



A Guide to Palliative Care

Palliative care is a team of providers for patients who have serious illnesses. It can be for any patient, whether or not a cure is possible.



Palliative care is focused on improving symptoms and stress. The goal is to improve the quality of life.



The palliative care team includes doctors, nurses, social workers, and therapists.



They will help explain your choices and make sure that your spiritual, physical and emotional needs are met.

Palliative care is not the same as hospice. Hospice provides support for people who have less than six months to live. Palliative care can be used by any patient.

What Palliative Care Can Do For You

The palliative care team tries to help improve your symptoms.



For example, if your doctors want advice to improve your pain they may call for help from the palliative care team.



The palliative care team also can help your other doctors understand your goals and wishes for your medical care.

Palliative care may be right for you. It can help at any stage of serious illness. Please understand that you can get palliative care while also getting medical care that is aimed to cure you.

If you feel that your needs are already being met, or if you feel uncomfortable with palliative care being added to your care, then please talk with your doctors about this.



Some additional resources to explore Palliative Care:

- Center to Advance Palliative Care (www.GetPalliativeCare.org)
- National Cancer Institute (<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/advanced-cancer/care-choices/palliative-care-fact-sheet>)
- WebMD (<https://www.webmd.com/palliative-care/what-is-palliative-care#1>)

Information About This Decision Aid

This Palliative Care guide was developed by Angelo Volandes MD, MPH, a physician and researcher at Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Volandes is a recognized expert on educating patients about their medical choices about Palliative Care. Dr. Volandes was not paid by any outside groups to develop this fact sheet which was last updated in 2017. Subsequent iterations have been funded by the Stupski Foundation, ACP Decisions, and the Melik-Baschkopf Foundation. Dr. Volandes and these non-profit organizations do not make money from medical choices people make about Palliative Care.