Policy
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Religion	Language	Diet	Special Requirements, Culture and Ablutions	Protocol on Death
Judaism (continued)	<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p> <p>Language identification cards are available to help identify the correct language.</p> <p>Some patients may not be able to read their spoken language.</p> <p>How to book an interpreter:</p> <p>Information available at: www.equality.scot.nhs.uk</p>	<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p>	<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p> <p>Blood Transfusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No restrictions • Personal choice 	<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funeral usually takes place within 24-48hrs. All paper work will require to be completed as quickly as possible. <p>Please refer to Faith and Belief Communities Manual for guidance in relation to a death on the Sabbath or a festival (see page 33).</p> <p>Post Mortem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally forbidden (unless ordered by authority) but the family may be asked for permission if it is for important research • Burial
Religion	Language	Diet	Special Requirements, Culture and Ablutions	Protocol on Death
Islam	<p>Language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urdu • Punjabi • Bengali • Arabic • Hindi • Other languages may also be spoken depending on the patient's nationality <p>Family should not be used as interpreters. If patient insists then record this in case notes.</p> <p>Interpreter booking details are available on the booking system poster.</p> <p>Language identification cards are available to help identify the correct language.</p>	<p>Always ask the patient's preference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halal food • No animal fats to be used in preparation. No animal rennet or gelatine. • Pork is forbidden (it is seen as unclean) • Staff must ensure that food and medication is culturally sensitive e.g. contains no alcohol <p>Usually wash hands and rinse mouths before meals.</p>	<p>Cleanliness is of great importance. May wish to wash in free flowing water. Water should be available in the same room as W.C. or with a bed pan when used.</p> <p>Many South Asians wash their perineal area with running water after using the toilet. A disposable urinal can be used as a water receptacle for this purpose and can be disposed of after use.</p> <p>It is also customary to use the left hand for personal hygiene. The right hand is traditionally used for eating. This information should be taken into account when an intravenous infusion is required and should be discussed with patient or carer.</p> <p>Gender Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer same gender practitioners when possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chaplaincy service must be informed if the patient is on the Liverpool Care Pathway. <p>Last Offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to Faith and Belief Communities Manual for guidance (see page 25) • Staff must comply with the Infection Control Policy <p>Muslims require to be buried as quickly as possible preferably the same day. Paperwork requires to be completed as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Additional paperwork is required if a body is to be repatriated e.g. if the patient wished to be buried in Pakistan or another country of origin. Airlines will not agree to transport the body without this.</p>
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Religion	Language	Diet	Special Requirements, Culture and Ablutions	Protocol on Death
Islam (continued)	<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p> <p>Some patients may not be able to read their spoken language.</p> <p>How to book an interpreter:</p> <p>Information available at: www.equality.scot.nhs.uk</p>	<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p> <p>Ramadan and Fasting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast takes place during month of Ramadan. This follows a lunar calendar and falls on a different date each year. • No food or water from dawn to dusk • This will include oral medication • May interfere with fluid balance and medication management <p>N.B. People who are ill are exempt from fasting during Ramadan.</p> <p>Some patients will also refuse e.g. intravenous infusions, eye drops, blood tests, smear tests and other invasive tests.</p>	<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p> <p>Modesty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modesty is very important. Ladies may wish to wear the Hijab (head dress), Nigaab (veil) or a Burka (full body cover). • Hospital gowns may not be appropriate. An alternative may be a Shalwar Kameez (tunic and trousers) or paper pyjamas. <p>Ablution (washing):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is necessary before prayers • Facilities should be available for prayer. Prayer mats are used. However, patients can pray in bed if necessary. • The patient may ask for a compass to establish which way is facing South East • The Faith and Belief Communities Manual contains details of a website which will give you the direction for Mecca by entering a postcode <p>Blood Transfusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No restrictions • Personal choice 	<p><i>Continued from previous page</i></p> <p>Post Mortem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be avoided except if legally necessary • All organs have to be buried with the body • Burial
Religion	Language	Diet	Special Requirements, Culture and Ablutions	Protocol on Death
Sikhism	<p>Language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punjabi • Hindi • Other languages may also be spoken depending on the patient's nationality <p>Family should not be used as interpreters. If patient insists then record this in case notes.</p>	<p>Always ask the patient's preference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sikhs do not eat beef • Many Sikhs are vegetarian <p>Usually wash hands and rinse mouths before meals.</p> <p>Fasting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sikhs are not required to fast 	<p>Cleanliness is of great importance. May prefer to wash in free flowing water. Water should be available in the same room as W.C. or with a bed pan when used.</p> <p>Many South Asians wash their perineal area with running water after using the toilet. A disposable urinal can be used as a water receptacle for this purpose and can be disposed of after use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The chaplaincy service must be informed if the patient is on the Liverpool Care Pathway.
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Religion	Language	Diet	Special Requirements, Culture and Ablutions	Protocol on Death
Sikhism (continued)	<i>Continued from previous page</i> <p>Interpreter booking details are available on the booking system poster.</p> <p>Language identification cards are available to help identify the correct language.</p> <p>Some patients may not be able to read their spoken language.</p> <p>How to book an interpreter:</p> <p>Information available at: www.equality.scot.nhs.uk</p>	<i>Continued from previous page</i>	<i>Continued from previous page</i> <p>It is also customary to use the left hand for personal hygiene. The right hand is traditionally used for eating. This information should be taken into account when an intravenous infusion is required and should be discussed with the patient or carer.</p> <p>Gender Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer same gender practitioners when possible <p>Modesty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital gowns may not be appropriate. An alternative may be a Shalwar Kameez (tunic and trousers) or paper pyjamas. <p>Blood Transfusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No restrictions • Personal choice <p>Removing religious jewellery must be discussed with patient. Practising Sikhs will wear a small sword, a Kirpan. This must not be removed. However, for medical procedures, such as x-rays or scans, it should be removed and kept safe or in sight of the patient, until the procedure is finished, and then returned (please see Faith and Belief Communities Manual, page 43, for explanation).</p> <p>Practising Sikh men do not cut their hair or beard. If hair has to be removed for a procedure e.g. an ECG or inserting an intravenous infusion this needs to be discussed with the patient as he may need to be re-baptised.</p>	<i>Continued from previous page</i> <p>Last Offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please refer to Faith and Belief Communities Manual for guidance (see page 46) • Staff must comply with the Infection Control Policy <p>In the absence of the family the 5 Ks must not be removed, (see Faith and Belief Communities Manual, page 43, for explanation of 5 Ks).</p> <p>Additional paperwork is required if a body is to be repatriated e.g. if the patient wished to be buried in India or another country of origin. Airlines will not agree to transport the body without this.</p> <p>Post Mortem</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sikhs do not like post mortems, but will accept them if legally necessary • Cremation

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Buddhism	<p>Language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any known language depending on their nationality. There are many Scottish Buddhists in the NHS GGC catchment area. However there is a large Chinese community, some of whom are Buddhist. If they are Chinese they may speak: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cantonese Mandarin Hakka <p>Family should not be used as interpreters. If patients insist then record this in their case notes.</p> <p>Interpreter booking details are available on the booking system poster.</p> <p>Language identification cards are available to help identify the correct language.</p> <p>Some patients may not be able to read their spoken language.</p> <p>How to book an interpreter:</p> <p>Information available at: www.equality.scot.nhs.uk</p>	<p>Always ask the patient's preference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some are vegetarians <p>Fasting:</p> <p>In some traditions on certain days, possibly full moon days, fasting may be observed.</p>	<p>Some Chinese people will wish to pray in hospital and may request the curtains drawn round the bed.</p> <p>Chinese people prefer to wash with a basin, sponge and hot water when they are unwell. Many dislike sitting in baths. However, ask the patient's preference.</p> <p>Gender Issues:</p> <p>Offer same gender practitioners when possible.</p> <p>Modesty:</p> <p>Is very important in the Chinese culture. Any form of exposure is extremely embarrassing for many people, especially older people.</p> <p>Blood Transfusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions Personal choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chaplaincy service must be informed if the patient is on the Liverpool Care Pathway. <p>Last Offices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to Faith and Belief Communities Manual for guidance (see page 9) Staff must comply with the Infection Control Policy <p>Additional paperwork is required if a body is to be repatriated e.g. if the patient wished to be buried in their country of origin. Airlines will not agree to transport the body without this.</p> <p>Post Mortem:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not like post mortems, but will accept them if legally necessary Personal choice Burial or cremation

References:

Culture, Religion and Patient Care in a Multi-Ethnic Society by Alix Henley and Judith Schott (1999)
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Faith & Belief Communities Manual (2010)

