



Faith and belief quick guide

Religion and belief play an important part in many people's lives and this can be particularly important when a person is facing end of life. This guide covers useful information for end-of-life care in the most prevalent religions in Nottinghamshire. Read our full guide on our website – just follow the QR code or search nottshospice.org/faith-and-belief-guide



	Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism	Sikhism
General Information	Non-theistic belief based on the teachings of Buddha, whose example is followed. Belief in reincarnation or rebirth.	Many different churches with different practices. Belief in one God revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.	No single founder or scripture; practices vary widely. Belief in the eternal soul and reincarnation.	Belief in one God, the prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an as the holy revelation.	Belief in one universal God and the commandments of the Torah. Differences in practice depending on the strand (orthodox, conservative or reformed).	Founded by Guru Nanak who received revelation from God in India. Belief in prayer and earning God's grace.
Diet	Some are vegetarian.	Patient may fast during Lent, and Wednesdays and Fridays in some denominations.	Beef prohibited, many are vegetarian.	Halal meat only, no pork or alcohol.	Many observe Kosher diet.	Many are vegetarian.
Beliefs around death and suffering	Death is inevitable and suffering is a part of life that needs to be experienced mindfully. Unclouded mind before death can lead to a better rebirth.	Belief in the afterlife. Suffering often has no obvious reason, but can be seen as a consequence of choices.	Death is a progression of the soul into the next state of existence.	Belief in afterlife; death is the will of God; suffering is a test of patience.	Different views on afterlife; death is part of life and God's plan.	Cycle of death and re-birth; suffering is a test of faith.
End of life care	Mental and spiritual preparation, awareness and meditation. Visitors and family will chant along with the patient. Refrain from displaying emotions or disturbing the patient's state of mind as they approach death.	Patients likely to have a church community. Prayers at bedside, as well as Holy Communion, might be requested.	Patient may wish to have religious items around, donate belongings. Certain prayers chanted, family and friends visiting, time for meditation.	Large number of visitors and social support is likely; patient may want to pray five times a day and perform ablutions, as well as donate; prayers recited as death approaches.	Patient may observe Sabbath and Kosher diet. Do not leave the patient alone. Visitors might recite prayers, patient might want to see a Rabbi for confession.	Staff of same gender if possible; large number of visitors; hymns and prayers important.
Pain management	May refuse.	No objections.	May refuse.	No objections.	No objections.	No objections.

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Resuscitation	Generally no objections.	No objections.	May refuse.	No objections.	No objections.	No objections.
Procedure upon death	Spirit lingers for some time after death, do not touch the body for at least a few hours – consult the family/friends. Family may perform religious rites.	Many will want a priest or minister to pray and anoint.	Consult the family before touching the body. Wear disposable gloves, close the eyes straighten the limbs, do not remove sacred threads. Body may be placed on the floor with head facing south. Family may gather to pray.	Consult family before touching the body. Close the eyes and mouth, keep legs and feet together, turn head to the right shoulder and facing south-east, cover with white sheet, leave a light on with the body. Washing performed by a family member.	Consult family before touching the body, do not leave the deceased person alone. Close the eyes and mouth, remove medical equipment, lay flat with hands open, cover with plain sheet.	Contact family immediately; close the person's eyes, straighten body, wrap in a white sheet; do not remove the "five K's".
Funeral	Burial or cremation; consult the patient or family. Chanting at funeral services.	Burial or cremation; consult the patient or family/friends. In Catholicism, a mass is often held to pray for the deceased. In Orthodoxy, cremation is not permitted – burial as soon as possible.	Cremation as soon as possible, priest performs a final ceremony, ashes scattered in water.	Burial as soon as possible; funeral prayer in the local mosque.	Most commonly simple burial as soon as possible; body cannot be left alone until burial.	Cremation as soon as possible, ashes scattered in water, hymns recited in the temple.
Bereavement	Mourning services on the 7th, 49th and 100th day after death. Excessive mourning discouraged.	Differing practices.	Hymns and prayers recited for 13 days, family/friends gathering daily.	Three day mourning, large number of visitors who will support family; excessive displays of mourning discouraged.	Seven-day mourning, family/friends visit; prayer service.	Family/friends visit, crying discouraged; prayers and songs recited for several days.
Organ donation and post-mortem	Generally no objections.	Generally no objections.	Generally no objections.	Differing views, consult the patient/family.	Consult family/friends; post-mortem discouraged.	No objections.