

**Culture Report: Jewish Culture**

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## **Introduction**

Comprehending the significance of diverse populations within the community is a critical aspect of nursing. Recognizing and delivering suitable care is a fundamental aspect of nursing. Understanding Jewish culture is essential, as 2% of the Jewish population resides in the United States, with 9% of that demographic located in the Midwest region. Despite the small population, it is essential to comprehend the practices of Jewish culture to deliver optimal care to its followers.

## **Description**

Fundamental beliefs of Jewish theology include the existence of a benevolent, loving God who is omniscient and omnipresent, and who showers the Torah, a compilation of narratives, rules, and customs, upon the Jewish people (Lapsley, 2021). By embracing the Torah and adhering to its precepts, the people of Israel establish a binding relationship with God. Key themes in Judaism include God's creation of the universe and all living beings, the revelation of the Torah to the Israelites, God's liberation of Israel from enslavement under Pharaoh in ancient Egypt, and the future redemption of the world from suffering (Lapsley, 2021).

## **Core Values**

### **Religion**

Jewish individuals hold the belief in a singular God who has formed a covenant, or particular agreement, with them (History.com, 2025). Jewish individuals congregate in sacred sites referred to as synagogues, and their spiritual authorities are designated as rabbis (History.com, 2025). The six-pointed Star of David serves as the emblem of Judaism. Inquiring about preferences concerning childbirth for the mother and infant is essential for establishing trust and delivering care that aligns with Jewish cultural values. Typically, male and female

clinical staff prefer to request individuals of the same gender, as both genders want to avoid physical contact (My Jewish Learning, 2019). Nevertheless, if such personnel are unavailable, they may permit interactions between men and women.

### **Healing Beliefs and Practices**

Judaism does not support treatments, medications, or operations that are excessively experimental or uncertain (My Jewish Learning, 2017). A reasonable likelihood of success or advantage must exist. Likewise, a Jew is prohibited from engaging in acts that evidently jeopardize health. The utilization of pharmaceuticals, for instance, is sanctioned to enhance health or alleviate pain, one is not obligated to endure unnecessary suffering (My Jewish Learning, 2017). Nevertheless, the beliefs of the majority of authorities would forbid the consumption of substances intended to induce a "high" or a mind-altering experience (My Jewish Learning, 2017). To ensure optimal procedures for the Jewish community, it is essential to inquire about the mother's personal preferences for pain management during childbirth, as spiritual beliefs advocate against suffering.

### **Family Life**

In Jewish belief, the birth of a child transcends a mere biological event, it represents a spiritual covenant (Hillside, 2025). Rabbi Chasen elucidates a principle in the Zohar that instructs us to revere our parents as we revere God, as all three are collaborators in our creation (Hillside, 2025). From this perspective, motherhood is regarded as a form of divine partnership. The Talmud delineates a set of obligations for Jewish parents, which encompass instructing their child in Torah, assisting them in finding a partner, and imparting a trade (Hillside, 2025). Rabbi Chasen observes that this coupling implies survival and spiritual development are equally vital. Transmitting Jewish tradition is an essential life skill. Parents influence Jewish identity not solely

via significant milestones but also through everyday practices (Hillside, 2025). Rabbi Chasen advocates for families to "regularize" basic traditions lighting Shabbat lights, reciting the Motzi prior to meals, or expressing thanks at the dinner table (Hillside, 2025). Family life is crucial within the Jewish community as it imparts lessons of modesty and religion while simultaneously educating them about life in general.

### **Communication**

Jewish individuals typically engage in communication that is direct, honest and casual. Jewish individuals often engage in expressive communication, characterized by numerous hand gestures (Scroope, 2020). They frequently converse in a loud and rapid manner, which may create the impression that they are shouting or agitated (Scroope, 2020). Nonetheless, it is probably their normal way of communication. Jewish individuals may gently touch or tap the other person while speaking (Scroope, 2020). Physical contact among men is prevalent as an expression of friendship and affection. Religiously observant Jewish people typically refrain from physical contact with those of the opposing gender. Direct eye contact is typically anticipated and signifies interest and respect for the individual (Scroope, 2020). Certain religiously observant women may avert their sight when conversing with individuals of the opposite sex (Scroope, 2020).

### **Diet**

Jewish culture exclusively consumes kosher foods. The term "kosher" translates to "fit" or "proper" in Hebrew (Brown, 2024). Foods that comply with Kashrut standards are deemed kosher and permissible for consumption and conversely, foods classified as "treyf" are deemed unclean or non-kosher (Brown, 2024). For an animal to be deemed kosher, it must graze and possess cloven hooves, only fish possessing fins and scales are considered kosher (Brown, 2024).

The ingestion of blood is explicitly prohibited by Jewish dietary regulations. This prohibition encompasses all types of blood, regardless whether it is from animals or poultry (Brown, 2024). Meat, including poultry, and dairy products must not be cooked or ingested together, all tools and cookware utilized for meat and dairy must be maintained separately (Brown, 2024). Challenges related to meals in the hospital may arise over kosher options, individuals may bring items they are certain are kosher.

### **Tips and Interventions**

Engaging with patients from the Jewish culture may provide challenges, understanding communication styles, preferences, gender-specific touch, and food limitations can enhance the client relationship. When a nurse is uncertain, inquiring about client preferences is always beneficial. Interventions encompass posing inquiries, supplying dietary menus suitable for the customer, and accommodating the client's preferences.

### **Conclusion**

It is essential to recognize the significance of providing care for individuals of Jewish culture, as their community, however small in the area, is present and relevant. Comprehending practices and fundamental principles might enhance the client's experience during the childbearing phase, which can be overwhelming. Establishing trust with the patient is crucial, adhering to their practices and respecting their decisions can facilitate this process.

## Resources

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