

Engaging Your Jain Population

Market Expansion Through Cultural Understanding



Community
Connected

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Objectives

- Summarize the history of Jain American communities in the United States
- Review strategies for pharmacies to better engage Jain American employees and patients
- Identify the key stakeholders in the community committed to advancing Jain American health



Jain Center of Greater Phoenix
Phoenix, Arizona, Established in 2008
<https://jcgp.org>

Community Connected

Preparing community pharmacies to thrive through the provision of patient-centered services delivery within the diverse communities where they live, work, play and pray.

Preparing pharmacies to be



Jain Core Beliefs

1. Ahimsa (Non-Violence)

- The most fundamental principle.
- Jains avoid harming **any living being**, including microscopic organisms.
- Influences diet (strict vegetarianism), occupation, and even walking habits (sweeping the ground to avoid stepping on insects).
- **Quote:** “Ahimsa Parmo Dharma” – Non-violence is the highest religion.

2. Anekantavada (Multiplicity of Views)

- Reality is complex and no single viewpoint can capture it fully.
- Encourages **tolerance, humility, and open-mindedness**.

3. Aparigraha (Non-Possessiveness)

- Avoid attachment to people or material things.
- Promotes **minimalism** and **detachment** from worldly desires.

4. Karma and Liberation (Moksha)

- Karma is seen as a **subtle matter** that clings to the soul due to actions, thoughts, and speech.
- Goal: **Free the soul** from karma through asceticism, knowledge, and right conduct, leading to **moksha** (liberation from the cycle of birth and death).

<https://jainpedia.org/themes/principles/jain-beliefs/> Dundas, Paul. *The Jains*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2002



Three Jewels (Ratnatraya) of Jain

These guide the path to liberation:

1. **Right Faith (Samyak Darshan)** – Belief in the truth.
2. **Right Knowledge (Samyak Jnana)** – Understanding reality.
3. **Right Conduct (Samyak Charitra)** – Ethical behavior and discipline.

<https://jainismhistory.weebly.com/the-three-jewels-of-jainism.html>

Long, Jeffery D. *Jainism: An Introduction*. I.B. Tauris, 2009



Key Practices

1. Strict Vegetarianism

- No meat, eggs, root vegetables, or fermented foods.
- Avoidance of foods that harm microorganisms (e.g., honey, alcohol).

2. Fasting and Austerities (Tapas)

- Practiced regularly, especially during festivals like **Paryushan**.
- May include partial or total fasting, silence, and meditation.

3. Daily Rituals

- Prayers, **Samayik** (meditation to maintain equanimity), and temple visits.
- Use of **puja**, holy texts, and **navkar mantra** (universal prayer).

4. Sallekhana (Peaceful Death)

- A voluntary fast unto death by spiritually prepared individuals.
- Considered a noble and non-violent end-of-life practice.

5. Monasticism

- Jain monks and nuns live lives of **extreme renunciation**, owning nothing and walking barefoot.
- Laypersons (Shravaks/Shravikas) follow a less strict path but still strive for self-discipline



Jainworld.org – [Jain Principles and Ethics](https://www.jainworld.org/jain-principles-and-ethics)

Major Sects

1. Digambara ("Sky-Clad")

- Monks renounce all possessions, including clothes.
- Women must be reborn as men to attain liberation.

2. Shwetambara ("White-Clad")

- Monks/nuns wear white clothes.
- Believe women can attain liberation

Jainworld.org – [Jain Principles and Ethics](https://jainworld.org/jain-principles-and-ethics)



<https://ericgerlach.com/indian-philosophy-the-jains-whiteclad-skyclad>

History of Jain American Communities

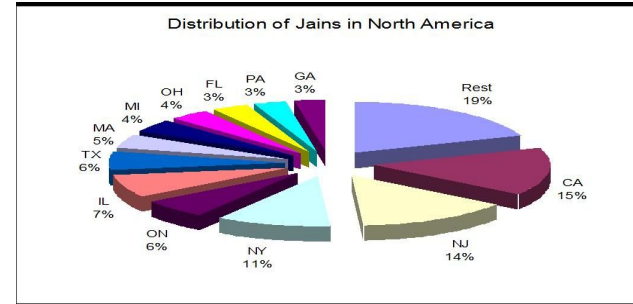
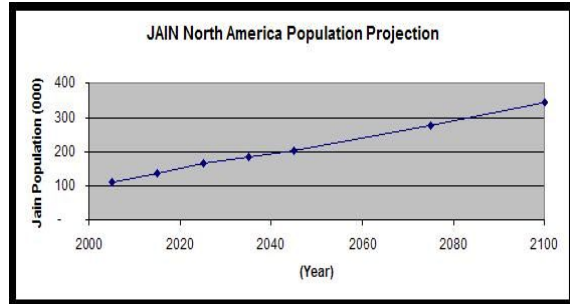
- Jain immigration to the U.S. began in the mid-20th century
- Growth accelerated post-1965 with the Immigration and Nationality Act
- Establishment of Jain temples and organizations like JAINA (Federation of Jain Associations in North America)
- Strong emphasis on non-violence (Ahimsa), education, and business
- Jain centers now active in many major U.S. cities

Sources: JAINA.org, Pew Forum, JainDigest.org

Jain American Population

- The United States is a country that has a large population of Jainism followers. It is actually the country with the second-highest members of the Jain population. Over 79K people in the United States follow the Jainism religion. The religion grew in popularity in the 1970s and today there is a large center located in New York City that is dedicated to the religion.

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/jain-population-by-country>



<http://jwolhandbook.pbworks.com/w/page/5563173/Jain%20Demographics%20and%20Projections>

Engagement

Employees, Patients, Community Stakeholders

Creating a business proposition around a
niche market

Engaging Your Employees

Jains observe several important religious holidays, many of which are rooted in the life and teachings of Lord Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara, and principles such as non-violence (Ahimsa), self-discipline, and renunciation.

Most Jains fast during holy days and festivals; some Jains choose fasting at other times in order to purify or to assist in their spiritual development. This ritual can vary from giving up food and drink entirely to only giving up favourite foods.

Many Jain holidays are not public holidays - hence an employee may ask

- for the day off to celebrate with his family
- to change shifts with someone else

Key Takeaway: As an employer, knowing when these days are will help in creating the schedule

Here are the most significant Jain holidays:

Paryushan (or Paryushana Parva)

- Most important Jain festival, observed annually.
- Duration: 8 days (Swetambar sect) or 10 days (Digambar sect).
- A time of intense reflection, fasting, prayer, and penance.
- Ends with Samvatsari, the Day of Forgiveness: Jains seek forgiveness from others by saying:
"Micchami Dukkadam" (May all the evil that has been done be fruitless).

Mahavir Jayanti

- Celebrates the birth of Lord Mahavira, usually in March or April.
- Includes temple processions, recitation of scriptures, and charitable acts.

Diwali (Jain Version)

- Marks the liberation (nirvana) of Lord Mahavira.
- Jains light lamps to signify his spiritual awakening.
- Emphasizes non-materialism and spiritual values, unlike the more commercial Hindu celebration.

Kartik Purnima

- Celebrated in November.
- Commemorates important events in Jain history, including Lord Mahavira's visit to Sammed Shikharji, a sacred pilgrimage site.

Maun Ekaadashi

- A day of complete silence, fasting, and spiritual reflection.
- Usually observed in the month of Kartik (October–November).



<https://www.twinstarcu.com/content/five-fun-facts-about-diwali>

Rath Yatra

- A procession of Jain deities, typically held at temples.
- Celebrated more widely in temple communities, especially in India

Varsitap (or Varshitap Parna)

- Completion of a special fasting regimen that lasts over a year (on alternate days).
- Parna (breaking of the fast) is a significant celebration.

<https://youngminds.via.org/i-survived-without-eating-anything-for-10-days-straight-8518297f474d>



Employee Engagement

Engaging Jain American Employees

- Understand dietary restrictions (strict vegetarianism, no root vegetables for some)
- Respect for religious holidays like Paryushan and Mahavir Jayanti
- Offer quiet space for prayer/meditation
- Ask about religious accommodations respectfully to foster inclusion

Sources: JainVegDiet.org, JAINA.org, Pew Research

<https://www.amarillo.com/story/news/2013/08/24/younger-jains-adapt-faith-modern-life/13096229007/>



- Stock and promote non-animal, non-alcoholic medications
- Highlight availability of vegan/vegetarian capsules
- Offer culturally competent counseling around fasting periods
- Build trust by participating in Jain community events and health fairs

Sources: JainVegDiet.org, JAINA.org, Pew Research



Patient Engagement

How to “Market” to Your Jain Population

Engaging you Patients Pharmacy with Staff

Jains often appreciate patience and a calm demeanor in interactions

- Provide mindful and attentive customer service
- Make an effort to be present and listen actively to their needs and concerns



Jain Healthcare considerations

- **Strict Vegetarianism & Avoidance of Root Vegetables**
 - **Jains typically avoid:**
 - Meat, fish, eggs
 - Root vegetables (e.g., onions, garlic, potatoes) because uprooting them kills the entire plant and many microbes.
 - Some avoid honey, fermented foods, and nightshades.
 - **Pharmacy implications:**
 - Avoid recommending products with gelatin (capsules), fish oil (omega-3), or animal-derived enzymes.
 - Use **plant-based alternatives**: vegetarian capsules, algal omega-3, etc.

- AINA Medical Professionals. JAINA Dietary Guidelines
- Jain, Vijay K. *Acharya Amritchandra's Purushartha Siddhyupaya*, Vikalp Printers, 2012.

Fasting Practices

- **Frequent fasting** is a spiritual practice in Jainism—particularly during **Paryushan** and other holy days.
 - May include skipping multiple meals, complete water fasting, or only consuming boiled water.
- **Medical counseling considerations:**
 - Monitor for hypoglycemia, dehydration, or medication non-adherence in chronic disease patients (e.g., diabetes).
 - Adjust insulin and oral antidiabetics accordingly.

Jainworld.org. "[Health During Fasting](#)"

Diabetes UK. "Fasting and Diabetes" Guidelines

<https://safetyiq.academy/5-key-points-of-the-teach-back-method-for-patient-counseling/communication/>



Engaging Your Patients

Pharmacist Counselling & Inventory Supply

Jainism is a global practice

- if you have a significant Jain population in your area whose primary language is not English, consider offering multilingual services to accommodate their needs

Jain emphasize ethical and sustainable living

- Stock products that align with these values, such as cruelty-free, or eco-friendly items
- Consider clearly labelling vegetarian and vegan-friendly products to make it easier for your customers to find suitable options

Engaging Jain American Patients

- Stock and promote non-animal, non-alcoholic medications
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Sources: JainHealthInitiative.org, JAINA Medical Professionals

OTC Products (RX)

Here are a few pharmaceutical companies that are known for cruelty-free practices according to PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals):

1. **Johnson & Johnson (McNeil Consumer Healthcare):** has been known for its commitment to cruelty-free practices
2. **Bayer Consumer Health Division:** includes brands like Aleve and Alka-Seltzer - has been recognized for not conducting animal testing.
3. **GlaxoSmithKline (GSK):** has committed to not testing its products on animals and is involved in producing various OTC medications.
4. **Procter & Gamble (P&G):** Known for pharmaceutical brands such as Vicks and Pepto-Bismol. P&G has made commitments to end animal testing for its consumer products.



OTC Products (Celebrations)

Here are a few products a pharmacy can consider selling during holidays/ celebrations:

1. Incense Sticks:

- Jains light incense sticks during worship. Offering these items in the pharmacy can be a thoughtful addition.

2. Deyas

- Deyas play a significant role in Diwali celebrations. Selling deyas can be a popular choice.

3. Mala

- Mala is used during workshop and selling this item would gain empathy from Jains in the community
- (Ensure that these items are culturally sensitive and appropriate)

1. Books and Literature:

- Books related to Jainism, mindfulness, and meditation may be of interest those who are continuously learning. Consider stocking literature that aligns with the spiritual themes of the festival



Engagement Community Stakeholders

Networking- Going outside your comfort
zone

Temple / Derasar

“A Place of Worship for Jains”

Temples, are all sacred spaces of worship.

Places of worship can also be local communities (Sanghas).

A sangha is a local community of mindfulness practitioners who gather to

- meditate
- share their joys and difficulties
- encourage each other on the path of practice



Key Takeaway: Temples are a [mindfulness practice center](https://www.jaina.org/page/LocalJainCen/CA---Jain-Center-of-Northern-California---JCNC.htm?/09_05_2017_DasLakD11)

- “a place to quiet the mind, look deeply, and enjoy the wonders of life within and around us through the practices of sitting meditation, walking meditation, mindful eating, deep relaxation meditation, and sharing togetherness”

https://www.jaina.org/page/LocalJainCen/CA---Jain-Center-of-Northern-California---JCNC.htm?/09_05_2017_DasLakD11

Prominent Figures in Jainism

The priest in Jainism is called “Muni”- Spiritual Advisor

- **Sudha Sagar Jain Muni** was a prominent Jain Monk spiritual leader. He pursued a Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com) degree and is proficient in Hindi and English. His spiritual journey began under the guidance of Acharya Vidyasagar Ji Maharaj, a revered figure in the Jain community. He is renowned for his deep knowledge of Jain philosophy and his commitment to spiritual practices. He has been instrumental in the renovation of several Jain temples,

Networking Opportunity : A pharmacy owner can ask to be a part of events scheduled at Temples to better engage with community members in the area.

https://www.bhaktibharat.com/en/bhakt/muni-sudha-sagar?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Engaging Community Stakeholders

- JAINA Convention (USA)
 - Past guests include scholars, monks (like Muni Shri Sangh), and international Jain leaders
- Global Jain Network
 - Click [HERE](#) to find a monastery in your city



Key Takeaway: Build relationships with trusted leaders in your community.

<https://www.jainaconvention.org/>

Museums

Museums dedicated to the history of Jains in the U.S. and abroad:

- Museum of Fine Arts in Boston exhibits Features a rare collection of Jain paintings and manuscripts, view more [HERE](#)
- New Orleans Museum of Art features an exhibit called, “The Pursuit of Salvation: Jain Art from India”, view more [HERE](#)
- Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas exhibits “Revealing a Hidden Treasure: A Jain Shrine from India” features a sculptural relief depicting two Jinas in meditation, view more [HERE](#)

<https://collections.mfa.org/objects/149703>

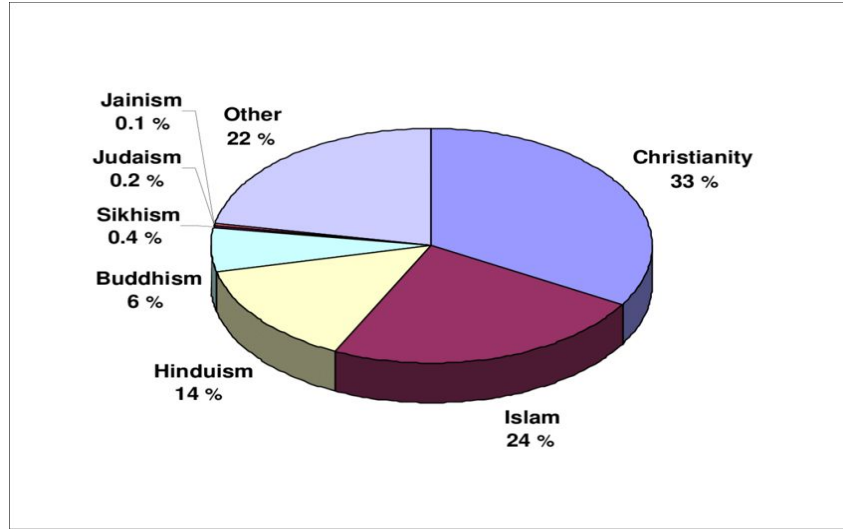


Stereotypes

Avoiding, Debunking , Demystifying

Stereotype

Is Jainism a sect of Hinduism or Buddhism?

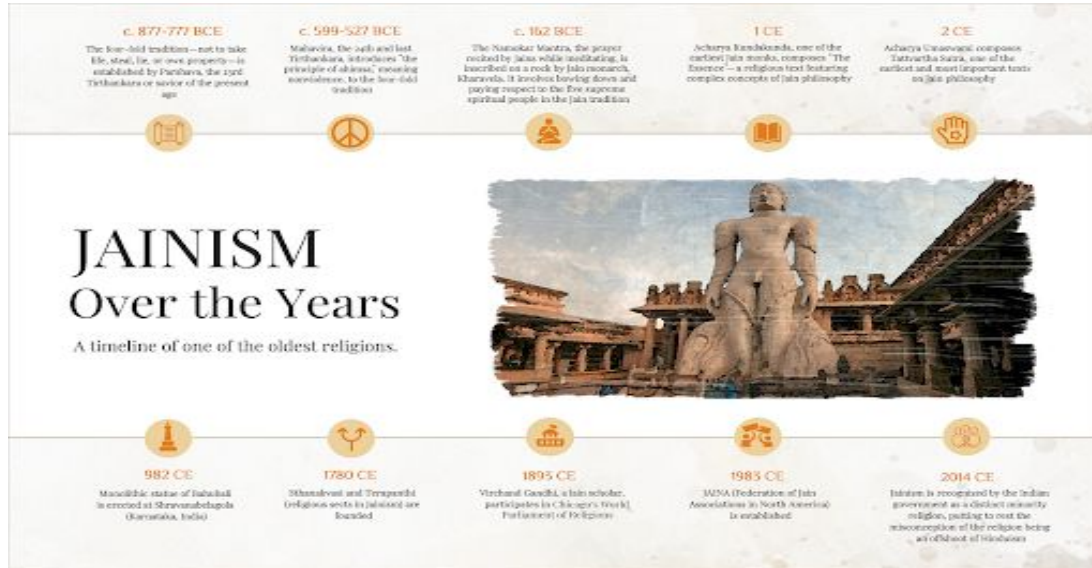


No, Jainism is an independent, ancient religion that predates or evolved parallel to Hinduism and Buddhism..

https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Seven-world-religions-by-percentage-adherents-of-global-population-4_fig2_235125928

Stereotype

Is Jainism founded by Mahavira Swami?



Jainism is an ancient religion that pre-dates lord Mahavira.

<http://www.nehamag.com/voyages/jainism-the-centuries-old-vegan-religion/>

Stereotype

Do Jains eat meat just for health or culture?



Jain vegetarianism is not cultural or optional — it's a core ethical and religious practice.

https://jainsamaj.org/content.php?url=Food_Taboos_in_Ancient_Religions:-