

What is Diwali?

Diwali, or Deepavali, a Sanskrit word meaning “a row of lighted lamps, is a festival celebrated in India and by Indian diaspora.

During the five-day celebration — also known as the “festival of lights” — clay lamps known as diyas are lit to signify the victory of good over evil, according to the Hindu American Foundation. Over time, Diwali has become a national festival marked by most Indians regardless of faith, with Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs also celebrating.

Diwali also celebrates the goddess of wealth and prosperity, Lakshmi. Some believe it falls on her birthday and the day she married Lord Vishnu, another Hindu god.

Hindus interpret the Diwali story based on where they live, according to *National Geographic*. In northern India, they mark the story of King Rama’s return to Ayodhya after he defeated Ravana by lighting rows of clay lamps. In southern India, people celebrate it as the day Lord Krishna defeated the demon Narakasura. In western India, the festival marks the day Lord Vishnu, one of the main gods of the Hindu trinity, sent the demon King Bali to rule the nether world.

Meanwhile, in Jainism it marks the nirvana or spiritual awakening of Lord Mahavira, *National Geographic* reported. And for Sikhs, it celebrates the day a major guru was freed from imprisonment.

In India and other places where the holiday is celebrated, residents leave their windows and doors open to allow Lakshmi to find her way into their

homes, the *Independent* reported. Every home is lit with diyas, leaving no room for darkness to enter, and doorsteps are decorated to welcome guests, according to the Hindu American Foundation. In addition, many people wear new clothing to thank Lakshmi for providing prosperity and good fortune. And, as evening comes, firecrackers are set off.

Throughout the festival, traditional sweets and savory items are eaten as well as full meals, particularly on the third and fifth days, according to the American Hindu Foundation. Among the sweets are diya-shaped sugar cookies decorated with icing and savories include mini-samosas and puris.

Source:
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2017/10/19/what-diwali-festival-lights-and-how-celebrated/779643001/>



October 2019 Calendar

Blindness Awareness Month
Down Syndrome Awareness Month

- 4 – St. Francis Day (Christianity)
- 5 – World Teachers’ Day
- 6-12 – Mental Illness Awareness Week (US)
- 9 – Emergency Nurses Day (US)
- 9 – Yom Kippur (Judaism)
- 10 – World Mental Health Day
- 14 – Thanksgiving (Canada)
- 20-26 – Freedom from Bullies Week (US)
- 21 – Lung Health Day (US)
- 21-25 – National Health Education Week (US)
- 27 – Diwali (Sikh, Hindu, Jain)
- 31 – Halloween (International)

Why We Need Professional Interpreters in Healthcare

By Cyndi Roat

Source: <http://cindyroat.com/interpreters/why-we-need-professional-interpreters-in-health-care/>

Imagine this: your mom needs shoulder surgery, so you take her to the hospital. As you check her in, the medical assistant hands you a blood pressure cuff and asks you to take your mom's blood pressure. The doctor has you fill out and sign a health history for your mom. In preparation for the surgery, the nurse tells you to put in the IV line; she leaves all the materials you'll need on a tray right next to the bed. And as the day wears on and your mom gets hungry, they tell you that you are expected to bring food for her – oh, and she'll need a low sodium, low potassium diet while she's there. Does something seem wrong with this picture?

It sure does! In our healthcare system, we make sure that the people providing services to our patients are qualified. We want vitals taken by people who are trained to do so! We want patients, as far as they can, to tell their own stories! We want skilled professionals to provide our care! Then why, for goodness sake, are we having family members act as interpreters?

Consider how much rides on clear communication in health care. Doctors depend on what they learn in a medical interview to make a diagnosis. The difference between an ache in the chest, a burning pain in the chest and crushing pressure in the chest could be the difference between a pulled muscle, an ulcer and a heart attack. And patients need clear communication to understand a treatment plan. Taking one pill twice a day is not the same as taking two pills once a day.

Misunderstanding in health care leads to errors in diagnosis and treatment, sometimes fatal errors. But how hard is it to interpret "one pill twice a day?" A bilingual family member should be able to do that, right? Actually, as I've discussed in another posting, interpreting accurately and completely is not easy at all. Untrained interpreters in general make lots of mistakes – adding things that weren't said, omitting things that were said, and changing the meaning. Guessing at technical terminology. Giving their own opinions.

With family members, it's even more complicated. Family members have an important role to play in health care, helping patients tell their story, describe their symptoms, remember instructions, implement a treatment plan. The interpreter's role is quite different, and one person cannot do both well. When family members interpret, there is no doubt as to which role takes precedence; the interpreting suffers. In addition, patients often have medical issues they don't want to discuss in front of their family members. Family members also frequently shield patients from hearing bad news, taking over the appointment, inadvertently robbing the patient of voice and ears.

What about having a child interpret? Documentaries have been made about the damage done to young people who have been forced to interpret in high-stakes discussions around health care.

We don't ask family members to cook for patients in the hospital – even if they are excellent chefs and the patient loves their cooking. We don't ask family members to provide a medical history, even if they know the patient better than anyone. We don't ask family members to give vaccinations, or provide vital signs or put in PIC lines. We hire trained professionals to do that work. Let's recognize the value of clear communication in health care and hire trained professional interpreters to do that work as well.

