



CANCERcare®

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fact sheet

PALLIATIVE CARE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Palliative care (pronounced pal-lee-uh-tiv) is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses. It focuses on providing relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness, including cancer. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and their loved ones.

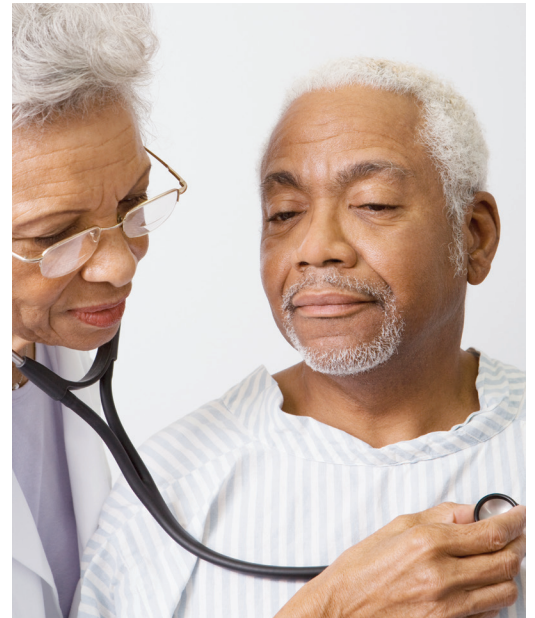
PALLIATIVE CARE AND HOSPICE CARE: THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

Palliative care improves the quality of life throughout the treatment of a serious illness by providing practical, emotional and spiritual support. Hospice care is form of palliative care that focuses on relieving symptoms when someone living with a serious illness approaches the end of life.

TALKING TO YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT PALLIATIVE CARE

Your doctor can guide you in making a decision about whether palliative care is right for you. Here are a few things you should discuss with your doctor:

- How do I know if I need palliative care?
- What palliative services are in my area?
- Where would I receive my care (in a hospital, home, nursing home or hospice)?
- How can palliative care benefit me?
- What does quality of life mean to me? This can include spending time with loved ones, making your own decisions on treatment options or whether you want to be treated at a home or hospital.
- Does palliative care align with my values? Let your doctor know of any personal, religious or cultural beliefs, values or practices that are important to you.



HOW PALLIATIVE CARE CAN HELP YOU

The palliative care team spends as much time as necessary with you and your loved ones and provides practical, emotional and spiritual support. They help you and your family every step of the way, not only by controlling your symptoms, but also by helping you to understand your treatment options and goals.

Palliative care is provided by a team of doctors, nurses, social workers and other specialists (e.g., massage therapists, pharmacists, nutritionists, chaplains) who work together with your primary doctor to provide an extra layer of support.

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Pain and symptom control. Palliative care helps control symptoms such as pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, constipation, nausea, loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping and depression. It also helps you gain the strength to carry on with daily life.

Communication and coordination. It is important that you have control over your care. Palliative care can help you better understand your treatment options.

Emotional support. It's natural to feel scared, sad, or anxious when coping with a cancer diagnosis. Reducing any stress you may experience during treatment can improve your quality of life. Palliative care can address the emotional needs for you and your loved ones.

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.

CancerCare® Can Help

Founded in 1944, CancerCare is the leading national organization providing free support services and information to help people manage the emotional, practical and financial challenges of cancer. Our comprehensive services include resource navigation, counseling and support groups over the phone, online and in-person, educational workshops, publications and financial and co-payment assistance. All CancerCare services are provided by master's-prepared oncology social workers and world-leading cancer experts.

To learn more, visit www.cancercares.org or call **800-813-HOPE (4673)**.

Facebook: [facebook.com/CancerCare](https://www.facebook.com/CancerCare) | **Instagram:** @CancerCareUS | **Twitter:** @CancerCare

PALLIATIVE CARE RESOURCES

American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine

www.palliativedoctors.org

Center to Advance Palliative Care

www.getpalliativecare.org

Compassion & Choices

www.compassionandchoices.org

The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization

www.nhpco.org

This fact sheet is supported by Takeda Oncology



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