INTRODUCTION
American Muslims are members one of the fastest growing and most diverse religious communities in the United States. It is very likely that most health care providers will find themselves delivering medical services to Muslim patients at one point or another during their career. Health care providers should therefore be aware of the potential need to accommodate certain traditional practices and norms surrounding gender interaction, clothing, and the nonconsumption of alcohol and pork, among other issues. The information in this guide is intended to educate health care professionals about common Muslim beliefs and practices that may assist them in the delivery of culturally competent patient care.

MUSLIM VIEW OF ILLNESS AND TREATMENT
Treat illness as a challenge and an opportunity to test your faith and commitment to God. Be encouraged and uplifted by the sayings of the Prophet and his companions. Serve patients. Good health is a gift from Allah and so is illness. Humbled and grateful, always be grateful to Allah in good health and suffering. Be an example of love, patience, and support to Allah’s patients. Be helpful, kind, and patient. Be48f0d984f297 for your patients. Be concerned, patient, and understanding. Offer comfort to your patients. Serve and care for patients in a loving and friendly manner. Always be respectful. Adhere to all cultural and religious practices of these Muslims may vary widely. Moreover, because of the significant cultural and ethnic diversity in the global Muslim community certain practices and customs may differ significantly, making it difficult for health care workers to generalize about Muslim practices. Health care providers should focus on the patient’s and caregivers’ concerns and get information about their specific preferences or religious practices prior to an episode of care.

MUSLIM PRACTICES IMPACTING HEALTH CARE INCLUDE:
- Gender, Clothing, and Physical Contact
- Religious Devotion and Observance
- Dietary Guidelines
- Hygiene
- Religious Devotion and Observance

CLOTHING AND MODESTY

Islamic prescriptions that both men and women behave and dress modestly. There are several ways in which Muslims express this belief. For example: When in public, Muslim women and men choose to wear long, loose-fitting clothing, as well as a head covering commonly known as a hijab.

Some Muslim women may wear a face veil, commonly referred to as a niqab.

Common Muslim women’s clothing includes items covering the hair, head, and body. Many Muslim women also opt to completely cover their arms and legs, to wear long skirts rather than trousers or jeans, and to wear only men’s style clothing, called kayaps or chadors.

Many men and boys also may express this principle of clothing by wearing traditional clothing, such as long robes or loose-fitting pants. Some male Muslims wear a small head covering, called a kufi. Many Muslims only eat ritual-slaughtered meat, called halal or sometimes zabiha. Health care providers should be familiar with these terms in the event that they are asked to accommodate alternative meals during hospital stays. Some Muslims also eat kosher meat, the requirements of which are similar but not identical, to halal meat or zabiha.

HYGIENE

Islam places great emphasis on hygiene in both spiritual and physical terms. In addition to the ritual cleansing (ablutions) before prayer, Muslims also follow several other customs related to bodily hygiene, including but not limited to:

- Washing with water after urination or defecation
- Owing washing practices before contact with certain bodily fluids such as semen and, in some cases, blood
- Regular removal of all body hair
- Keeping nostrils clean and fingernails trimmed

RITUAL WASHING BEFORE PRAYERS

Before the daily ritual prayer, which is observed five times a day, Muslims rinse their mouth, wash their hands, face, arms and feet with water, also known as making wudu (woo-doo). Health care workers may witness Muslims “waking up” in public bathroom sinks.

RELIGIOUS DEVOTION AND OBSERVANCE

- Daily Prayer: Salat, practiced five times daily is the ritual prayer in which Muslims recite verses of the Qur’an, engage in a series of prostrations and standing positions. Salat typically lasts 30 minutes and is performed before sunrise, early and late afternoon, and at sunset, and during late evening.
- Friday Prayer: Jumah (JOO-mah), the collective prayer performed on Fridays at a set time in the early afternoon, and is obligatory for Muslims of all but very elderly. Specifics vary according to geographical location.
- Fasting: Ramadan, the obligatory month of (intermittent) fasting in which sound-minded, healthy and able-bodied Muslims abstain from food, drink, and sexual activity from the time the sun rises to dusk.
- Annual Holiday: The two primary religious holidays observed by all Muslims around the world are Eid al-Adha, which takes place after the annual Hajj pilgrimage and Eid al-Fitr, which take place at the end of the month of Ramadan.

REFERENCES


- Educational Resources
  - Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA): https://imana.org/

EXTERIOR RESOURCES

- Educational Resources
  - Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA): https://imana.org/