



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

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

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| GENERAL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is no “Protestant Religion” as such. “Protestant” is a term which applies to a large number of Christian groups, such as Adventist, Baptist, Congregational, Episcopal/Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal and Presbyterian. ▪ Protestant Christians will differ in their understanding of the cause of illness, some seeing it as a consequence of personal behavior and expressing guilt or shame. Others may view their illness as coming from causes over which they have no control and may see themselves as victims. Some may interpret illness as punishment or as a personal test from God. Some will view illness as a part of the natural course of events and will take responsibility for doing what is necessary to overcome a temporary inconvenience and return to their normal routine of life. Since these ideas are often related to a person’s experiences and relationships, it is best to refer patients to their clergy or to the Chaplain if staff finds the patient’s views troublesome. ▪ A number of Protestant groups do not practice infant baptism. In some cases the rite associated with birth involves the naming of the child. Staff should ask the parents’ preferences regarding baptism if a newborn is in crisis. ▪ A number of Protestant groups regularly offer services of healing and spiritual renewal. These services, which may include prayers, reading of Scripture, and anointing with oil, are presented in conjunction with the support of the healing ministry within the health care community. ▪ In general, Protestants will be receptive to medical care as practiced in today’s health care environment. Individual preferences, expectations, and demands will be related to the patient’s personality and family/cultural system rather than to their religious beliefs. |
| GENDER ISSUES/ BODY EXPOSURE | Individual preferences, expectations, and demands will be related to the patient’s personality and family/cultural system rather than to their religious beliefs. |
| BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS | Blood transfusions are allowed. |
| FAMILY ISSUES | Many Protestant groups affirm gender equality even though individual families may not practice it. Staff may encounter some families in which males are expected to be the decision-makers. |
| DIETARY ISSUES | While there are no specific Protestant prohibitions or requirements related to diet, individual preferences may vary, especially regarding consumption of caffeine, meat, and alcohol. Always ask the patient for his/her preferences. |
| END OF LIFE CARE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In general, Protestant groups support the drafting of advance directives. Most groups do not forbid cremation. ▪ Some groups have specific rituals and practices at the time of one’s dying and death. |

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| | Many prefer family members, friends and their own clergy to be present for comfort and prayers at this time. Consult with the family regarding their preference. |
| ORGAN DONATION/RECEIPT OF TISSUE OR ORGANS | Typically, Protestant groups do not prohibit organ/tissue donation or autopsy. Most groups encourage organ and tissue donation as a way of caring for others. However, individuals will have their own beliefs and preferences regarding these issues, so staff should ask the patient/family and/or surrogate about those preferences. |
| AUTOPSY | Autopsies are permitted. |
| CARE OF THE DECEASED | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In general, Protestant groups do not practice special rituals for the deceased. Consult the family for their preferences. ▪ 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 | <p>Protestant groups include persons from many ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds. Ceremonies and celebrations are held at times of birth, confirmation or coming of age, marriage and death according to the individual's culture and family tradition more than according to the religious group.</p> <p>Advent and Christmas in December, and Lent, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter in the spring, are the most widely recognized observances for Christians. Advent is the 4-week season of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus (Christmas). Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, is the 40-day period of preparation for the celebration of Easter. Maundy Thursday, the Thursday before Easter, is the time for remembering and reenacting the Bible story Jesus' Last Supper with his 12 disciples. Good Friday is the observance of the day when Jesus was crucified. Easter Sunday is the day when Jesus is believed to have risen from the dead (resurrected). The resurrection of Jesus on Easter is the reason most Christians worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, rather than on the seventh day, or Sabbath, (which is the practice in many other religions).</p> <p>These holidays and seasons are observed with varying degrees of intention and adherence to beliefs. There are no specific requirements of members during these times, but there may be individual preferences, such as the having ashes applied to one's forehead on Ash Wednesday or observing periods of fasting during Lent. Most practicing Christians will want to spend time with family on Christmas and Easter and will not want to be hospitalized on these days. If they must be hospitalized, provisions should be made for visitation by family.</p> <p>Many Protestant groups have members who take responsibility for praying for those who are ill or hospitalized. Sometimes those persons will come to the hospital to pray with the patient. Privacy should be provided when this occurs.</p> |
| CONTACT INFORMATION & RESOURCES ON THE WEB | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact your facility's pastoral/spiritual care department for specific information regarding local congregations. ▪ National Council of Churches – Member Communion & Denominations - http://www.nccusa.org/members/index.html |