

HOW TO CARE FOR A JEWISH PATIENT WHO HAS PASSED AWAY

The following procedures and requirements of Jewish law were reviewed and approved by – in alphabetical order – Rabbi Zalman Leib Eichenstein, shlita; Rabbi Shmuel Fuerst, shlita; Rabbi Boruch Hertz, shlita; Rabbi Yona Reiss, shlita.

- After death has been ascertained, family members or friends should be given the honor to straighten out the deceased's body, close his/her eyes and mouth and draw a sheet over his/her face. (Family members: Consult your Rabbi regarding Sabbath & Holiday prohibitions and appropriate protocol in this regard.)
- Hospital personnel are requested to remove catheters and all tubing that will not cause any bleeding or discharge. If any bleeding or discharge is to be expected, it is then preferred to clamp the tubes instead of totally removing from skin. Hospital staff should not remove any bandages or dressings from the body.
- The body should NOT be washed, cleaned or anointed. The patient's gown should not be changed after his/her demise. Funeral home personnel will perform all the necessary preparations upon their arrival to transfer the deceased or after bringing the deceased to the funeral home. Funeral personnel should be the ones putting the deceased into the body bag.
- There is a Jewish tradition not to leave the deceased alone from the moment the death occurs until after the burial and to have at least one person recite prayers continuously. If a request is made to keep such vigil near the body, arrangements should be made to facilitate this wherever the deceased may be.
- Jewish burial should take place as soon as possible after death; therefore, arrangements for the release of the body should be made without any undue delay. If the doctor is not available to sign the death certificate, the hospital should nevertheless allow the body to be released to the funeral director and other arrangements should be made to have the certificate signed.
- Jewish tradition prohibits the removal of the deceased during the Sabbath* or Jewish holiday*. In such a case, the hospital is urged to make every effort possible to allow the body to remain in the room until after the Sabbath or Holiday has concluded. If the room must be vacated or if the amount of time exceeds the limit allowed by law, then:
 - In a hospital, the deceased may be moved into the morgue until after the Sabbath or Jewish holiday.
 - In a nursing or rehabilitation facility, the Gentile nursing staff may call the funeral director to have the body transported.
 - In a private home where proper ventilation is available, the family should always make an effort to keep the deceased at home until the end of the Sabbath or Jewish Holiday.
- Whenever the funeral home is called on a Sabbath or Jewish Holiday, a non-Jew should place the call. (Family members: Consult your Rabbi as to when and how a Jew may be involved in handling/transferring the body on Sabbath and Holidays.)

* SABBATH: Begins Friday 20 minutes before sundown and ends Saturday, approximately 50 minutes after sundown.

* JEWISH HOLIDAYS: Rosh Hashona (2 days) / Yom Kippur (1 day) / Sukkot (1st 2 days) / Shemini Atzeret-Simchat Torah (2 days) / Passover (1st, 2nd 7th and 8th days) / Shavuot (2 days). Holidays also begin 20 minutes before sundown and end [one or two days later] approximately 50 minutes after sundown.

AFFIRMATION OF PATIENT'S WISHES

I, _____
(PRINT YOUR NAME)

**do hereby agree and express my wishes to have the procedures
described on the other side of this page implemented for**

my _____
(PRINT, "SELF" OR DESCRIBE YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE PATIENT),

(PRINT NAME OF PATIENT IF OTHER THAN YOURSELF)

Signed _____

Date _____

Submit this document to the patient's medical practitioner in
order to be kept in the patient's medical record.