

# Palliative Care

## What is it?

Palliative care is a specific type of care for people who have a life-limiting illness. Palliative care helps you, or your loved one, to live as comfortably as possible and achieve the best possible quality of life.

Your GP can arrange your care and it may involve a team of doctors and counsellors. The team will help you manage any painful or challenging symptoms. They will also give you support for your emotional, social and spiritual concerns.

## What will my GP do now?

Your GP will help you understand more about the palliative care process.

Together, you and your GP will:

- Talk about your awareness of your health and wishes for your future care
- Identify support people who can legally make decisions on your behalf if it becomes necessary
- Discuss support services to help with day-to-day activities if necessary
- Consider any medicine you may need to take
- Develop strategies to help manage any physical symptoms
- Talk about how you can stay at home for longer
- Discuss any financial or legal considerations

Your GP will discuss whether you want to stay in the comfort of your own home if you are nearing the end of your life. Your GP may also work with you to complete an advance care plan.

## What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP will continue to check your symptoms, health needs, medication, home support, and specialist care. Together, you will talk about your end-of-life care wishes and whether you want to die at home or in hospital.

Your GP will also work with you to develop a palliative care plan in case an ambulance needs to be called.

## What can I do?

There is no 'right' way to be or feel when discussing and planning for care. It's common to feel a range of emotions and question the beliefs you once held.

Continue to talk about your feelings and needs with your GP, close friends or family members, so they can support you. Consider asking your GP about a referral to a counsellor who can help you work through the emotional and spiritual aspects.

Think about what gives your life meaning, and how you can find strength in challenging times. You can also talk to your GP about a referral for community care services. There are specialist services that can help if you have complex care needs.

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## What supports are available?

South western Sydney has a range of palliative care services available to support you.

The **Primary and Community Health Nursing** team provides palliative care services across south western Sydney. They also offer the PEACH Program (Palliative Care Home Support Packages) which provide care packages for people in the last days of life. You can access these services by calling intake on 1800 455 511 or visit [swslhd.nsw.gov.au](http://swslhd.nsw.gov.au).

The **South Western Sydney Palliative Care Service** offers specialist support for palliative care patients. This includes inpatient units and hospital clinics. Home visits may also be arranged in some situations. The palliative care clinics are based at:

- **Bankstown Hospital:** Phone 9722 8683
- **Braeside Hospital:** Phone: 9756 8849
- **Liverpool Hospital:** Phone: 8738 9803
- **Campbelltown Hospital:** Phone: 4634 4356

## What questions could I ask my doctor?

- What do I need to do now?*
- How can I stay at home for longer?*
- Who can help me with financial concerns?*
- What do I tell my family and friends?*
- What support do I need?*
- What medicine do I need to take?*
- How can you help me live as comfortably as possible?*



## Where can I learn more?

For general information about palliative care:

- **Australian Department of Health & Ageing** - Palliative Care Publication: [health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au)
- **Cancer Council NSW** - Understanding Palliative Care: [cancercouncil.com.au](http://cancercouncil.com.au)
- **CarersNSW:** [carersnsw.org.au](http://carersnsw.org.au)
- **Caresearch Palliative Care Knowledge Network:** [caresearch.com.au](http://caresearch.com.au)

For palliative care support in multiple languages:

- **Multicultural Health Communication:** [mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au](http://mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au)

For resources about emotions and spirituality:

- **Emotions and Spirituality** - How to let go of anxiety about death and the meaning of life: [virtualhospice.ca](http://virtualhospice.ca)

For financial counselling and advice about income support:

- **Centrelink:** [humanservices.gov.au](http://humanservices.gov.au)
- **Cancer Council NSW:** Phone 13 11 20 or visit [cancercouncil.com.au](http://cancercouncil.com.au)
- **Lifeline:** Phone (02) 4940 2000
- **Samaritans:** Phone (02) 4922 1509
- **Salvation Army Money Care:** Phone (02) 4013 2901

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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