

## Family Responsibilities

At Baycrest, we are sensitive to the varying spiritual and religious needs of our families. Thus, each family is responsible for:

- Choosing a funeral home and making the appropriate arrangements (staff or volunteers do not make the initial contact with a funeral home).
- Notifying staff regarding the name and telephone number of the funeral home.
- Arranging for proper guarding and the recitation of prayers for the deceased until transference to a funeral home (if desired). The need is especially great on the Sabbath and Jewish Holy Days.

## Chaplain Responsibilities

The chaplain can assist if the family does not have a rabbi or until the rabbi arrives. Chaplains offer bereavement support, explain the funeral and burial process, promote healing by accessing inner resources for coping at the time of death and helping family members find meaning and significance in times of loss.

The chaplain can also lead rites and rituals and prayer. Baycrest chaplains are not available to sit as a shomer.

## Social Work Responsibilities

Most often it is the Social Worker who will contact a family and rabbi or chaplain when death occurs. If the family requires financial assistance, the social worker can guide the family to the appropriate resources. The social worker can also offer end-of-life and bereavement support.

Funeral homes:

Benjamin's (416) 663-9060  
Steeles (905) 881-6003  
Hebrew Basic (416) 780-0596

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Spiritual care is available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**416-785-2500 x 3636**  
spiritualcare@baycrest.org

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3560 Bathurst Street | Toronto, Ontario  
Canada M6A 2E1



# When Death is Imminent

**[www.baycrest.org](http://www.baycrest.org)**

Spiritual Care Services provides support for patients, residents, families and staff.

Baycrest is fully affiliated  
with the University of Toronto



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Judaism views life as the integration of soul and body into a single entity. Jewish tradition values life above all else, but also recognizes that death is a natural part of the life cycle.

Death is the dissolution of body and soul into two separate entities; a separation of the spiritual self from the physical self. The body will inevitably fail and disintegrate, but the soul is eternal and indestructible. The body, as befits the vessel of the soul, must be accorded the ultimate respect and sanctity.

### Prior To Death

As a family member, it is important to find out in advance, if possible, the dying patient's final wishes regarding death and the funeral.

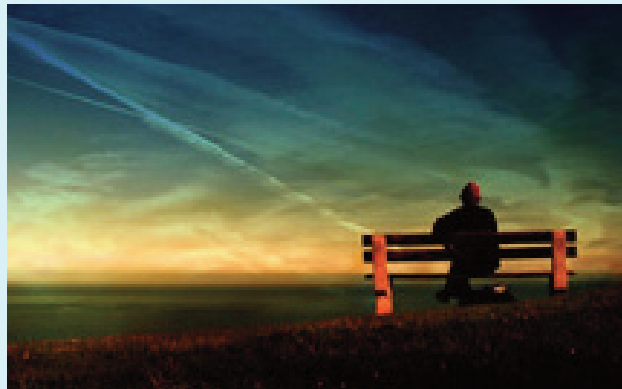
If you already discussed these concerns, refer to them for your guidance. If not, discuss them now and ask if the dying patient would like his or her rabbi involved.

### When Death Is Imminent

It is traditional to recite the viddui, a confessional prayer, prior to or at the moment of death. This prayer expresses the reaffirmation of the dying person's belief in God and the Jewish people. Please call on your rabbi or a chaplain from Spiritual Care to assist you during this difficult time.

Jews believe that death should occur in the midst of a supportive community. Your health care team will do their best to update you regarding your loved one's health status, but are not always able to predict this with exact accuracy.

For many, being with someone who is dying helps reduce their anxiety, fear and loneliness. It also gives family members the opportunity to say "good bye" and come to grips with the reality of death. If you are unable to remain with the patient, try to arrange for someone else to stay in the room. Others prefer to be alone in order to spare their loved ones additional sadness, guilt or burden. Try to discern and honor their preference.



### The Shomer (Guardian)

It is the family's responsibility to arrange for proper guardian and prayer recitation for the deceased until transferred to a funeral home. Baycrest is not able to provide a shomer.

- The family or their designate may sit with the body as a shomer. The deceased may not remain longer than two hours on the Apotex/Hospital Unit and must be moved to the Baycrest morgue. The shomer sits in the adjacent room.
- The family may contact outside individuals or sacred societies to perform this function.
- Baycrest has on-call individuals who may be contacted for such service. Their fee is approximately \$250 a day or part thereof. This is in keeping with standard rates in the community.
- Benjamin's, Steeles and Hebrew Basic funeral homes are not able to send persons to Baycrest to sit as shomer.

Each nursing station and the Spiritual Care Department maintains a list of individuals who may be available to sit as shomer. The family must contact the shomer directly to make appropriate arrangements including payment of fees and a means of contact if death occurs on Shabbat. This list is provided as a courtesy to families, but Baycrest cannot be responsible for making any arrangements on behalf of families.