

What to Know About Hospice Care

Everyone wants a peaceful End-of-Life experience. Hospice is a care option devoted to this goal: improving the quality of a person's End-of-Life.

Hospice provides medical services, pain management, emotional support and spiritual resources for people nearing End-of-Life. Hospice also helps family members manage the practical details and emotional challenges of caring for a loved one at End-of-Life, and offers bereavement services.

Hospice honors each patient's unique needs and wishes. It focuses on *caring* rather than *curing*.

Who Needs Hospice Care?

Today, hospice provides medical and non-medical comfort and support to enable a peaceful End-of-Life journey. A person qualifies for hospice when he or she has a life-threatening condition that cannot benefit from curative treatment. Most often, a physician has determined a prognosis of six months or less. Hospice is available to patients of any age, religion or race, and their families.

Where is Hospice Care Provided?

Hospice care is often provided in the patient's home, yet may also be offered in hospice centers, hospitals, nursing homes and other long-term care facilities.

Who Provides Hospice Care?

Hospice offers a team approach to End-of-Life care. The hospice team develops a care plan to meet a patient's needs for pain management and symptom control. The hospice team may include:

- Patient or person receiving care
- Patient's family members, loved ones or caregivers
- Patient's personal physician

- Hospice physician or medical director
- Nurses
- Home health aides
- Social workers
- Clergy, counselors or other spiritual advisors
- Trained volunteers
- Speech, physical and occupational therapists

How Long can Hospice Care Last?

Hospice patients are evaluated every 60-90 days to determine if hospice care is still appropriate. Although typically intended for a six-month period, hospice may last longer because many people live longer than the original six-month prognosis. A patient may be released from hospice care if their condition stabilizes, improves or if their needs no longer require it. A hospice patient may choose to end hospice care at any time.

How Does Hospice Care Differ from Palliative Care?

Hospice and palliative care both focus on relieving suffering and improving quality of life by providing physical, emotional and spiritual support tailored to the unique needs of each patient.

Hospice care treats the person, rather than the illness or condition and focuses on the quality of remaining life. Palliative care is specialized medical care that provides patients with relief from the symptoms, pain and stress of any illness. Visit: <http://getpalliativecare.org/whatis/> for more information.

Hospice helps ensure a graceful passage at End-of-Life by providing comfort, compassion and dignity. Visit: www.passare.com for more information and expert resources on many End-of-Life topics.