

Getting Palliative Care

- Why is palliative care being recommended to me?
- When am I eligible for services?
- Are there treatments I must stop, and why?
- Which ones may I continue?

Setting

- Where is the palliative care team or program based?
- Where can I receive this care?

Staffing

- Who is on the palliative care team?
- How does the team work together to provide care?

Volunteers

- Are there volunteers available to me?
- What can volunteers do?

You and Your Family

- How will my family and loved ones be included in my care?
- How can my loved ones and I get information and learn caregiving skills to meet my care needs?

Comfort and Pain

- How does the care team talk with my doctor?
- How do I get emergency treatment for pain and other symptoms during the day and after hours?
- How will the care team address our spiritual and emotional needs?

What If I Don't Live at Home?

- Can care be delivered to me in a nursing home or other facility?

Other Services

- What other services will be offered to me?

For more information about palliative care, hospice or other related issues, visit www.caringinfo.org. For more information on palliative care guidelines, visit www.nationalconsensusproject.org. If you want to talk with someone about your questions, please call 800/658-8898.



For more information, Contact Caring Connections:
HelpLine 800.658.8898 • Multilingual Line 877.658.8896
www.caringinfo.org • caringinfo@nhpco.org



What is Palliative Care?



What is Palliative Care?

You may have heard of a new medical term—palliative care (*pronounced PAH-LEE-UH-TIVE*). For the last thirty years, palliative care has been provided by hospice programs for dying Americans. Currently these programs serve more than 1 million patients and their families each year.

Now this very same approach to care is being used by other health care providers, including teams in hospitals, nursing facilities and home health agencies in combination with other medical treatments to help people who are seriously ill.

To palliate means to make comfortable by treating a person’s symptoms from an illness. Hospice and palliative care both focus on helping a person be comfortable by addressing issues causing physical or emotional pain, or suffering. Hospice and other palliative care providers have teams of people working together to provide care. The goals of palliative care are to improve the quality of a seriously ill person’s life and to support that person and their family during and after treatment.

Hospice focuses on relieving symptoms and supporting patients with a life expectancy of months not years, and their families. However, palliative care may be given at any time during a patient’s illness, from diagnosis on. Most hospices have a set of defined services, team members and rules and regulations. Some hospices provide palliative care as a separate program or service, which can be very confusing to patients and families. The list of questions below provides answers to common questions about the difference between hospice and palliative care.



Question	Palliative Care	Hospice Care
Who can receive this care?	Anyone with a serious illness, regardless of life expectancy, can receive palliative care	Someone with an illness with a life expectancy measured in months not years
Can I continue to receive treatments to cure my illness?	You may receive palliative care and curative care at the same time	Treatments and medicines aimed at relieving symptoms are provided by hospice
Does Medicare pay?	Some treatments and medications may be covered	Medicare pays all charges related to hospice
Does Medicaid pay?	Some treatments and medications may be covered	In 47 states, Medicaid pays all charges related to hospice.
Does private insurance pay?	Some treatments and medications may be covered, but there generally is not a 'package' benefit for palliative care.	Most insurance plans have a hospice benefit
Is this a package deal?	No, there is no 'palliative care' package, the services are flexible and based on the patient’s needs	Medicare and Medicaid hospice benefits are package deals
How long can I receive care?	This will depend upon your care needs, and the coverage you have through Medicare, Medicaid or private insurance	As long as you meet the hospice’s criteria of an illness with a life expectancy of months not years
What organization provides these services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospitals • Hospices • Nursing Facilities • Health Care Clinics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospice organizations • Hospice programs based out of a hospital • Other health care organizations
Where are services provided?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home • Assisted living facility • Nursing facility • Hospital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually, wherever the patient resides, in their home, assisted living facility, nursing facility, or hospital • Some hospices have facilities where people can live, like a hospice residence, or receive care for short-term reasons, such as acute pain or symptom management
Who provides these services?	It varies. However usually there is a team including doctors, nurses, social workers and chaplains, similar to the hospice team.	A team—doctor, nurse, social worker, chaplain, volunteer, home health aide and others
Do they offer expert end-of-life care?	This varies, be sure to ask	Yes, staff experts in end-of-life care