



QUICK REFERENCE FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS INTERACTING WITH BUDDHIST PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

For more complete information on interacting with Buddhist patients, please see the complete version of the *Guidelines for Health Care Providers Interacting With Buddhist Patients and Their Families*. This *Quick Reference* is meant to assist Health Care Workers in Emergency Situations.

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<p>GENERAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buddhism adheres to the belief that human existence is part of an ongoing cycle of multiple lives (<i>samsara</i>) the circumstances of which are governed by one's deeds or actions (<i>karma</i>). <i>Karma</i> is the law of cause and effect: there is a reason for all things that happen in life - positive action results in positive results; negative action results in negative results. It is believed that all beings possess Buddha-nature (the potential for full and complete enlightenment.) ▪ Among the common teachings in Buddhism are the <i>Four Noble Truths</i>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> √ that the nature of life involves suffering, √ that suffering is caused by ignorant grasping desires, √ that there is possible a life based on peace and contentment (<i>Nirvana</i>), and √ that this life is realized by moderating desire and ameliorating ignorance through the practice of the <i>Eightfold Noble Way</i> (or the <i>Eightfold Path</i>). ▪ Pain management and palliative care measures are acceptable as they relieve suffering. There is no conflict with the <i>precept</i> on intoxication as long as the intention and the effect is simply to relieve physical pain. If the individual patient wishes to minimize the use of pain medication in order to be as lucid as possible then that expressed wish should be respected. In the absence of an expressed wish, standard care is acceptable.
<p>GENDER ISSUES/ BODY EXPOSURE</p>	<p>Generally, Buddhists do not have a preference that the health care professional rendering care be of the same sex. An individual may have such a preference, perhaps because of ethnic or cultural values but not because of Buddhist values.</p>
<p>BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS</p>	<p>Blood transfusions are allowed. There are no restrictions on blood or blood products.</p>
<p>DIETARY ISSUES</p>	<p>Buddhists may or may not be vegetarian or vegan. Many have no specific dietary preference and so consulting the patient and family is advised.</p>
<p>END OF LIFE CARE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decisions about removing artificial means of life support or not employing such means in the first place should be based primarily upon the wishes of the patient. Difficult decisions on procedures such as abortion are the responsibility of the individual with the religious teacher providing caring consultation and support. If the patient is incapable of expressing a preference, the family must be consulted. ▪ Whether the individual has an advance directive would depend on their culture and ethnicity. The decision to forego life-sustaining efforts is an individual matter that requires consultation with the person concerned and their family. As the end of life approaches it is important that the attending physician consult the patient, patient's family and priest.
<p>ORGAN DONATION/RECEIPT OF TISSUE OR</p>	<p>Organ transplants (both donor and recipient) are generally permissible, although with some individuals there is a concern that organ donation may affect the consciousness of the decedent. Some traditions hold this to be possible and, therefore, organ donation</p>

ORGANS	may be impossible.
AUTOPSY	Beliefs on autopsy vary, therefore the individual or the individual's family must be consulted.
CARE OF THE DECEASED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disposition of the body varies with the culture and denomination. Consult with the family regarding their preferences and their choice of mortician. ▪ For ethnic Japanese, cremation is the predominant custom; for non-Japanese people inhumation (burial) may be preferred. ▪ If the death is subject to investigation by the local Medical Examiner or Coroner, follow established procedures. Be sure to notify the Medical Examiner or Coroner of any special religious beliefs or family requests.
RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES	Buddhists are of many cultures and therefore celebrations of religious events are also not uniform. Either or both the Solar and Lunar New Year's Days may be celebrated. Religiously, the most important celebrations are the days of the birth, enlightenment, and entry into <i>Nirvana</i> of the Buddha. There is generally an annual period of paying respect to the family dead, which usually occurs in the summer.
CONTACT INFORMATION & RESOURCES ON THE WEB	<p>For contacts in the Buddhist community in case of emergency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pure Land Tradition; Japanese ethnicity: Midwest Buddhist Temple - Rev. Bryan Siebuhr, 312-943-7801 ▪ Theravada Thai Tradition: Ven. Dr. Boonshoo Sriburin, 708-594-6131 or Ajahn Ratana Thongkrajai, 773-784-0257 ▪ Tibetan community: Tsering Tashi, 773-743-7772 ▪ Korean Zen: Ron Kidd , 773-327-1695 ▪ Vietnamese/Chinese Buddhism- International Buddhism Friendship Association: 773-271-5708 ▪ For other ethnic groups, call Asayo Horibe, Buddhist Council of the Midwest, 847-869-5806 ▪ Official Sotoshu website, http://www.sotozen-net.or.jp/