

Palliative and end of life care

Who is it for?

Palliative care is for people living with a terminal illness where a cure is no longer possible. It's also for people who have a complex illness and need their symptoms controlled. Although these people usually have an advanced, progressive condition, this isn't always the case.

What is it?

Palliative care aims to treat or manage pain and other physical symptoms. It will also help with any psychological, social or spiritual needs. Palliative care includes caring for people who are near the end of life.

The goal of palliative care is to help the patient and everyone affected by their illness to achieve the best quality of life. People can receive palliative care alongside other treatments, such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

Palliative care:

- improves quality of life
- provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms
- supports life and regards dying as a normal process
- doesn't quicken or postpone death
- combines psychological and spiritual aspects of care
- offers support to help people live as actively as possible until death
- helps families cope during a person's illness and after they have died
- uses a team approach to address the needs of the person who is ill and their families
- also applies to the earlier stages of an illness

End of life care

End of life care is an important part of palliative care for people who are nearing the end of life. It's for people who are considered to be in the last year of life, but this timeframe can be difficult to predict.

It aims to help people live as well as possible and to die with dignity. It also refers to care during this time and can include additional support, such as help with legal matters. End of life care continues for as long as someone needs it.

Who provides palliative care?

The professionals who provide palliative care fall into two main groups – general care and specialist care. A patient and their family are likely to need both as their needs change. Palliative care can be provided in different places including in the home, in hospital, at a care home or a hospice.

General care

This is given by the health professionals who provide day-to-day care to people with advanced illness and their family and friends. This includes GPs, community nurses and Marie Curie Nurses. These professionals should be able to assess a patient's care needs, meet those needs where possible and know when to seek specialist advice.

Specialist care

This is provided by experts in palliative care, such as consultants in palliative medicine or clinical nurse specialists. Specialist palliative care services manage more complex care problems that cannot be dealt with by generalist services. These may be provided by the NHS (local health and social care trust in Northern Ireland), local councils and voluntary organisations. They can include in-patient and outpatient facilities and bereavement support.



Care and support
through terminal illness

Help for people living with a terminal illness

Marie Curie Support Line **0800 090 2309***

For confidential support and practical information on all aspects of terminal illness. Open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. (Calls may be recorded for training and monitoring purposes.)

Marie Curie Community **community.mariecurie.org.uk**

For anyone affected by terminal illness to share experiences and support each other. Available 24 hours a day.

More information and further support

We also have an extensive range of information materials available to view online or order as printed copies. Visit mariecurie.org.uk/help where you can also find film guides, information about our services and links to further support.

*Calls from landlines are free, but there may be a charge if you're calling from a mobile. Check with your mobile provider for details. Calls from any type of phone will be free from 1 July 2015.

People living with a terminal illness and their families, friends and carers can struggle to find the information they need. They want a range of practical information and emotional support that's reliable, easy to access and available at the time they need it.

That's why Marie Curie has introduced its new Information and Support services. We can meet these needs and help people get the most from the time they have left.

We have information on everything from symptom management and day-to-day care, through to financial information and legal issues, and much more. And we're also there for emotional support when people just need someone to talk to. People with any terminal illness and their families can contact Marie Curie for practical information and emotional support they can trust. They can call our Support Line, join our online community or see our information materials online.



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Marie Curie is here for people living with any terminal illness, and their families. We offer expert care, guidance and support to help them get the most from the time they have left.

mariecurie.org.uk