

End of Life Care

Your guide to who,
what and where



The
Departure
Lounge

When there is no cure for an illness, palliative and end of life care aim to make the end of your life as comfortable as possible.

What is end of life care?

Support for people who are in the last months or years of their life. End of life care should help you to live as well as possible until you die, and to die with dignity. People who are approaching the end of life are entitled to high-quality care, wherever they're being cared for.

When does end of life care begin?

Care should begin when you need it and may last a few days, or for months or years. People are considered to be approaching the end of life when they are likely to die within the next 12 months, although this isn't always possible to predict.

Who provides end of life care?

Different health and social care professionals may be involved in your end of life care, depending on your needs. For example, hospital doctors and nurses, your GP, community nurses, hospice staff and counsellors may all be involved, as well as social care staff, physiotherapists, occupational therapists or complementary therapists. If you are being cared for at home or in a care home, your GP has overall responsibility for your care. Community nurses usually visit you at home, and family and friends may be closely involved in caring for you too.

What is palliative care?

End of life care includes palliative care. If you have an illness that can't be cured, palliative care makes you as comfortable as possible, by managing your pain and other distressing symptoms. It also involves psychological, social and spiritual support for you and your family or carers.

Who provides palliative care?

Many healthcare professionals provide palliative care as part of their jobs. An example is the care you get from your GP or community nurses. Some people need additional specialist palliative care. This may be provided by consultants trained

in palliative medicine, specialist palliative care nurses, or specialist occupational therapists or physiotherapists.

Care at home

You may not need to move away from home to receive care. Your GP can arrange for community nurses to come to your home and provide nursing care for you there. You may also need specialist care from community palliative care nurses who visit you at home to:

- › provide or arrange hands-on nursing or personal care, if you need it
- › advise on pain and symptom control
- › provide practical and emotional support for you and your carers at home

Care in a care home

You can receive end of life care in a care home, if you wish. Here, trained staff are available to look after you day and night. They can provide the same type of care that family members can provide at home, such as help with washing, dressing and providing meals.

Hospice care

The aim of hospice care is to improve the lives of people who have an incurable illness. It aims to look after all their medical, emotional, social, practical, psychological, and spiritual needs, and the needs of the person's family and carers. Looking after all these aspects is often referred to as "holistic care".

- › Your local hospice is St Christopher's
www.stchristophers.org.uk

Being cared for in hospital

In hospital, you will be cared for by the doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals who work on the ward where you are staying. Many hospitals have specialist palliative care teams, who work alongside and help hospital staff to care for people nearing the end of their life.

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