



## Did you know?

### Fascinating Facts and Interesting Information about Cultural Diversity

#### Diwali

Diwali or Deepavali, Sanskrit & Hindi: दीपावली *Dīpāvālī*) Festival of Lights

October 25, 2011

Today, Indians around the world will illuminate their homes with candle-lit oil lamps known as diyas in honor of Diwali. Popularly known as the festival of lights, it is the biggest holiday in India which occurs on the fifteenth day of Kartika. This five-day Hindu celebration honors the victory of goodness over evil in the world. In Hindu culture, light signifies knowledge and burning a candle symbolizes the power of knowledge destroying negative forces.

As with other Indian festivals, Diwali signifies many different things to people across the country. In north India, Diwali celebrates Rama's homecoming that is his return to Ayodhya after the defeat of Ravana and his coronation as king; in Gujarat, the festival honors Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. For Jains, Diwali marks the attainment of moksha or nirvana by Mahavira in 527 BC, and in Bengal, it is associated with the goddess Kali. Everywhere, it signifies the renewal of life and heralds the approach of winter and the beginning of the sowing season. It is common practice to light small oil lamps (called *diyas*) and place them around the home, in courtyards, verandahs, and gardens, as well as on roof-tops and outer walls; exchange gifts; wear new clothes; decorate the house performing traditional ceremonies together in their home.

*You can now find the above information and more on the Cultural Diversity Section of our Library Web site.* It is important to respect the cultural diversity and be sensitive to everyone's diverse backgrounds and traditions.

To find more information that will help you caring for your patients, please visit:

<http://www.marianjoylibrary.org/Diversity/index.aspx>

