

NAVRATRI

NAVRATRI, MEANING “NINE NIGHTS,” IS A HINDU FESTIVAL THAT CELEBRATES the achievement of good over evil and honours Durga, the goddess, in her nine forms. This festival typically takes place in early autumn, and marks the start of the harvest season. This year the celebration starts on Oct. 3 and ends on Oct. 12. Each day of Navratri is dedicated to one of Durga’s forms, representing various aspects of strength, protection and devotion. Navratri celebrations include dancing, fasting, feasting and worship.

Navratri ends with Dussehra, a celebration of Lord Rama’s victory over the demon king Ravana, symbolizing the triumph of light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. It’s a time for not just religious observance, but also cultural expression, community gatherings and personal reflection.

Connection to Doctors Nova Scotia’s work

Physicians can support Hindu community members by recognizing Navratri and understanding its cultural importance. Since this festival involves fasting, physicians can have meaningful conversations with their Hindu patients around their Navratri practices, offering advice on staying healthy during fasting. By understanding the spiritual and cultural aspects of Navratri, physicians can provide care that is sensitive to their patients’ beliefs, helping to build stronger connections with patients.

Recognizing Navratri and diverse cultural practices with patients and colleagues helps cultivate an inclusive environment where everyone feels respected and understood. Promoting cultural awareness among our staff and physicians is essential to providing care that respects the unique traditions and values of the Hindu community.

Resources

- Navratri: Celebrating the Triumph of Good over Evil (tinyurl.com/DNS-Navratri)
- Navratri Fasting Rules (tinyurl.com/DNS-Navratri-fasting)



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