








Characteristics of these groups are generalizations only; individual variables must be taken into account to avoid stereotyping. Provide culturally sensitive care by expecting, accepting, and respecting the uniqueness of others.

Cultural Group and Language	Spiritual Beliefs	Dietary Preferences	Communication Style	Health Beliefs & Treatment of Illness	Pain Beliefs & Treatment
African Americans English, African American English 	<p>Strong religious affiliation, predominately Protestant. Lay spiritual leaders common. Prayer used to treat illness. Visible grieving behaviors such as crying and wailing expected and accepted by culture as a sign of respect, importance, and love of the deceased.</p>	<p>May favor "Southern" type foods as well as the typical American fare.</p>	<p>Reserved. Shake hands. Limited public display of affection and emotion. Little kissing and touching in formal situations. Address others with title and formal name.</p>	<p>Some African Americans believe in a direct connection between their health and God's plan. Illnesses can be treated not only with medical intervention but also with spiritual approaches such as prayer and supportive visits from church ministers and members.</p>	<p>Stoic or expressive. May deny pain even if severe. Addiction fears common.</p>
Anglo Americans (northern European descent) English with many regional variations	<p>Christianity predominates. Some Christians believe in miracles. Consequently, they may delay seeking treatment while waiting on a miraculous healing. This belief may also affect the decision to discontinue life support once it is started. Grieving usually private.</p>	<p>Eclectic mix of home cooked, fast foods, health foods and ethnic foods. Meat, potatoes, rice considered staples for many. Increasing popularity of vegetarian and vegan diets. Coffee, tea, water, soft drinks, alcoholic beverages.</p>	<p>Reserved. Shake hands firmly. Limited public display of affection and emotion. Little kissing and touching in formal situations.</p>	<p>Focus is on Western medicine but use over-the-counter treatments, home remedies, food, complementary therapies and prayer. Prescription meds valued. Expect high quality care. Value preventative medicine/life styles.</p>	<p>Stoic or expressive. The poor and elderly may be less expressive. Accepting of efforts to relieve pain. May believe that injections are more powerful than pills. Addiction fears common.</p>
Arab Originate from Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, and other Arab nations English Arabic	<p>Predominate religion is Islam. Followers of Islam are called Muslims. Lebanese tend to be Christians. Strong family ties. May prefer to have poor prognosis discussed with family, not patient. Before death, confession of sins with family present. After death, only relatives or priest may touch the body. The body is bathed and clothed in white and buried within 24 hours.</p>	<p>Consumption of pork and alcoholic beverages are prohibited. Muslims are required to consume meat that is ritually slaughtered (<i>halal</i>). Preferred foods include lamb, rice, bread, chick peas, lentils, fava beans, ground sesame seed oil, olive oil, olives, feta cheese, dates, and figs.</p>	<p>Reserved. Shake hands. Public display of emotion not acceptable. Little kissing and touching in formal situations only within the same gender. Modesty is highly valued, especially in women.</p>	<p>Women may avoid eye contact when communicating with men.</p>	<p>Females tend to be expressive while males tend to be stoic. Pain may be viewed as punishment; suffering may be perceived as atonement.</p>
Argentinean Castilian Spanish 	<p>Predominate religion is Catholicism. Strong family ties. Family involved in caregiving.</p>	<p>Emphasis on meat, especially beef with pastas, empanadas, paellas, pastries, local wines, tea, espresso. Mate (tea) is a national beverage that is a stimulant.</p>	<p>Kiss when greeting. Touching common during talking. Close personal space accepted. Animated speech. Public display of emotion acceptable. Direct and to the point.</p>	<p>Modern medicine coexists with traditional (folk) medical beliefs. In some regions of Argentina, beliefs in cold and hot principles, which are very common in Latin America, guide the understandings of health. Self-medication is quite common. Use home remedies (aloe, herbs, oils, poultices) as well as Western medicine.</p>	<p>Stoic or expressive. Access to opioids for treating pain limited to the wealthy.</p>
Brazilian Portuguese 	<p>Predominate religion is Catholicism with some followers of Spirits. Strong family ties. Family involved in caregiving.</p>	<p>Brazilian cuisine varies by region. Some examples include: beans and rice are staples along with tropical fruits. Beef e.g., churrasco style, pork, seafood, yams, peanuts, mango, papaya, guava, pineapple.</p>	<p>Kiss when greeting. Touching common during talking. Close personal space accepted. Animated speech. Public display of emotion acceptable. Good eye contact.</p>	<p>Trust and respect the healthcare team. Use home remedies (herbs, teas, balsams) and Western medicine.</p>	<p>Stoic or expressive. Use home remedies and analgesics.</p>
Canadian English/French 	<p>Christianity predominates. Family and community are important.</p>	<p>Comparable to US diet with the addition of the French influence in Montreal and Quebec particularly.</p>	<p>Reserved. Shake hands. Limited public display of affection and emotion. Little kissing and touching in formal situations.</p>	<p>Trust and respect the healthcare team.</p>	<p>Stoic or expressive. The poor and elderly may be less expressive. May believe that injections are more powerful than pills. Addiction fears</p>

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					common.
Caymanian English 	Predominately Protestant--Baptist or Church of God primarily. Voodoo and psychics are outlawed.	Fish, turtle, goat, conch, rice, beans, plantains, and U.S. influences.	Friendly, like to be acknowledged. Reserved. Shake hands. Limited public display of affection and emotion. Little kissing and touching in formal situations.	Prefer information directly from the physician. Use prayer and complementary therapies along with Western medicine.	Primarily stoic. Home remedies are used first to treat pain. Stoic if British lineage, expressive if Caribbean lineage.
Chinese English Chinese 	Chinese practice a variety of religious beliefs including, Buddhism, Taoism (or Daoism), Confucianism, Christianity. Self-expression and individualism discouraged. Hierarchical structure for interpersonal and family decision-making and communications.	Balance and contrast between Yin (cold) and Yang (hot) foods by choosing the proper combination of cooking methods and food choices. May avoid cold (yin) foods after surgery. May be lactose intolerant. Chinese food is quite diverse and selections depend on the region in China from which it originated. Examples of typical foods include: rice, tofu, fish, beef, pork, fowl, vegetables, soups, and a large variety of seasonings.	Avoidance of eye contact may signify respect. Shyness and passivity the norm. Shake hands. Public display of emotion not acceptable. Non-confrontational. Privacy and modesty important.	Reluctant to talk to an outsider about health and psychosocial problems. May not ask questions. Silence does not mean agreement. Foods used to treat body imbalances. May use traditional Chinese herbal medicine, acupuncture, and acupressure to treat pain and other illnesses. May use faith healers, prayer, and ritualistic acts (chanting, use of charms).	Stoic. May not report pain. The poor and elders may complain less but this does not mean pain is less severe. May avoid asking for pain relief. Influence of the evil eye on the cause of pain or other illnesses. Opioids okay but may fear dependence.
Cuban English, Spanish 	Predominate religion is Catholicism. Strong family ties. Family involved in care-giving. May prefer to have poor prognosis discussed with family, not patient. Do not resuscitate orders and acceptance of terminal status may represent giving up and abandonment of the patient. Hospitalized patients are likely to be attended by family around the clock.	Pork, beef, chicken, rice, black beans, yucca, Cuban bread, avocados, tomatoes, mangos, plantains, guava, flan, Cuban espresso. A good appetite is associated with good health.	Kiss when greeting. A firm, slightly longer handshake than is customary among Anglos. Touching common during talking. Close personal space accepted. Animated speech. Public display of emotion acceptable. Silence may indicate lack of understanding or disagreement.	Western approach to illness prevails along with other theories of illness causality (spiritual, supernatural). People may be simultaneously using prayer, folk and/or herbal medicine, plus prescription medicines. Sharing of prescription meds is common. View healthcare providers as authority. Believe strongly that nourishment is essential in the healing process.	Both men and women express pain openly, though both may tolerate painful procedures without complaint. May believe that injections are more powerful than pills. Addiction fears common.
Ecuadorian Spanish Quechua-Indian 	Predominantly Catholic. Typically large families. Parents often live with grown children.	Wide variety depending on region--beef, poultry, pork, fish, rice, corn, yucca, potatoes, peanuts, bananas, plantains, beer.	Polite, reserved, respectful. May feel intimidated by physicians/health care team. Should be encouraged to ask questions. Modesty is highly valued, especially in women.	Pamper ill family members. Hospitalized patients are likely to be attended by family around the clock.	Stoic or expressive. Access to opioids for treating pain limited to the wealthy.
Filipino Filipino or Tagalog, Cebuano & other regional dialects English 	Predominately Catholic. Strong family ties. Some believe in evil spirits and supernatural powers of others (evil eye). Visible grieving behaviors such as crying and wailing expected and accepted by culture as a sign of respect, importance, and love of the deceased.	Rice, chicken, pork, beef, and fish, coconut, tomatoes, bananas. Mixed cuisine due to Malayo-Polynesian, Hispanic, Chinese, American, and other Asian influences.	Value and respect elders. May feel intimidated by physicians/health care team. Should be encouraged to ask questions.	May view illness as something outside their own control (natural forces or spiritual); therefore preventative medicine may not be valued and may not adhere to the treatment plan. Use home remedies such as teas, herbal medicines, body manipulation, massage, sleep. May use faith healers as well as Western medicine.	Quiet, reserved, stoic. Often use home remedies for treating pain.
Guatemalan Spanish, Mayan ancestral languages 	Predominately Catholic. Strong family ties. Value elders.	The basis of the Guatemalan diet is the tortilla. It is served with every meal, and is usually accompanied by black beans, plantains, rice, tamales.	Quiet, reserved, respectful. May feel intimidated by physicians/health care team. Should be encouraged to ask questions. Modesty is highly valued, especially in women.	Mainly use Western medicine in combination with home remedies, traditional healers, and/or over-the-counter drugs	Quiet, reserved, stoic. Access to opioids for treating pain limited to the wealthy.

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<p>Haitian Haitian Creole French</p> 	<p>Predominately Catholic. In addition to being Christian, many Haitians are adherents of Voodoo. Elders are highly respected. Nursing homes rarely used. Many Haitians believe in life after death, for which the body should be intact; therefore, organ donation is usually opposed. Many Haitians believe that if a donated organ is received, the donor's personality will affect that of the recipient. Traditionally, Haitians prefer to die at home but in the US, most die in the hospital. Spiritual leaders may come to pray with the dying and to give support to the family. If the death is anticipated, the patient may have many visitors. Visitors may openly express their grief and sadness. Autopsies are usually resisted unless legally required</p>	<p>Rice and beans are the national dish. Preferred foods include: pork, beef, chicken, goat, plantains, cassava, yams, corn, rice, coconut, avocados, mangos, papayas, and passion fruit. Foods are classified on a gradual scale from cold to hot (not temperature). Foods are often used to treat illness. Foods with the opposite properties from the illness are consumed. The following are not eaten: yogurt, cottage cheese, runny egg yolks. A moderate amount of body fat is considered healthy.</p>	<p>Most Haitians greet new and formal acquaintances with a handshake. They are typically addressed by their title (<i>Monsieur, Madame, Doctor, etc.</i>) and last name. Nodding is often a sign of agreement; however, some may nod even if they do not understand what is being conveyed. Prolonged eye contact is considered rude.</p>	<p>May view illness as something outside their own control (God's will, supernatural causation). Some Haitians believe that certain illnesses result from taboo violation or being disrespectful to elders. May appear quiet, apprehensive or reserved when communicating with healthcare providers. May not trust provider. Some Haitians, especially those who visit traditional healers, expect the practitioner to diagnose their problem without asking for information. Use Western medicine primarily for treatment, not prevention. Some may seek herbalists, clergy, and voodoo priests. Sharing of prescription meds is common.</p>	<p>Expressive or stoic. Some may prefer to take home remedies that are natural and herbal based. Access to opioids for treating pain limited to the wealthy.</p>
<p>Indians (India) English, Hindi</p>	<p>Predominant religion (way of life) is Hinduism which is a conglomeration of religious, philosophical, and cultural ideas and practices that originated in India, characterized by the belief in reincarnation. A clear mind is important at time of death. After death, the body is immediately bathed sometimes by women in the family.</p>	<p>Aromatic spices are a vital part of food preparation. Many are vegetarians. No beef is permitted (cows are sacred). Typical foods include rice, lamb, chicken, fish, goat, a variety of vegetables, coconut, unleavened bread, milk puddings, and tea.</p>	<p>Reserved. Shake hands. Little kissing and touching in formal situations. Public display of emotion not acceptable. Avoiding eye contact indicates respect. Silence usually indicates approval. Modesty is highly valued, especially in women.</p>	<p>May believe that illness results from bad actions. Prayer and ritualistic acts to relieve suffering. Ayurvedic medicine may be used instead of or in addition to Western medicine. The former is the use of herbal and dietary practices aimed at restoring balance to the mind-body system.</p>	<p>Stoic, especially older people. For some, pain must be endured in order to purge sin. Home remedies are used first to treat pain. Open to complementary approaches to treatment.</p>
<p>Jamaican Jamaican Patois, Jamaican English</p> 	<p>Christianity (Anglicanism, Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism); Rastafarianism. Elderly are respected.</p>	<p>Foods that are rich in spices. Ackee with saltfish is a popular Jamaican snack or breakfast dish. Other popular foods include curry chicken, goat meat, jerked meats, peas, rice, jams, breadfruit, plantains, pumpkin, mangoes, pineapple, papayas, and bananas.</p>	<p>Reserved, avoid hugging and showing affection in public. Curious and tend to ask a lot of questions.</p>	<p>Many tend to self-medicate and exhaust every possible home remedy before seeking medical assistance. Disability and illness are believed by some to be the result of evil spirits or past sins. Women are more inclined to seek health care than are men.</p>	<p>May be reluctant to admit pain. Expressive or stoic. Often use home remedies for treating pain.</p>
<p>Japanese English Japanese</p> 	<p>Predominate religions-Buddhism, Shinto, and Christianity. Believe that the body is as holy as the mind. Tradition views the mind and body as one; therefore may be reluctant to accept the term brain dead. Agreeing to donate one's organs could cause concern that the oneness of body and soul might be destroyed. Accepting the organs of a dead person could be seen as disrespectful by some.</p>	<p>Focus on small portions. Fish, brown rice, fresh fruits, vegetables, soy products, and green tea. Minimal use of bread and dairy. Considered one of the world's healthiest diets.</p>	<p>May strive to avoid conflict and be reluctant to ask a question or add a comment since individual assertion is highly discouraged. Silence should not be interpreted as agreement initially. Intense or long-term eye contact is viewed as discourteous. Modesty is highly valued, especially in women.</p>	<p>Likely to view an illness as something outside their own control (natural forces or spiritual); therefore preventative medicine may not be valued. View health professionals as authority figures, thus are uncomfortable with physical touching.</p>	<p>Reluctant to admit pain. Self-control and self-discipline valued. Older persons may delay seeking help and have concerns about becoming dependent on pain meds. May prefer oral meds to injections.</p>
<p>Jewish English, Hebrew Yiddish</p>	<p>Three groups—Orthodox (most strict), Conservative and Reform. Sabbath is from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday. Donor transplants are not acceptable to Orthodox Jews. Cremation is discouraged. Autopsy is permitted in less strict groups. Orthodox Jews believe that all parts of the body must be buried together e.g., amputated limbs and items</p>	<p>Orthodox and some Conservative Jews maintain a Kosher diet. Kosher food is prepared under strict Rabbinical supervision and includes no touching/mixing of meat and dairy. Eating of unclean animals such as pigs is forbidden. Blood and animal fats are taboo (blood is synonymous</p>	<p>Reserved. Shake hands. Little kissing and touching in formal situations. Orthodox men do not touch women except for their wives.</p>	<p>Value education and expect competent care. Use over-the-counter and prescription analgesics.</p>	<p>Stoic or expressive. Accepting of efforts to relieve pain.</p>

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	soaked with blood. Do not cross the hands after death.	with life).			
Korean English Korean	Christianity, Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism. The family is the most important part of Korean life. Family welfare is much more important than the needs of the individual. Discussing terminal status and prolonging life in the face of futility may be viewed as unacceptable. Organ donation and transplantation are seen as a disturbance in the integrity of the body.	Popular foods include kim chee, is a traditional fermented dish made from cabbage or other vegetables, fish, marinated meats, rice, soups, stews. May be lactose intolerant. Speak little during meals.	Public displays of emotion are embarrassing to Koreans. Reserved with strangers. Will use eye contact with familiar people. Etiquette is important. First names only for family members. Modesty is highly valued, especially in women. Father and then eldest son are decision-makers. Children should not be used as interpreters.	Illness is sometimes attributed to fate or a disharmony in the natural forces (yin and yang). Treatment of illnesses is through the use of the opposite force to achieve balance. Use herbs, acupuncture, cupping, moxibustion, and Western medicine. Physician is seen as powerful and trustworthy.	May not be expressive regarding pain. Prayer and ritualistic acts (chanting and use of charms) may be used to treat pain.
Mexican English, Spanish	Predominant religion is Catholicism.	Corn, beans, rice, pork, goat, spices, chocolate, tomatillos, avocado, guava, papaya, sapote, mamey, pineapple, soursop, jicama, squash, sweet potato, peanuts, chocolate.	Communication tends to be indirect and subtle. Prolonged eye contact can be considered aggressive. Shake hands firmly. Prefer closeness. They do not have the need for personal space that many Americans do.	Western approach to illness prevails along with other theories of illness causality (spiritual, supernatural). People may be simultaneously using prayer, folk and/or herbal medicine, plus prescription medicines.	Stoic or expressive. Tolerating pain may be valued.
Native Americans (American Indian)—Miccosukee Tribe English Mikasuki	Clan system passed down from mother. Clan leader is primary decision maker when individual is incapacitated. Receiving cartilage is not acceptable, but receiving an organ is acceptable to some. Head of bed is not to face West while living; however, after death, one's head is to be turned to the West. Organ donation is an individual decision. Burial, not cremation, is the rule.	Beef, pork, and chicken excluding bones and internal organs. Freshwater fish, rice, beans, fruits and vegetables. The following foods are banned: mushrooms, turkey (causes dizziness and weakness), anything from the ocean (considered unclean) and fruits and vegetables grown outside the North American continent e.g., kiwi.	Reserved. Nonverbal communication is important; silence is respected. Appreciative and courteous. Public display of emotion discouraged.	Certain animals cannot be used as medicines e.g., snake venom, oyster shells, shark cartilage. Western medicine is used in conjunction with Indian medicine. Use herbal remedies, prayer, ceremony, spiritual healers, and rituals. Patient might have water at the bedside that has been blessed by a spiritual healer. Non-Indians are not permitted to touch the water or the container.	Stoic, may describe pain in vague terms. Not demanding regarding requesting relief for pain, but accepting of efforts to relieve pain.
Vietnamese Vietnamese	Predominate religions are Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. Some Christianity and Islam. May believe that hospitalization is the last resort. May believe that blood or tissue loss will exacerbate their illness and that their body cannot replace what was lost. May perceive that organ donation causes suffering in the next life. Surgery is particularly feared for this reason.	Rice with green vegetables. Fish sauce for flavor. Meat used sparingly and cut into small pieces. Tea is main beverage. Some are vegetarians. Often lactose and alcohol intolerant.	Formal and polite. Address others with their formal name and title. Limited use of touch in social interactions. Personal distance is greater than typical of other cultures. May appear to accept or agree with something rather than create discord by disagreeing. Flowers are for the dead.	May believe illness can come from spiritual causes, imbalance of yin and yang, plus belief in Western concepts of disease. Traditional healing methods include coining, cupping, pinching, steaming, balms, herbs, acupuncture, and acupressure. Skeptical of prescription meds, may perceive that it is too strong.	Stoic or expressive. May fear invasive procedures to treat pain. Cupping, coining, and pinching releases evil spirits or toxins causing pain or illness.

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