



Montrose Access
Inspiring Quality Lives

WHAT IS PALLIATIVE CARE?

A Guide for Parents & Caregivers



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Palliative care is a special type of integrated care that aims to support people to live well while they manage a life-limiting health condition. The aim of palliative care is to achieve the best possible quality of life for the individual, their family and/or carers.

Palliative care practice is based on the following principles:

- Affirms life and treats dying as a normal process
- Neither hastens nor postpones death
- Provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms
- Integrates the physical, psychological, social, emotional and spiritual aspects of care, with coordinated assessment and management of each person's needs
- Offers a support system to help people live as actively as possible until death and
- Offers a support system to help the family cope during the person's illness and in their own bereavement.

Palliative care puts the person at the centre of care planning and management of their condition. Families and carers also have an important role in this. When families and the person living with a life-limiting condition are well informed and communicate openly with each other, their doctors and health professionals, this helps to make the care provided as effective as possible. This in turn can help reduce anxiety and may help the person to maximise their sense of control. The person can continue to have treatment from their existing healthcare team while receiving palliative care.

WHO RECEIVES PALLIATIVE CARE?

The provision of palliative care does not depend on any specific medical diagnosis but on the person's unique needs. A doctor can be requested to refer the person to palliative care services for advice on symptom management and supportive care for the person and their family or carers. Many aspects of palliative care support can be accessed early in the course of the condition not only in the later stages.

Families and carers also receive support from palliative care services. Families provide much of the care for people with life-limiting conditions and practical and emotional support for them in this role is critical.

Palliative Care Australia advises that individuals and their families should plan ahead about the type of care the person would like to receive and to consider making an Advanced Care Directive to ensure their wishes are clarified.

WHERE ARE PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES PROVIDED?

Palliative care services can be provided in the home, in community-based settings or in hospitals. People who have a life-limiting condition need to be able to move freely between these places in response to their medical care and support needs.

The pattern of care will be different for every individual and may depend on factors such as geography, services in an area, and the needs and desires of the person, family members and

friends. People living in rural or remote areas may not have as much access to specialist palliative care as others.

WHO PROVIDES PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES?

Palliative care professionals provide information and support to help make decisions about medical treatment and about being cared for in the place of their choice. Palliative care involves coordination of the skills and disciplines of many service providers. Those involved in palliative care may include:

- **Specialist providers:** medical, nursing and allied health staff who have undertaken further study in palliative care or have significant experience in the area;
- **Generalist providers:** those clinicians (medical, nursing and allied health) working in other areas of the health system who have a professional involvement with people requiring palliative care; and
- **Support services:** including those who assist with the practical processes of daily living, enhancing quality of life, and/or providing emotional and spiritual support.

For further information about palliative care and local services contact Palliative Care Australia or Palliative Care Queensland. You may also speak with your MontroseAccess Social Worker or other team members.

Palliative Care Queensland

Freecall 1800 660 055 or (07) 3256 2486 or 0408 924 767

www.palliativecareqld.org.au

Palliative Care Australia

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