



A Palliative Approach to Care

Palliative care is about living as well as possible, for as long as possible.

Palliative care focuses on comfort, quality of life, and what matters most to each person. It can begin at any stage of a serious illness and is provided alongside treatments that support health and well-being. Care is guided by each person's goals, values, and wishes.

Every person's journey is unique. While no two experiences are the same, there are common changes that may occur as health declines. This guide outlines those changes and describes how we can continue to support comfort, dignity, and quality of life throughout each stage of the illness.

What does palliative care provide?

- Pain and symptom management
- Emotional, social, and spiritual support
- Help with planning ahead
- Support for families and caregivers
- Guidance through changing health
- Care focused on dignity and quality of life

When do we start palliative care?

Palliative care is not just for the last days of life. It can begin months or even years before death as health changes. Introducing palliative care early allows time for planning, managing symptoms, and making sure care reflects what matters most to you.

What can families do?

- Learn about the illness.
- Stay hopeful while asking honest questions.
- Focus on what matters most to your loved one.
- Share important information with the healthcare team.
- Talk about goals and wishes early.
- Ask questions whenever something is unclear.
- Remember to care for yourself too.

THE STAGE	SIGNS YOU MAY NOTICE	WHAT THIS MEANS
1. Increasing Frailty • Discuss goals, values, and wishes. • Begin advance care planning • Manage symptoms • Focus on quality of life	• More tired • Sleeping more • Less interest in social activities • Needing more help	<i>The body is naturally saving its energy for essential functions.</i>
2. Increasing Medical and Functional Decline • Family meetings • Review Medications • Plan ahead • Prevent unnecessary hospital visits	• Reduced appetite • Loss of energy • Weight loss • More assistance needed	<i>The body's systems are beginning to work more slowly.</i>
3. Last Weeks • Comfort becomes the priority • Reassess medications • Prepare for changes • Discuss where the resident wishes to receive care	• More weakness • Swallowing difficulties • Sleeping much of the day	<i>Rest becomes the body's natural response as energy decreases.</i>
4. Active Dying • Comfort-focused care • Treat symptoms promptly • Support family at the bedside	• Less responsive • Changes in breathing • Reduced intake • Long periods of sleep	<i>The body is preparing for the end-of-life.</i>
5. Death and Bereavement • Support after death • Time with your loved one • Bereavement information • Community resources	We are here to support you. This is a time of both loss and love. We will walk alongside you and connect you with the support and resources you need.	<i>Your loved one has died but our support continues for you.</i>



Questions? Please speak with your nursing team.
We are here to support you and your family.

