

# Hispanic Culture in MN - At a Glance

Common cultural norms of the Hispanic population residing in Minnesota.



## Traditional Beliefs on Health and Medicine

- Authorities are respected. Doctors, teachers, and others with authority can be very influential.
- In addition to Western medicine, use of folk healers or spiritualists occurs on a small scale, especially if there is a lack of health insurance.
- Overall skepticism about taking medications and many view a pharmacist as a medical provider because in their home country, the pharmacist often prescribed medication.
- Many medications that are prescribed here are over the counter in their home country.
- A large part of the population does not use birth control or favors the natural method.

## Personal Space & Social Gestures

- Common to touch and kiss on the cheek when greeting someone.
- Eye contact is common and shows respect when it is done in a non-dominant way.
- Friendly physical contact and personal space is much closer than for Americans, especially among single people.
- Prefer to be referred to by their specific nationalities, i.e. Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc. It should not be assumed that individuals are from the same country, or are all Mexican.



## Religion

- Mostly Christian and predominantly Catholic. Faith is extremely important.
- Candles and religious imagery (i.e. Virgin Mary, crucifix, local Saints) are seen in many Latino homes. Serve as a form of protection.
- Churches serve as strong community ties and gathering spaces, especially for new immigrants.

## Communication Styles

- English speaking children will serve as interpreters for non-English speaking adults.
- Children are typically bilingual but often do not want to speak Spanish in the home. Parents may be bilingual if they work outside the home.
- Use body language to augment or reinforce communication.
- Building trust and respect is essential for a well-working relationship.
- Use more words to say the same thing. Explanations and/or stories are used as part of a response.
- Giving specific answers to questions is sometimes avoided.

## Gender

- Men “take care” of the women and children, not just financially.
- Women are homemakers and caregivers more often than men and are seen as powerful and strong in their role.
- Gender is clearly defined at an early age.

## Familial Structure

- Greatly value children and extended family.
- Strong sense of pride for family.
- Many times close friends are considered part of the family.
- Family provides a huge network of support for individuals.

The above information was provided by the following organizations and individuals: ECHO Spokespeople Morgan Michilot and Verónica Jaralambides, Stratis Health [www.stratishealth.org](http://www.stratishealth.org), and Latino Minnesota by Leigh Roethke.

This information sheet is not intended to be an exhaustive approach or complete representation of the Hispanic culture, but rather a basic introduction and foundation.

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