

## Who is palliative care for?

Palliative care is for people of any age who have been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness. This includes children and young people, adults and the elderly. Palliative care assists people with illnesses such as cancer, motor neurone disease, dementia and end-stage kidney or lung disease to manage symptoms and improve quality of life.

For some people, palliative care may be beneficial from the time of diagnosis with a serious life-limiting illness. Palliative care can be given alongside treatments given by other doctors.

Palliative care extends to providing support and advice for family and carers.

## What is End-of-life Care?

End-of-life care is the last few weeks of life in which a patient with a life-limiting illness is rapidly approaching death. The needs of patients and their carers are higher at this time. This phase of palliative care is recognised as one in which increased services and support are essential to ensure quality, coordinated care from the health care team is being delivered. This takes into account the terminal phase, or when the patient is recognised as imminently dying, or close to death and extends to bereavement care.



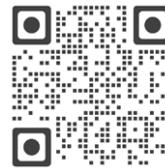
## How do I get palliative care or find more about it?

Speak to one of these people. They can talk to you and help you;

- Your Doctor
- A Nurse
- Allied Health Professional
- Aboriginal Health Worker
- Hospital Liaison Officer
- Social Worker
- Aged Care Service Coordinator or Care Worker

To find out more, visit the 'Palliative Care: It's more than you think' Australia website at [morethanyouthink.org.au](http://morethanyouthink.org.au)

Or contact the palliative care peak body in your state or territory. Find this at [palliativecare.org.au/members/](http://palliativecare.org.au/members/)



[morethanyouthink.org.au](http://morethanyouthink.org.au)



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Palliative Care Australia is funded by the Australian Government.



Palliative care is about maintaining quality of life. The aim of palliative care is to help you live as well as possible, for as long as possible.



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## What is palliative care?

Palliative care is high-quality health care and support for people living with a life-limiting illness and their families. Palliative care helps people live as well as they can by managing pain and symptoms to ensure their quality of life is maintained as the illness progresses.

Palliative care identifies and treats symptoms and issues associated with a life-limiting illness which may be physical, emotional, spiritual or social. Palliative care is a family-centred model of care, meaning that family and carers can also receive practical and emotional support.

Palliative care is about maintaining quality of life. The aim of palliative care is neither to hasten, nor postpone death. Rather, the focus is on living as well as possible, for as long as possible.

Palliative care may include:

- Relief of pain and other symptoms, e.g. vomiting, shortness of breath
- Medication management
- Food and nutrition advice and support
- Care and education to support better mobility and sleeping
- Planning for future medical treatment decisions and goals of care
- Resources such as equipment needed to aid care at home
- Assistance for families to come together to talk about sensitive issues
- Links to other services such as home help and financial support
- Support for people to meet cultural obligations
- Support for emotional, social and spiritual concerns
- Counselling and grief support for the person with the illness and their family and carers
- Referrals to respite care services
- Bereavement care to the family and carers once the person has died.



## Who is in the palliative care team?

Palliative care can be provided by a range of health professionals and other support services. Depending on a person's situation, palliative care is often provided by GPs and other treating doctors. Aged care services provide palliative care support in both residential aged care facilities and in homes. When symptoms become complex or distressing (particularly pain or problems such as vomiting and breathlessness), referral to a specialist palliative care service is advisable. A specialist palliative care service may offer both inpatient and outpatient support, delivered by a palliative care physician or a palliative care nurse practitioner, supported by a palliative care team.

Palliative care teams may include people from a range of health and social support professions and backgrounds, including:

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Allied health professionals
- Social workers
- Pharmacists
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational and speech therapists
- Psychologists
- Dietitians
- Spiritual/pastoral practitioners
- Palliative care trained volunteers.

## Where is palliative care provided?

Palliative care is provided where the person and their family prefer, when possible.

This may include:

- Within a general practice or primary health care clinic
- In a person's home
- A palliative care outpatients facility
- In hospital
- In a hospice (a dedicated health facility caring for people approaching the end of their life)
- In a residential aged care facility.

Many people indicate a preference to die at home, and making this possible often depends on several factors, including:

- The nature of the illness and the amount of care the person needs
- How much support is available from the person's family and community
- Whether the person has someone at home who can provide physical care and support for them.

