

Palliative Care

What You Should Know

To learn more about palliative care, go to getpalliativecare.org

Palliative Care (pronounced pal-lee-uh-tiv) is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses. It is focused on providing patients with relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness—whatever the diagnosis. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family.

Palliative care is provided by a team of doctors, nurses, and other specialists who work together with a patient's other doctors to provide an extra layer of support. It is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness and can be provided along with curative treatment.

1 WHERE DO I RECEIVE PALLIATIVE CARE?

Palliative care is provided in a variety of settings including the hospital, outpatient clinics, home, hospice and long term care facilities.

2 DOES MY INSURANCE PAY FOR PALLIATIVE CARE?

Most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid, cover palliative care. If costs concern you, a social worker or financial consultant from the palliative care team can help you.

3 HOW DO I GET PALLIATIVE CARE?

Ask for it! Tell your doctors, nurses, family and caregivers that you want palliative care.

4 HOW DO I KNOW IF PALLIATIVE CARE IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Palliative care may be right for you if you suffer from pain, stress or other symptoms due to a serious illness. Serious illnesses may include cancer, cardiac disease, respiratory disease, kidney failure, Alzheimer's, HIV/AIDS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), multiple sclerosis and more. Palliative care can be provided at any stage of illness and along with treatment meant to cure you.

5 WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM PALLIATIVE CARE?

You can expect relief from symptoms such as pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, constipation, nausea, loss of appetite and difficulty sleeping. Palliative care helps you carry on with your daily life. It improves your ability to go through medical treatments. It helps you better understand your condition and your choices for medical care. In short, you can expect the best possible quality of life.

6 WHO PROVIDES PALLIATIVE CARE?

Palliative care is provided by a team including palliative care doctors, nurses and social workers. Massage therapists, pharmacists, nutritionists and others might also be part of the team.

7 HOW DOES PALLIATIVE CARE WORK WITH MY OWN DOCTOR?

The palliative care team works in partnership with your own doctor to provide an extra layer of support for you and your family. The team provides expert symptom management, extra time for communication and help navigating the health system.