

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 illness. This type of care is focused on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of a serious illness. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family.

Palliative care is provided by a specially-trained 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 it can be provided along with curative treatment.

1 WHERE DO I RECEIVE PALLIATIVE CARE?

Palliative care can be provided in a variety of settings including the hospital, outpatient clinic and at home.

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 from the palliative care team can help you.

3 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, heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, Alzheimer's, HIV/AIDS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's and more. Palliative care can be provided at any stage of illness and along with treatment meant to cure you.

4 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.

5 WHO PROVIDES PALLIATIVE CARE?

Palliative care is provided by a team including palliative care doctors, nurses and other specialists.

6 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 about your goals and treatment options and help navigating the health system.

7 HOW DO I GET PALLIATIVE CARE?

You have to ask for it! Just tell your doctors and nurses that you would like to see the palliative care team.