



PALLIATIVE CARE

PALLIATIVE CARE IS FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES WITH A LIFE-LIMITING CONDITION.

Palliative care is an added layer of support to help you and your loved ones live with a life-limiting illness.

WITH PALLIATIVE CARE, YOU CAN GET PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SPIRITUAL SUPPORT

You can get help to relieve pain, fatigue, anxiety, shortness of breath, nausea, and depression. This helps you learn what to expect from your illness and decide on a treatment plan. Palliative care also supports your family/whānau. Sometimes your doctor can provide palliative support. Other times a trained palliative care team works with you and your doctor to provide specialist care and the services you need.

PALLIATIVE CARE CAN HELP YOU AT ANY STAGE OF A LIFE-LIMITING ILLNESS

Examples include congestive heart failure, kidney disease, multiple sclerosis, and cancer. Doctors often wait too long or they simply don't refer patients for added palliative care supports. Many patients who are seriously ill miss out on the benefits of palliative care.

PALLIATIVE CARE IMPROVES YOUR QUALITY OF LIFE AND MAY HELP YOU LIVE LONGER

In a study of people with advanced cancer, those who got palliative care early reported better control of pain and other symptoms. People who got palliative care had a better quality of life and less depression. They also lived longer and spent less time in the hospital than those receiving only standard treatments.

Studies suggest that there are similar benefits for people with other life-limiting illnesses.

PALLIATIVE CARE IS NOT ONLY “END-OF-LIFE” CARE OR HOSPICE

Palliative care can be useful no matter how long you are expected to live. You don't have to give up other treatments for your illness.

START PALLIATIVE CARE EARLY FOR BEST RESULTS

Palliative care is most helpful if you start it early during a life-limiting illness. You should request it, no need to wait for your doctor to bring it up. It will affect your quality of care and treatment decisions.

PLAN AHEAD! DON'T WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE SICK TO START ADVANCE CARE PLANNING CONVERSATIONS

Advance care planning helps you think about, talk about and document wishes for health care in the event that you become incapable of consenting to or refusing medical treatments or other care.

Choose a loved one, family/whānau member or friend to communicate your wishes for you, should you become too unwell to make decisions for yourself. Talking to that person as well as your doctor and the rest of your family/whānau will help ensure your wishes are known and will help your loved ones make treatment decisions on your behalf.

Put your plans in writing.



Some people and their doctors put off talking about their wishes and values for health care. This puts you at risk of being too ill to guide your doctors and may increase the uncertainty and burden that your loved ones feel.

For more information: www.advancecareplanning.org.nz/

It's OK to ask questions

If you have questions about your symptoms or the medicines managing your symptoms, speak with your health professional.

WHY WAS THIS RESOURCE DEVELOPED?

Choosing Wisely is a campaign to help health professionals and patients engage in conversations about unnecessary tests and treatments and make smart and effective choices to ensure high quality care. For more information on Choosing Wisely or to see other patient materials, visit www.ChoosingWisely.org.nz

Developed by Choosing Wisely New Zealand, 2018. Adapted from Choosing Wisely Canada (2014) "Palliative care" and the New Zealand Ministry of Health (2014) "About palliative care"¹. Reasonable care is taken to provide accurate information at the time of creation. This information is not intended as a substitute for medical advice and should not be exclusively relied on to manage or diagnose a medical condition. Choosing Wisely does not assume any responsibility or liability arising from any error or omission or from the use of any information in these resources.

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¹ www.health.govt.nz/our-work/life-stages/palliative-care/about-palliative-care