

# RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL OBSERVATIONS.....

Dongzhi Festival



**In support of our patients, their families and our employees, faculty members and students, this information is offered as a resource about the Dongzhi Festival, also known as the Winter Solstice Festival.**

## **History and Meaning:**

The Dongzhi Festival celebrates the turning point of winter. It is common for families to gather and enjoy a hearty, warming meal. This is a harmonious balance of yin and yang energy; the dark cold night and the impending sunlight and warmth of delicious food. The festival started during the Han dynasty (202 B.C.-220 A.D.). The day was devoted to worshipping heaven and praying at the tombs of ancestors.

## **Relevant Observances:**

- Observers enjoy tang yuan, sweet round rice balls typically filled with sesame or red bean paste and served in ginger broth. Other traditional foods enjoyed during the celebration are dumplings, won ton and mutton.
- It is important to share a lavish meal with family on this day.

## **Tips for Supporting Patients:**

- Special foods and drinks may be requested and should be allowed if medically appropriate.
- Patients may want to have visitors during the evening hours.

## **Tips for Supporting Staff and Faculty Members and Students:**

- Employees, faculty members and students may request this time off. This should be allowed.

### **For More Information**

Please contact the Office of Diversity and Cultural Competence at [diversity@jhmi.edu](mailto:diversity@jhmi.edu) or Paula Teague, senior director of the Department of Spiritual Care and Chaplaincy, at [pteague1@jhmi.edu](mailto:pteague1@jhmi.edu).