

What happens when someone is dying?

A photo book with words that are easy to read



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Will the person be in pain or uncomfortable?

When someone is dying, they might feel:

- pain
- out of breath
- sick
- confused
- uncomfortable
- unsettled or fidgety.

These things are sometimes called **symptoms**.

Some people just have one or two symptoms.

And some people will not have any symptoms.



What can help with pain or discomfort?

A doctor or nurse can help if someone has these things when they are dying.

They might give them medicines, injections, or do other things that can help. For example, they might open the window if the person feels out of breath.

This can make the person feel more comfortable.



What might happen in the last weeks before someone dies?

In the last weeks, the person might:

- feel more tired
- look thinner
- eat and drink less
- talk less.

These things are normal when someone is dying.

Some people will have these changes but other people will not.



Can they do what they normally do in their last weeks?

They might not be able to do things they normally do.

Like eating, walking, or getting dressed by themselves.

They may need help with these things.



What might happen in the last days or hours before they die?

In the last days and hours, the person might:

- stop eating and drinking
- sleep more
- sound noisy when they breathe
- breathe slowly
- have gaps between taking breaths
- feel cold when you touch them, especially on their hands or feet
- have changes to their skin colour.

These things are normal when someone is dying.

Some people will have these changes but other people will not.

Or they might have one or two changes.



Can they do what they normally do in their last days?

The person might not be able to do things they normally do.

Like talking, sitting up, or opening their eyes.



Does everyone who has these symptoms die?

No, not everyone who has the things we talk about in this book will die.

For example, someone who is not dying might have a headache or feel sick, and then they will get better.

If you do not know if someone is dying, you can speak to their doctor or nurse.



Why is the person dying?

People die for different reasons.

Some people have an illness that they will die from.

They cannot get better.

This is sometimes called a **terminal illness**.



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Curie



Where will the person die?

The person might stay at home, where they normally live.

But they may need to move to a different place if they need more care or treatment.

They might move to a care home, hospital or hospice. You should still be able to visit them.

You can ask their doctor or nurse for more information.



family

How can I help the person who is dying?

There are a lot of ways you can help.

You can spend time together.

You could listen to music, read to them or talk about memories.

If you cannot see them, you could call them or send them a card or picture.



What else can I do to help?

You could hold or stroke their hand.

Or help them with things like drinking or brushing
their hair.



When will they die?

You can ask the doctor or nurse when they think the person might die.

But, they might not know. It can be very hard to know when someone will die.



What will happen when they die?

When the person dies, their body stops working.

They stop breathing and their heart stops beating.

They cannot wake up or come back to life.

They will not feel any pain after they die.

Read more in our booklet, **What is death?**

You can get the booklet from this web page:

www.mariecurie.org.uk/easy-reads

or by calling our free Support Line on **0800 090 2309**.



Who can I talk to?

Reading about what happens when someone is dying can be upsetting.

If you have questions or need support, you could talk to a doctor, nurse, family member, friend, or support worker.

Or you can call Marie Curie's free Support Line on **0800 090 2309** or email **support@mariecurie.org.uk**

You can also watch our video, **What happens when someone is dying?** at www.mariecurie.org.uk/learning-disability



Supporting someone to read this book

This book can help people prepare for when someone they know is dying.

There is no right or wrong way to read this book. The person might want to look at one or two pages, or they may want to look at everything.

They might read the words, or you could read to them. Or, you might just look at the pictures and talk about them.

Here are some questions you could think about:

- What is happening in the picture?
- How are the people feeling?
- Do you know anyone this has happened to?
- Do you know anyone this might happen to?
- How do you feel?
- Do you have any questions?



About this information

We hope you find this information helpful. But it should not be used instead of speaking to professionals.

You should still get information from a doctor or nurse.

You can tell us if you like the booklet or if you do not like the booklet.

You can email us at **review@mariecurie.org.uk** or you can call our free Support Line on **0800 090 2309**.

Your call may be recorded to help us make our service better. And to make sure you are safe.

Marie Curie - why we're here



We're here for people living with a terminal illness, which is an illness people will die from. We also support people's families and friends.

We give people care, information, and support. If you have any questions or need support, call our free Support Line on **0800 090 2309**.

You can find more Easy Read booklets and videos at
www.mariecurie.org.uk/learning-disability