

## Things to Know About Palliative Care

### What is Palliative Care?

Palliative Care is specialized medical care for individuals diagnosed with serious illness which helps to relieve the symptoms, pain and stress of living with a serious illness. The goal of palliative care is to manage pain and symptoms, provide emotional support to the patient and family, and improve an individual's quality of life.

### Can anyone with a serious illness ask for Palliative Care?

Yes. Anyone with a serious illness seeking relief from symptoms, pain and stress can ask their doctor for palliative care. Serious illness may include cancer, respiratory diseases, heart disease, Alzheimer's Disease, HIV/AIDS, kidney failure, multiple sclerosis, and more. Palliative care can be effective at any age, whether you are receiving curative treatments, living with serious chronic illness, or coping with serious advancing illness and end of life care.

### When can I ask my doctors for Palliative Care?

Anytime. You or a family member can ask for palliative care when first diagnosed and all throughout a serious illness. It can help with aggressive treatments when working towards a cure or remission of an illness. If serious illness is not or no longer curative, palliative care can be supportive to help control the progression of the illness, manage symptoms, and improve quality of life. It can help make everyday life the best it can be.

### How does Palliative Care work?

Every person with a serious illness can experience the pain and symptoms of their disease differently. A palliative care clinician or team, works together with a patient's regular doctor to find the source of the problem. The clinician or team will offer the patient options for the best possible treatments to help lessen or control pain, and improve symptoms such as shortness of breath, nausea, loss of appetite, fatigue, trouble sleeping. Additionally, palliative care typically offers the patient, family and caregivers emotional and spiritual support.

### Where can I get it and how do I pay for it?

Most adults can receive palliative care where they live or receive care. Many insurance plans cover all or part of palliative care. However, palliative care can vary as to who provides it in your community, what services they offer, and how to pay for care. Ask your primary care doctor or specialist about the type of care that may be best given your illness and treatment choices.

### What's the difference between Palliative Care and Hospice Care?

Palliative Care is for individuals at any age or phase of health living with a serious illness. Hospice Care is a benefit you receive from Medicare when your doctor determines your life expectancy is 6 months or less. Often people receiving hospice care receive palliative care to relieve symptoms, pain and stress, and to offer emotional and spiritual support. Having palliative care at this phase of health can improve the quality of everyday life, and for some, increase life expectancy.