

Vietnamese Cultural Profile

A photograph of three women in traditional Vietnamese ethnic clothing, likely from the Hmong or M'Nong tribes. They are wearing colorful, patterned headscarves and long, intricately embroidered blouses and skirts. The woman on the right is holding a small, dark, patterned umbrella. In the foreground, there is a large, round, woven basket. The background is slightly blurred, showing more people in similar attire.

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PO Box 5199

WEST END Q 4101

Ph 07 3846 1099

Vietnamese Cultural Profile

Thanks are given to the following people:

Margaret Hess, Director, Diversicare

Elizabeth Zajac, Project Officer, PICAC

Hedrika Johnson

Huong Kim

Chau Bai

... and to all those people who have provided comment about this cultural profile.

Editor: Carly Goldman

Disclaimer

This cultural profile is a synthesis of information from a range of sources believed to be reliable. Diversicare gives no guarantee that the said base sources are correct, and accepts no responsibility for any resultant errors contained herein or for decision and actions taken as a result and any damage.

Please note there may be costs associated with some of the resources and services listed in this directory.

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This profile of the Vietnamese cultural community is one of the many projects undertaken by the Queensland Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care (PICAC).

The Queensland PICAC Project aims to facilitate the development of partnerships between ethnic community groups and residential aged care service providers to implement “best practice” strategies of care for older people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. This booklet is about ensuring that the needs of older people from a Vietnamese cultural background are met.

Funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health & Ageing, the project in Queensland is managed by Diversicare under the auspice of the Ethnic Communities Council of Qld.

Population trends within Australia are increasingly characterised by a diversity of people, languages and culture. Coupled with this trend is an ageing population, also with a rich diversity of languages and cultures.

It is not surprising then that residential aged care service providers are faced with increasing demands for culturally responsive facilities and care.

This profile aims to assist by enhancing:

- staff knowledge of the cultural and linguistically diverse needs of people from a Vietnamese background. It also seeks to facilitate professional competence and development of staff in the provision of culturally inclusive care; and
- the organisation’s compliance with the Residential Care Standards and National Aged Care Standards as they pertain to the issue of cultural and linguistic needs.

The profile provides useful information about a range of topics and resources including books, articles, visual aids and services.



This symbol is used to indicate a “tip”, which you, as the caregiver of a person who was born in Vietnam, may find useful in your day-to-day support of that person.

This guide is not intended to replace one stereotype of this culture with another. Rather it is intended to provide some insights into the culture. Neither does this guide diminish the importance of establishing the individual cultural needs of each person as part of the care planning process.

In an effort to maintain the accuracy of this profile and improve its contents for all stakeholders, we encourage readers to complete the feedback form on the last page to inform us of any inaccuracies or other resources available. It is considered that this feedback will assist us to maintain a user relevant and quality resource.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Hess
Director

Elizabeth Zajac
PICAC Project Officer

Background

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Vietnamese Cultural Profile

Vietnam is approximately 331 688 km² in area and occupies the eastern coast of the Southeast Asian peninsula. The northern part of the country consists mostly of highlands and the Red River Delta. The south is divided into coastal lowlands and extensive forests. Because of differences in latitude and the marked variety of topographical relief, the climate tends to vary considerably from place to place. During the winter or dry season (November to April) the monsoon wind blowing from the northwest brings considerable moisture. Consequently the winter season in most parts of the country is dry.

Vietnam is bordered by the South China Sea on the west and south, China to the north, Laos to the northwest and Cambodia to the southwest. Major Vietnamese cities include Hanoi in the north, Da Nang in the mid coastal region, and Ho Chi Minh City (formally known as Saigon) to the south.



Migration experience

The main reason for migration was the Vietnam War between the north and south provinces. Vietnamese migrants arrived in Australia in three broad waves. The first group was mostly young, well-educated, English speaking Catholics who fled to Australia in 1975. The second wave of refugees in 1978 was a more diverse group, with a large scale exodus of *boat people* travelling to Australia directly. This group included people with different ethnicities, nationalities, religions and languages. As a group, these people were less educated, less literate, less familiar with western ways and thoughts, and more rural than those in the first wave. A third wave of refugees arrived from 1982 onwards under the Family Reunion Program.

After the war, many Vietnamese people experienced re-education camps which were a significant device for social control and punishment. These camps were used to incarcerate members of certain social classes in order to coerce them into accepting and conforming to the new social norms. These type of camps were one feature of a broader effort to control social deviance and to campaign against counter-revolution and the resistance. Many people in this wave spent years in camps under devastating conditions (refer to page 22 - trauma situations).

The Vietnamese refugees trying left the country experienced the pirates' attacks. They have been faced: typhoons, overcrowded and often leaky boats, and lack of navigation tools, starvation, dehydration and illness. Thai pirates kidnapped, raped and murdered countless numbers of boat people.



Australian Statistics

The latest Census in 2006 recorded 159 850 Vietnam born people in Australia, with Queensland being the third largest state behind New South Wales and Victoria. Of the total Vietnam born population in Australia:

- 7.3% are aged over 65 years;
- 21% have either a trade or a tertiary qualification;
- 21.8% are employed in a skilled occupation, 12.2% in semi-skilled;
- 52.9% are females and 47.1% male;
- their ancestry includes Vietnamese 65.0%, Chinese 24.6% and 2.3% others; and
- depending on their ethnic background, Vietnam born people may also speak Chinese (usually Cantonese) and many older Vietnamese are familiar with French or English.

8.2% (13 080 people) of this total population and have settled across Queensland.

(Source: Vietnamese Community Information Summary, DIMIA, 2008)



The above data means the person you are caring for could have been well-educated and worked in a skilled job or a person with a limited education and not speak English well or at all at all.

Customs in Everyday Life

Greetings:

- Vietnamese people greet each other by joining hands and bowing slightly to each other. However, in big cities, some men have adopted the Western practice of shaking hands.
- Hugging is reserved for relatives only.
- Women do not shake hands with each other or with men.
- To show respect, Vietnamese people bow their heads and do not look a superior or elder in the eye.

Referring to others:

- Vietnamese names are traditionally written with the surname first, followed by their middle name, with their given name last (e.g. **Ms Dang Thi Thanh Van** Family name: **Dang**; Sex indicator: **Thi**; Given name (2) **Thanh**; Given name (1) **Van** – should be addressed as **Ms Van**). (**Thi** – indicates female; **Van** indicates male when following the family name)
- Most names can be used for either gender.
- Vietnamese people prefer to be addressed using their title e.g. Dr, Mr or Mrs
- Many Vietnamese people have also adopted western names.

Non-verbal communication:

- For certain feelings, Vietnamese people favour non-verbal communication. People with Vietnamese background do not express feelings of thankfulness or apology by verbal expressions such as ‘thank you’ or ‘I am sorry’, but by non-verbal through silence or a smile. A person who gives a compliment should not expect a ‘thank you’ in return. In Vietnamese culture, a verbal expression of thanks can amount to a lack of modesty from the person who receives the compliment.
- The proper respectful behaviour is to avoid eye contact when talking to person who is not of equal status or of the same gender.
- The smile is another non-verbal symbol conveying the feeling of respect in Vietnamese culture. It is used as an expression of apology, or as expression of embarrassment when committing an innocent blunder. For the Vietnamese a smile is a proper response in most situations in which verbal expression is not needed or not appropriate. The smile is used as a substitute for: ‘I am sorry, ‘Thank you’ or ‘Hi’ to avoid appearing over-enthusiastic. A smile is also a proper response to scolding or harsh words, to show that one does not harbor any ill feelings toward the interlocutor, or that one sincerely acknowledges the mistake or fault committed. In summary, smiling can show agreement, embarrassment, disbelief, mild disagreement, appreciation or apology.

Gestures:

- **Nodding** - as a greeting, affirmative reply or agreement;
- **Shaking one's head** - negative reply, disagreement;
- **Bowing** - greeting or great respect;
- **Frowning** - showing frustration, anger or worry;
- **Forefinger and top of thumb meet to form circle, other fingers upright** – meaning: 'poor quality';
- **Palm of right hand facing one, forefinger crooked and moving back and forth** – this gesture is offensive to adults and threatening to children;
- **Crossing arms** - sign of respect;
- **Pointing** to other people while talking - means disrespect;
- **Summoning** a person with a hand or finger in the upright position is reserved for animals or inferior people. Between two equal people it is a provocation.

Taboos:

- Wearing a white head band is reserved for funerals only.
- It is very important **not** to visit or telephone anyone on New Year's Day without an invitation.
- Do not give handkerchiefs, anything black, yellow flowers or chrysanthemums.
- Do not pass anything over someone's head.
- Items should be passed with both hands.
- Never make promises that you cannot keep as this will lead to loss of face.
- Do not ask personal questions like: 'How old are you?', 'Are you married?', 'Do you have children? Why not? 'How much money do you earn?'
- When inviting a friend on an outing, the bill is paid by the person offering the invitation.
- Speaking in a loud tone with excessive gestures is considered rude - especially when done by women.
- Nakedness and family discussion of sexual matters are forbidden.
- Everything done on New Year's Day will determine your luck for the next 12 months e.g. avoid people in mourning.

Values:

- The Vietnamese value system is based on four basic tenets: allegiance to the family, yearning for a good name, love of learning, and respect for other people. These tenets are closely interrelated
- Many customs/values are rooted in both
 1. Confuciansm - respect for education, family and elders
 2. Taoism - desire to avoid conflict
- In the Vietnamese community the benefit of the family and community comes before the individual
- Vietnamese people tend to be polite, guarded and non-confrontational. Disagreement may be expressed in the form of non-compliance, or not answering a question
- Modesty and privacy are important cultural values
- To the Vietnamese, a good name is better than any material possession in this world. To acquire a good name, a man must avoid all words and actions that could damage his dignity and honour. There are three ways by which a man can acquire a good name: either by heroic deeds', by intellectual achievements, or by moral virtue

Cultural Stereotypes:

Whilst identifying as Vietnamese, each person has a strong sense of regional cultural identity. The region in which the person lived will impact on the person's preferences relating to such things as festivals, food, drink, clothing, cultural personality, music and language dialect.

The Vietnamese traditionally believe that human nature is basically good but corruptible; that man should strive for harmony with nature; they live oriented to the past, not the future; and they are traditionally attached to one place, their ancestors' land (they value the process of being or becoming, mutual dependence and linearity).



Some of the above customs are from a time in which the older generation lived and were raised. They may not be evident in the younger generation, nor do they necessarily apply to every Vietnamese aged person. It is important that YOU check on whether adherence to these, or other customs unique to their region of origin, are applicable to that Vietnamese person.

For more information

"The Vietnam born Community", Community Information Summary, Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA), 2006. Available as a PDF document from the following web address:

<http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/comm-summ/summary.htm>

Family Structure

Influenced by Buddhist theology and Confucian philosophy, Vietnamese people are highly family oriented, although the family may be nuclear or extended. Sometimes two or three generations reside in one household. The traditional Vietnamese family is patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal. Traditionally, children lived with their parents until marriage, then the couple moved to the husband's father's household.

After marriage, a woman would usually become a housewife and a mother. She would be expected to depend upon her husband, to care for the children and often the grandchildren, as well as perform all the household duties.

Men are usually married between 20 and 30 years of age, and women between 18 and 25 years.

Based on Confucian tenets, men have a higher status than women, and sons are valued more highly than daughters.

A traditional Vietnamese woman is governed by three basic tenets:

1. She should submit to her father
2. She should obey her husband
3. If widowed, she should obey her eldest son

Children are not regarded as having rights. Daughters are expected to assist with household chores from an early age; to defer to men; to protect their virginity; and to regard marriage as automatic.

Family members are expected to work and behave for the good of the group.

Each member of the family has a designated kinship term and these are used when addressing one another.

Obedience and respect are the traditional values which Vietnamese children are taught to exhibit in their family. Discipline and physical punishment are acceptable remedies for disobedience.

When parents grow old, children are expected to take care of them to compensate for the gift of birth and upbringing.

The father or eldest son is the family spokesperson. They have ultimate responsibility and act as an authority/leader while delegating tasks and involving others in decision making.

The father also leads the family in ancestor worship.

Attitudes to Residential Care:

Some Vietnamese people may feel they have 'lost face' in their community if they accept outside help with caring for their ageing parents, or permit their parents to move to alternative accommodation. They can be regarded as lacking filial respect, or as being self-centred and cold-hearted.

Older people who move away from living with their families might feel shame for 'being abandoned' by their children, or guilt for being considered 'bad parents' and deserving this treatment.

It becomes very difficult for elderly Vietnamese to accept residential facilities. Traditionally family members (especially daughters and daughters-in-law) took care of older family members. Generally residential facilities are not accepted by older people with Vietnamese background.

Most Vietnamese elderly prefer to stay with their families so separation should be the last resort. This is usually achievable provided that the older person accepts outside help and support.

In Vietnam, elders are the leaders in families, have the strongest influence in decision making, and are respected and sought after for advice.

During their run from their country, many people lost their property and many of their material goods.

Many elders who want to work outside the home are unable to, because of their lack of training for available work, their age, and lack of English skills. They become very socially and culturally isolated while their younger family members become more self-reliant and financially independent. This situation has created a fundamental role reversal - the elders no longer have power, money or land, and become financially dependent on their children. Because they are culturally isolated, they are no longer sought after for advice. This creates much tension in families where elders feel ignored and disrespected, while their children become more culturally proficient and adapt to ways their elders do not approve of.



If you need help to provide culturally appropriate care, the assistance of the PICAC Project Officer is available, free of charge, to your agency or the resident. For more information on PICAC contact Diversicare on (07) 3846 1099 or email: picac@diversicare.com.au

The routines and preferences surrounding the following personal hygiene activities greatly impact on the person's sense of self, pride, dignity and confidence.

Bathing:

The older Vietnamese person will usually prefer to use a basin (some kind of sink) and a hand towel for a morning wash, and a shower - at night.

Dress:

Vietnamese people value comfort in dressing. They prefer to wear plain dark-coloured (black, brown and blue) trousers and a shirt or blouse covering the neck. Older Vietnamese women (especially those who have been living in Australia for a long time) usually prefer to wear dark coloured skirts.

Bright colours are worn mainly by the young.

For formal celebrations (e.g. Chinese New Year, Lunar Year Festival) or church mass Vietnamese people wear the *Ao Dai* (long dress) made from silk or cotton.



Grooming:

Most women do not wear makeup and prefer to tie their hair back.



It is important that each person's preferences regarding personal hygiene needs be checked before completing their care plans.

Pensions

Vietnamese older people are not eligible for any pensions from the Vietnamese government. Australia and Vietnam have not signed any formal agreements relating to this issue.

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Older Vietnamese people aged 65 or over who are not receiving a pension yet should contact Centrelink.



Family activities have an important role in leisure, with no definite preferences for indoor or outdoor activities.

Outdoor activities could include walking, doing easy exercises like Tai-Chi or gardening (vegetables, flowers or herbs). Indoor activities could include listening to music, watching movies or playing chess.

Some older Vietnamese women may be interested in painting or crafts.

Vietnamese people enjoy eating and celebrating special occasions which are usually time for family to come together.



The above information can assist in developing diversional therapy activities (e.g. tending potted flowers that are kept in the person's room and/or a small box of vegetables kept in a communal area, cooking cakes or pastries; craft work; playing cards; chess or board games; watching the fish in the fish tank etc.) However, you need to check with each individual as to his or her preferences in regard to what they enjoy.

Daily Routine:

Vietnamese people like routine (e.g. time for meals, baths and activities) and generally have a structured pattern to the day and like adhering to these times.



You need to establish each individual's preferences with them regarding his/her daily routine and timing for their daily activities.

Social Groups:

There are a limited number of Vietnamese social groups and community organisation involved with the older people with Vietnamese backgrounds:

Van- Lang Cultural and Social Welfare Association

1 Scotts Road, Darra, Queensland

Tel: (07) 3375 3699

Television:

The SBS Television network is available in major cities in Queensland. SBS provides Vietnamese news.



Check your TV program guide or the SBS website for local viewing times as they may change in rural areas or across time zones.

Movies:

Vietnamese movies are available for hire in some Video Libraries or the Brisbane City Council Library located at the **Inala Civic Centre , Corsair Avenue, Inala**.

A few Vietnamese shops at the Inala Civic Centre have Vietnamese movies for sale.

It is also possible to purchase Vietnamese movies via the internet by doing a search, e.g. <http://www.multilingualbooks.com/foreignvids-viet.html>

Radio:

Broadcasting in Vietnamese language occurs on SBS Brisbane radio station **93.3 FM** on:

Brisbane 93.3 FM

Monday	7pm - 8pm
Tuesday	7pm - 8pm
Wednesday	9am - 10am
Thursday	9am - 10am
Friday	7pm - 8pm
Saturday	9am - 10am
Sunday	7pm - 8pm

Sydney 1107 / 97.7 FM

9am - 10am and 7pm - 8pm everyday



Check your radio program guide or the websites for local listening times as they may change in rural areas or across time zones.

<http://www.sbs.com.au/radio/>

Newspapers and books:

Brisbane City Council Library at Inala has a variety of books, DVDs and CDs in Vietnamese. Regardless of your location in Queensland it is possible to arrange to have these books sent to your local library for a small fee.

You can search the Brisbane City Council library catalogue via its language collection by going to following website and choosing the preferred language which will then take you to a screen where you choose your category of interest (e.g. movies, books, music, newspapers or DVDs):

<http://elibrarycat.library.brisbane.qld.gov.au/uhtbin/webcat>

The **free** Vietnamese Newspaper is available on **Friday** from the Inala Civic Centre (“SS Weekly Newspaper”). You can also buy other Vietnamese magazines in this area (e.g. At the fruit & vegetable shop - next to Crazy Clarks).



Vietnamese speaking staff can provide you with support and information at the Inala Commonwealth Bank and Inala Mayfair Chemist located at the Inala Civic Centre.



Religion in Vietnam is closely related to the history of Vietnam and most importantly the culture of Vietnam. The earliest established religions in Vietnam were Mahayana Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism (called the 'triple religion' or *tam giáo*). These religions have been co-existing in the country for centuries and mixed well with the Vietnamese tradition of ancestor worship. This special mix explains why the Vietnamese people find it hard to say exactly which religion they belong to. They usually classify themselves as non-religious, despite visiting religious temples several times every year.

At the 2006 Census, the major religious affiliations amongst Vietnam born people were Buddhism (58.6%), Catholics (22.1%), other (4.6%), and no religion (11.03%).

The religion observed by each Vietnamese person impacts on every day observances, for example:

- Buddhists fast for 3 days each month, celebrate Buddha's birthday, and some of them are vegetarian.
- Catholics will celebrate Christmas, Easter and All Saints Day.

Remember there could be a difference between nominating a particular religion to practicing that religion in one's everyday life (or whether all or only some rituals/practices within that religion are observed).

Important days:

There are a variety of special events with many of the dates varying from year to year because the Vietnamese use the Lunar Calendar.

Many festivals and events can be observed throughout the year in various regions of North and South Vietnam. These celebrations show the people of Vietnam, their songs and dance. Most of these festivals are very colourful, full of entertainment and fun. Even tourists from far away places visit to be a part of these festivals on their trip to Vietnam.



Festivity	Month / Day	Customary Practices
New Year's Day	1 st January (Catholics) Tet - Chinese New Year occurs anytime from late January to early February, following the Lunar Calendar.	Parties everywhere. Special mass at church. In big cities streets and stores are decorated with lights, fake snow, shiny baubles and ornaments. Vietnamese people spend their time feasting and visiting family and friends. Before Tet, people clean their houses, refurbish ancestral graves, settle debts and mend strained relationships.
Wandering Souls Day - <i>Trung Nguyen</i>	15 th day of the seventh lunar month.	This is the second most important holiday after Tet. People all over the country worship and offer prayers in temples, homes, and even offices.
Buddha's Birthday	Celebrated in May 2009 - May 2nd 2010 - May 21st 2011 - May 10th	Celebrations take place at Buddhist temples throughout Vietnam and some of the bigger towns hold magnificent festivals and parades
Mid-Autumn Festival	15th August Chinese Lunar Calendar	This festival has become a loving celebration of children. In the days before festival toys, masks and lantern spilt out of shops and stalls. During the festival children parade around the neighbourhood wearing colourful masks and carrying bobbing lanterns that illuminate the scene. The festival is celebrated by the whole family consuming moon-cakes, fruits and wine.
Labour Day	1st May	Legions of workers parade through cities to mark their solidarity with working people throughout the world.
Easter	March or April	Celebrated only by Catholics. They attend church, and prepare special food like eggs.



The above listing is not intended to be exhaustive rather it lists the major shared 'special days'. You should check with the person or his/her family if there are other special days, which are important to that individual.

Food is a very important part of Vietnamese culture. The Vietnamese not only enjoy eating but believe eating good food can bring harmony and closeness to the family and relationships. The types of foods are chosen to bring luck and these vary from province to province.

Shopping daily for fresh food is essential for all Vietnamese cooking. In general, Vietnamese people are not as concerned about nutrition as Western people. They are more concerned with the food's texture, flavour, colour and aroma.

Vietnamese cuisine is known for using fish sauce, soy sauce, rice, fresh fruits and vegetables and herbs and spices including lemon grass, lime and kaffir lime leaves. Throughout all regions of Vietnam, the emphasis is always on serving fresh vegetables and herbs as side dishes along with dipping sauce. The most common meats used in Vietnamese cuisine are pork, chicken, shrimp, cockles and various other kinds of seafood. Beef is usually used for one of the most popular dishes in Vietnam, 'pho soup' and the 'seven course beef' dish.

A typical meal for the average Vietnamese family could include individual bowls of rice; boiled, grilled steamed, stir fried or stewed meat, fish or other seafood; a stir-fried, raw or steamed vegetable dish; soup and fish sauce or soy sauce for dipping.



Meals:

Breakfast - is preferably rice or noodles with milk, and some older people enjoy a bread roll prepared from rice flour.

Lunch - could consist of pork, chicken or fish with noodles or rice. (*Vietnamese people do not eat lamb.*) Soup for lunch is desirable but *preferably separate containers for the soup and rice.*

Afternoon tea - should be checked with the resident. They might be interested in eating a piece of cake and drinking herbal or green tea.

Dinner - is the main meal and should be rice, a meat dish and vegetables and *should not be a sandwich.*

The most popular Vietnamese dishes include:

- **Noodle dishes** - Special Vietnamese noodles should be used which are extremely thin and woven into intricate bundles (e.g. *Banh Hoi*, *Bun cha*, *Mi Quang* or *Bun thit nuong*).
- **Noodle soups** - A common characteristic of many of these soups is the rich and very tasty broth (e.g. *Pho*, *Bun bo Hue*, *Bun Mang*, *Bun Oc* or *Bun rieu*). The most popular is pho - a noodle soup. There are many varieties of pho made from different types of meat but it is most commonly beef and chicken.
- **Rice dishes** - There are numerous types of meat prepared in various ways that are served with the broken rice. The rice and meat are served with various greens and pickled vegetables, sometimes with a prawn paste cake and grilled prawns (e.g. *Com chien Duong Chau*, *Com hen* or *Com tam*).
- **Sticky rice dishes** - The general idea is sticky rice with coconut milk, cooked the same way as the rice or steamed for a firmer texture and more flavour (e.g. *Banh chung* or *Xoi*).
- **Wraps and rolls** - Rice flour rolls are stuffed with ground pork, prawns and wood ear mushrooms (e.g. *Banh cuon* or *Banh trang* are made from 'rice paper' - thin rice flour sheets).
- **Meat dishes** - examples of these include beef and vegetables stew with spicy herbs (*Bo kho*), and cubed , marinated beef served with green vegetables, onion and tomato (*Bo luc lac*).



Bread	Soup / Rice	Vegetables	Meat / Fish	Fruit	Drinks
Rolls made from rice paper that often include shrimp, herbs, pork, and other ingredients wrapped and dipped in peanut sauce	Spicy beef noodle soup with pork, crab, chicken, shrimp, spring onion Egg noodle soup with beef balls	Cabbage Bitter Melon Bok Choy Carrot Cauliflower Spinach Chilli pepper Cucumber Crown Daisy Eggplant Daikon	Pork Chicken Beef Cockles Various kinds of seafood	Sapodill Mangosteen Jackfruit Durian Thieu litchi Star Apple Mango Avocado Passionfruit Banana	Herbal tea Green tea Soy milk Fruit juice



Vietnamese food is not related in any way to the Chinese ‘yin’ or ‘yang’

Older people usually avoid eating yellow cheese and scrambled eggs because they contain fat and milk.

Check with the residents as to their preferences as some Vietnamese people do not eat lamb or veal. Also check preferences regarding the use of chopsticks or other utensils. It is important to establish each person’s food preferences, cooking style (e.g. fried or steamed rice), amount and timing of meals and record this as part of their care plan.



Food sources:

Below is a list of known suppliers of Vietnamese foods in Queensland. For those people outside of Brisbane, you could phone and see if they can organise a delivery to your local area. There would obviously be an additional cost.

Asian Food & Seafood

56 Vulture Street
West End 4101
Tel: (07) 3844 4873

Asia Mart

Shop 6/14 Annerley Road
Woolloongabba 4102
Tel: (07) 3391 2322

Asian Supermarket NQ Pty Ltd.

Shop 3, 116 Charters Towers Road
Hermit Park 4812
Tel: (07) 4772 3997

Asia World Trading Smithfield Shopping Centre

Smithfield Qld
Tel: 4038 2240

Aum Asian Grocery Store

Unit 3, 50 Aerodrome Road
Maroochydore 4558
Tel: (07) 5479 1264

Flavours of Asia

200 Old Cleveland Road
Capalaba 4157
Tel: (07) 3245 5300

Formosa Asian Markets

Shop 88 Sunnybank Plaza Shopping Centre
Sunnybank 4109
Tel: (07) 3344 5286

Garboro Asian Supermarket

38 Station Road
Yeerongpilly 4105
Tel: (07) 3848 1566

Shop Bac Thien

11-19 Darra Station Road
Darra 4076
Tel: (07) 3217 0028

Van Phat

Shop 2, Kittyhawk Avenue, Inala Civic Centre
Inala 4077
Tel: (07) 3372 7540

Vui's Market

53 Kittyhawk Avenue
Inala 4077
Tel: (07) 3879 0611

Yune's Market – Grocery Wholesale

917 Beaudesert Rd
Coopers Plains 4108
Tel: (07) 3722 8100



For more addresses check the SS Business Directory (VIETPAGES) 2009 Queensland NIEN GIAM - (available from some Vietnamese shops).

Trauma situations:

Many Vietnamese refugees arrived in Australia between 1975 and 1990 are still suffering from problems related to traumatic experiences. A large number of families were separated, fortunes were lost, and many who fled on small fishing boats perished at sea. Some people already had a pre-war trauma in Vietnam, and had to acculturate in a new country, learn a new language, find jobs, and raise their children in a new place. Now, 30 years after the war, there are still people having related health problems. Most of them experienced trauma and torture in the past but were wary of seeking help for mental health issues because it is seen as taboo and is rarely spoken about. For older Vietnamese people, seeking help is more of a last resort. They do not do it until they feel so helpless that they do not know where else to go.

Attitudes to illness and pain:

Vietnam born people usually display stoicism towards pain and may suffer in silence. They may not try to disclose their feelings and pain to staff, doctors or other people in fear of losing face and honour.

Older Vietnamese people may accept pain in a stoic manner; motivated by a strong desire to go home, they may hide their pain.

Residential facility staff and doctors should watch for changes in facial expressions, physical movements, or changes in blood pressure and/or pulse, which might suggest pain. Other symptoms can also be observed. For example, a resident might be tired, not show any interest in outside life, always sleep during the day and refuse to eat.

Many Vietnam born older people may try to use traditional methods of healing exclusively, or in combination with Western medicine. There is, however, an increasing tendency for Vietnamese to attend a doctor before visiting a traditional practitioner such as a herbalist or acupuncture clinic.

Buddhism has a great influence on the thinking and behaviour of Vietnamese people. For them it is not only a religion, but also a way of life that emphasizes disconnection to the present. People believe that *“to the same degree, they reap today what they have sown in the past”*. In other words, they believe in rebirth and that their present life is a reflection of actions in a previous life. Thus pain and illness are often endured rather than immediately seeking remedies. People believe that all the pain which they suffer is caused by desire: desire for life, happiness, riches and power. If desire is suppressed, it is believed the cause of pain will be destroyed.

Some Vietnamese Catholics believe pain comes from God, giving the person another chance to pay for/atone for previous bad behaviours.

Perception of health professionals:

Going to health professionals is usual and Vietnamese people are used to the medical hierarchy (i.e. General Practitioners for overall health with referral to Specialists as needed for more in-depth treatment). Some older Vietnamese people would prefer go to the pharmacy and ask for medication, and can get frustrated if they need to visit the GP and ask for a prescription. For them going to a GP unless they want to see a specialist, is a waste of time. Vietnamese patients may be reluctant to speak up about their illness. They often expect quick relief from symptoms. They are cautious about Western medicines and sometimes initiate downward dosage adjustments to avoid even minor side effects. In their opinion, Western medication can be quick and effective in removing symptoms, but not a permanent cure. In effect, they rely on Chinese medicine for long term treatment.

Due to language barriers, aged Vietnam born people prefer Vietnamese speaking medical practitioners.



This may mean you shouldn't perceive a Vietnam born person who questions a doctor or health professional as 'being difficult'. Nor should you consider the person as 'being difficult' should they want a second opinion or to access complementary medicines of some type.



Palliative Care:

The family has a central role in the Vietnamese culture. In cases of terminal illness the family should be consulted to make the health care decisions to avoid worrying the ill person.

The diagnosis of a terminal illness should not be communicated to the person concerned but rather to their family. In the Vietnamese family structure, traditionally the eldest male (father or son) is responsible for the decision making, but often the person with the best English assumes this role.

Also, the removal of life support may require extensive family discussion. The family wish to 'protect' the person from diagnosis and prognosis of a terminal illness, places the responsibility for the decision on the entire family rather than on the individual.

There is sometimes an initial belief that if the diagnosis and prognosis is communicated to the dying person, they will give up hope and lose the will to live.

Once the family has accepted the prognosis, plans for support, and the personal care plan can be discussed. The ill/older person accepts the authority of the family.



Language difficulties may provide significant barriers to communicating about personal issues. Use clear and specific language to help your patient/resident and family understand the prognosis and make informed decisions about care. Always remember that there are nuances within each cultural grouping which can be addressed through comprehensive communication with the patient/resident and family.

Death:

Dying is one of life's unique experiences. A person's attitude towards death and bereavement is shaped to a large extent, by their cultural heritage, religious practices and family unit.

In Vietnamese culture, religion dictates some of the rituals in the dying and bereavement process.

In Buddhism for older people who are ill and know they are going to die, death is acceptable and is not shocking for the family. If a dying person is Buddhist and is in hospital or residential facility, he or she will ask for the monk to come to the bedside to chant (pray). If the monk is not available, you could bring some elderly people who can do Vietnamese chanting.

In the case of death, it is very important to contact the family and ask them what they would like to do, before the officials come. Some people believe that within the body the brain may die but the heart is still working. This makes the last minutes of life a very important time for the person to settle, to get ready for rebirth.

The Catholic patients/residents may ask for a priest for last rites and communion at the end of life.

The body should ideally be at home for one day, so the lost spirit does not bring bad luck to the family. Emotional and spiritual issues are more important than physical issues, regardless of religion.

Death and Dying

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Older Vietnamese people may prefer to be at home at the end of life with family members around them. If the older person has to die in the hospital or residential facility they may wish that family members have the opportunity to stay with them. If a person does not die at home it is regarded as causing bad luck for the family.

Dying people who are Buddhist may wish that a small group of monks can stay with them during the last few hours of their life.



Be aware that there are a variety of Vietnamese cultures and religious practices. Most Vietnamese are Buddhist; other religious preferences include Catholicism, Evangelical Protestant, and Chinese Confucianism. Ask your patients/residents and family members about their preferences and rituals to better understand their needs.

Language

Vietnamese is the official language, although there are distinct northern, central and southern dialects and accents. Vietnam born people who arrived in Australia in 1975 and 1976 usually speak English well.

You need to be aware that just because a person once spoke English, this does not mean:

1. They necessarily spoke it fluently or extensively OR
2. They have retained these skills when growing older OR
3. That it is their preferred language as speaking English can be tiring to the elderly because they are engaging in a translation-type process

For more information:

A variety of Vietnamese language guides targeted at health and everyday activities is available at a cost from:

HENDRIKA (Health and Rapport Interactive Kommunikation Aid)

Email: ph.johnson@bigpond.com **website:** www.oyo.net.au

Phone: 0418754288 **Fax:** 02 66824801

Eastern Health Language Cue Cards

www.easternhealth.org.au/language/cueCards/index.asp (free of charge)

Sample Communication Card

clothing

tiệm

 <p>bra kai net voo cải nịt vú</p>	 <p>cardigan ow jee-ley áo gi-lê</p>	 <p>coat ow chwang áo choàng</p>	 <p>dress ow dam áo đầm</p>	 <p>dressing gown ow kho-ahk trong nhah áo khoác trong nhà</p>
 <p>nightgown ow ngoo áo ngủ</p>	 <p>pyjamas pee-jah-mah pi ja ma</p>	 <p>shirt ow shul-mee áo sơ-mi</p>	 <p>slip vay lot váy lót</p>	 <p>socks vũ vớ</p>
 <p>stockings vũ lòng vớ ni lông</p>	 <p>suit doh vet đồ vét</p>	 <p>trousers kwàn quần</p>	 <p>underwear doh lot đồ lót</p>	<p>other khahk khác</p>

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Diversicare

www.diversicare.com.au

Queensland

www.health.qld.gov.au/multicultural

New South Wales

www.mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au

Victoria

www.healthtranslations.vic.gov.au

Victoria PICAC (Partners in Culturally Appropriate Care)

www.culturaldiversity.com.au

Federal Government

www.ageing.health.gov.au/publicat/multilin.htm

www.ageing.health.gov.au/publicat/pubindex.htm

Alzheimer's Australia

www.alzheimers.org.au/content.cfm?categoryid=14

Alzheimer's Australia NSW

www.alzheimers.org.au

Queensland Health – Multicultural Health Publications

[www.health.qld.gov.au/publications/restopicmaster.asp?](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/publications/restopicmaster.asp?Rec=40&frmHealthTopic=MulticulturalHealth)

[Rec=40&frmHealthTopic=MulticulturalHealth](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/publications/restopicmaster.asp?Rec=40&frmHealthTopic=MulticulturalHealth)

Queensland Transcultural Mental Health Centre

www.health.qld.gov.au/pahospital/qtmhc/multilingual_resources.asp

Cross Cultural Health Program (USA)

www.xculture.org/resource/order/index.cfm?Category=Articles

Others

<http://www.culturaldetective.com>

www.dhi.gov.au/clearinghouse/TranslatedInfo.htm

www.healthinsite.gov.au

<http://www.cs.nsw.gov.au/csahs/ggrm/tacs/eLearning/main.htm>

1. “Attitudes”
www.haivenu-vietnam.com/vietnam-culture-attitudes.htm
2. “Communicating with Vietnamese people” – Dana Homles
www.vietnam-beauty.com/vietnamese-culture/vietnam-culture-value
3. “End –of-Life Care: The Vietnamese Culture” – Patient and Family Education Services; Culture Clue Series – University of Washington – Medical Center – UW Medicine, 2005
4. “Multicultural Palliative Care Guidelines” – Association of Palliative Care, Victoria
www.pallcare.asn.au/mc/mcvietnamese.html
5. “The Vietnamese Value System” – Huynh Dinh Te
www.vietspring/values/valsystem.html
6. “Vietnamese cuisine”
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnamese_cuisine
7. “Vietnamese – Cultural Profile”
http://ethnomed.org/ethnomed/cultures/vietnamese/vietnamese_cp.html
8. “Vietnam – Language, Culture, Customs and Etiquette”
www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/vietnam.html
9. “Vietnamese Spiritual Life”
www.vietnam-beauty.com/vietnamese-culture/vietnam-culture-value
10. “Vietnamese Table Etiquette”
www.thingsasian.com/stories-photos/1140
11. “Vietnamese Traditional Family Values” – Samantha O'Donnell, 2008
www.vietnam-beauty.com/vietnamese-culture/vietnam-culture-value

Correction / Addition Form

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Please complete the following page if you are aware of either incorrect details or you know of additional resources that should be included.

Correction	
Listed Item	Correction
Title	
Page:	
Additional Resources / Contact	
Contact Details	Description of Resource
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