

## Where can I find more information?

Every person is different and has different needs. It is important to know what care and support is available and how to receive it.

[www.pallcare.org.au](http://www.pallcare.org.au) – this is the website for Palliative Care Australia where you can find more information about palliative care and the following resources.

*Standards for Providing Quality Palliative Care For All Australians* – this brochure articulates the level of care palliative patients should receive.

*Patient Rights and Responsibilities* – patients receiving palliative care have a number of rights and responsibilities which are set out in this brochure.

*A Journey Lived* – This is a collection of short stories on personal experiences with dying and death and on the assistance that can be provided by palliative care.

*Asking Questions Can Help* – This is a booklet with a list of questions you may wish to ask when you are seeing a member of the palliative care team. This question list helps you get the information you want about palliative care and your illness.

*Facts about morphine and other opioid medicines* – The brochure contains information on the facts and myths about morphine and other opioid medicines.

[www.livingcaringworking.com](http://www.livingcaringworking.com) – this is a website for people in the workplace either living with, caring for or working with someone with a terminal illness. It contains information and resources on supporting someone with a terminal illness or their caregivers.



## PCA and PCA Member Organisations

National Palliative Care Information Line: 1800 660 055

Palliative Care Australia  
T (02) 6232 4433  
E [pcainc@pallcare.org.au](mailto:pcainc@pallcare.org.au)  
W [www.pallcare.org.au](http://www.pallcare.org.au)

Palliative Care Council of  
New South Wales  
T 0403 699 491  
E [info@palliativecare.nsw.org.au](mailto:info@palliativecare.nsw.org.au)  
W [www.palliativecare.nsw.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.nsw.org.au)

Palliative Care Queensland  
T (07) 3633 0096  
E [info@pallcareqld.com](mailto:info@pallcareqld.com)  
W [www.pallcareqld.com](http://www.pallcareqld.com)

Palliative Care Victoria  
T (03) 9662 9644  
E [info@pallcarevic.asn.au](mailto:info@pallcarevic.asn.au)  
W [www.pallcarevic.asn.au](http://www.pallcarevic.asn.au)

Palliative Care WA  
T (08) 9212 4330  
E [pcwainc@palliativecarewa.asn.au](mailto:pcwainc@palliativecarewa.asn.au)  
W [www.palliativecarewa.asn.au](http://www.palliativecarewa.asn.au)

Palliative Care Council of  
South Australia  
T (08) 8291 4137  
E [pallcare@pallcare.asn.au](mailto:pallcare@pallcare.asn.au)  
W [www.pallcare.asn.au](http://www.pallcare.asn.au)

Tasmanian Association for  
Hospice and Palliative Care  
T (03) 6234 7577  
E [tahpc@associationoffices.com.au](mailto:tahpc@associationoffices.com.au)

ACT Palliative Care Society  
T (02) 6273 9606  
E [acthpc@bigpond.com](mailto:acthpc@bigpond.com)

Palliative Care NT  
T (08) 8922 8824  
E [moq13026@hcinternet.com.au](mailto:moq13026@hcinternet.com.au)

## National Community Education Initiative



# What is Palliative Care?

The PCA National Community Education Initiative is supported by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing

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Palliative  
Care  
Australia

## What is palliative care?

Palliative care is specialised care and support provided for someone living with a terminal illness. Importantly, palliative care also involves care and support for family and caregivers.

The goal of palliative care is to improve quality of life for patients, their families and caregivers by providing care that addresses the many needs patients, families and caregivers have: physical (including treatment of pain and other symptoms), emotional, social, cultural and spiritual.

Palliative care aims to help the patient live as well as possible. Palliative care offers support to help family and caregivers manage during the patient's illness and in bereavement.

As a person receiving palliative care, the patient is an important partner in planning their care and managing their illness. When people are well informed, participate in treatment decisions and communicate openly with their doctors and other health professionals, they help make their care as effective as possible.

Care planning is an important process in ensuring the patient's wishes, in relation to their care, are met. Patients should speak to their doctor about advance care planning and advance care directives.

## Can I have active treatment for my illness as well as palliative care?

Yes – people can continue treatment aimed at curing illness. The focus of palliative care is maintaining quality of life and meeting the needs of the patient, their family and caregivers.

*My first reaction was "but we don't need palliative care". I feared what this meant. I felt more comfortable when I realised that palliative care was much more than just nursing a dying person – it was about holistic support and understanding, ensuing that my husband could still "live" as best he could in the time he had left. I know my family would not have coped nearly as well physically and emotionally without it.*

*I cannot imagine how difficult it would have been without the wonderful support from a grief counsellor, my general practitioner, advice from my specialist palliative care service and a bereavement group.*

## Who provides palliative care?

Palliative care can be provided by a number of different health professionals depending on the illness and the needs and resources of the patient, their family and caregivers.

Together, professionals involved in delivering palliative care generally work in a multidisciplinary team and may include:

- specialist palliative care doctors and nurses
- general practitioners
- specialist doctors – oncologists, cardiologists, neurologists, respiratory physicians
- nurses
- allied health professionals – pharmacists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists
- social workers
- grief and bereavement counsellors
- pastoral care workers.

Patients and their families and caregivers should have access to the level of care and support they need provided by health professionals, trained volunteers and their own communities.

A small number of people experience severe or complex problems as their illness advances. These people may be referred to a specialist palliative care service where a team of specialist professionals will work to meet their needs.

Palliative care is delivered in accordance to the *Standards for Providing Quality Palliative Care for All Australians*. More information on the *Standards* can be found in the information section of this brochure along with information on *Patient Rights and Responsibilities* when receiving palliative care.

## Who should I talk to about palliative care?

You can talk to your doctor or care team about palliative care. You can also call the palliative care association in your state which can provide more information on palliative care in your area.

*I wish we had known about palliative care and the assistance we could receive earlier.*

## Where can I receive palliative care?

Palliative care can be provided:

- in the home
- in a hospital
- in an aged care home
- in a hospice.

Most people prefer to receive palliative care in the home, but this will depend on many factors including:

- the nature of the illness
- how much support is available from the patient's family and community
- whether the patient has someone who can care for them.

## If I am in pain, how will it be eased?

Not everyone with a terminal illness will experience pain. If patients do experience pain, in almost all cases it can be relieved. There are many pain management medicines that can be given in many different ways – tablets, liquids, injections, patches. There is also a wide range of medicines that can be combined to improve pain relief.

Some complementary therapies, such as massage, acupuncture or aromatherapy can also be helpful in relieving pain.