



Palliative Care

Helping people with life-limiting illness live well

What is palliative care?

Palliative care helps people with a life-limiting illness to have the best possible quality of life. It is available for everyone – of any age, race, culture, background or religion, and most services are free.

Depending on your needs, palliative care may include:

- Medicine and other therapies to relieve your pain and manage symptoms
- Support for your family members
- Help and equipment to live comfortably at home where possible
- Help to meet your spiritual, religious or cultural needs
- Regular visits from health workers and other care providers

If you choose to have palliative care, you can talk about your individual needs, ask any questions and make requests so you have the best care possible.

When using palliative care, the person with the illness and their family are always in control of decisions about their health, medical treatment and wellbeing.

Palliative care does not mean the end

Palliative care can be used at any time in your illness, not just for people who are near the end of life. Using palliative care does not mean there is no hope, you have 'given up' or your families don't care. You can continue treatment at the same time as receiving palliative care.

You may be able to use complementary therapies or traditional medicine.

Who provides palliative care?

Palliative care can be provided by your own doctor, specialist doctors and nurses, physiotherapists, religious or spiritual advisors and others.

Where can I receive care?

Depending on your needs and other factors, you may receive care at home, a hospital or hospice, or other care facility. Care in a hospital or a hospice is usually for a short time to treat your symptoms and pain so that you can return home if possible.

Will I have to pay?

Most services are free but there may be some costs for equipment or medicines. Ask your local service to make sure you know if there are costs.

What if I need to speak another language?

If you feel better speaking in your own language, let your palliative care service know. Most of them can organise an interpreter for free.

What about my family?

Palliative care also helps your family as they care for you. This may include:

- Help with doctors and other appointments
- Help to make sure you have the right medicine and care
- Support to meet their needs
- A break from care
- Help to organise financial and legal support
- Support and advice after business hours

Where can I get more information?

For more information, you can talk to:

- Your doctor
- Your local palliative care service

You can also call Palliative Care Victoria to find out more information or help you find your local service.

Freecall

1800 660 055 or

03 9962 9664

(9am - 5pm Monday to Friday)

A telephone interpreter can be arranged – please tell us what language you need.



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This handout was produced by Palliative Care Victoria in partnership with the Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria and the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health.

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