

## **What is Palliative Care?**

Palliative care (pronounced pal-lee-uh-tiv) is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses. It is focused on providing patients with relief from the symptoms, pain, 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 specialized 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 can be provided along with curative treatment.

## **Who requires Palliative Care?**

Palliative care is appropriate for anyone suffering a serious, chronic or life-threatening illness (e.g., cancer, cardiac disease, respiratory disease, kidney failure, Alzheimer's, AIDS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and more). You can receive palliative care at any age at any stage of an illness.

## **Can I have curative treatment together with palliative care?**

Yes, absolutely. Your treatment choices are up to you. You can have palliative care at the same time as treatment meant to cure you.

## **Where do I get palliative care?**

Palliative care is available in a number of places. More and more, palliative care is available outside of the hospital in the places where you live.

You, your doctor and the palliative care team can discuss outpatient palliative care or palliative care at home. Some hospitals also offer outpatient palliative care even if you have not been in the hospital. Check with your doctor. These include hospitals, outpatient clinics and at home.

## **How does palliative care help me choose the best treatment option?**

The palliative care team will also spend time talking and listening to you and your family. They will make sure you completely understand all of your treatment options and choices. By deeply exploring your personal goals, the palliative care team will help you match those goals to the options. They will also make sure that all of your doctors are coordinated and know and understand what you want. This gives you more control over your care.

### **When should I ask for palliative care?**

You can have it at any age and any stage of an illness, but early in your illness is recommended.

Recent cancer **guidelines** say that cancer patients should receive palliative care early and together with their other treatments. People who are newly diagnosed with advanced cancer should receive a palliative care consult within 8 weeks of their diagnosis.

### **What is the difference between Palliative Care & Hospice?**

The goal of Palliative Care is to improve quality of life for patients and their families who have chronic or life-limiting illnesses.

- Pain/symptom management
- Improve/maintain quality of life
- Determining goals of care
- Discuss realistic expectations
- Clarification of code status
- Family/staff support during withdrawal of life support
- Psychosocial/spiritual support
- Coordination of care across settings

Palliative Care	Hospice
Life-prolonging/disease-modifying treatments OK	Generally foregoes life-prolonging

	treatment
Terminal, chronic, or acute illness	Terminal illness
No time restrictions	
Not covered by all insurance plans	Insurance, Medicare usually covers

### **Is Palliative Care right for me?**

If you: (from [sebastianhospicecare.com](http://sebastianhospicecare.com))

- Have a disease or injury that cannot be cured
- Have made multiple trips to the emergency room in the past 6 months
- Have pain or other symptoms that interfere with your daily activities
- Need assistance with setting your goals of care and treatment preferences

### **When is the best time to request a palliative care consultation?**

Consultations in palliative care are provided at any stage of a serious illness or diagnosis, but earlier interventions can help patients experience the benefits more quickly. Palliative care is appropriate from the time of receiving a diagnosis and ideally spans a period of months to years. Palliative care is delivered alongside treatments that are meant to cure your disease or help you recover. Supporting you and your family—regardless of the stage of the illness or treatment—can more effectively allow you to live well, regardless of the diagnosis.