

Frequently Asked Questions about Palliative Care

What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care is specialized medical care that focuses on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of a serious illness. It is provided by a specially-trained team of doctors, nurses and other specialists who work together with your other doctors to provide an extra layer of support. The goal is to improve your quality of life.

To do this, the palliative care team will:

- Relieve your symptoms and distress
- Help you better understand your disease and diagnosis
- Help clarify your treatment goals and options
- Understand and support your ability to cope with your illness
- Assist you with making medical decisions
- Coordinate with your other doctors

Which illnesses need palliative care?

All serious conditions which can be life-limiting or life-threatening, will benefit from palliative care. This includes cancer, kidney failure, chronic lung disease, heart disease and liver failure. It also includes illnesses like stroke, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Palliative care teams also take care of bedridden patients. This list is not exclusive, however, and if you feel you have an illness that is affecting your physical and mental health adversely, please reach out to your healthcare providers. Alternatively, you can also contact a palliative care team close to you.

How Can Palliative Care help me or my loved one?

Palliative Care will help improve your quality of life. You will have substantial relief from symptoms such as pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, constipation, nausea, loss of appetite and difficulty sleeping. This symptom control will help you carry on with daily life. It can help you get more control over your illness, mainly through knowledge about your illness. It can help you match your goals to your treatment choices.

Can I continue my primary doctor's treatment along with Palliative Care?

Yes of course! In fact, recent cancer guidelines say that cancer patients should receive palliative care early, and together with other treatments. Apart from cancer, other serious illnesses also require integrated care, and palliative care plays a role along with the other physicians and medical professionals taking care of the patient.

What issues are addressed in Palliative Care?

The physical and emotional effects of an illness and its treatment may be very different from person to person. Palliative care can address a broad range of issues, integrating an individual's specific

needs into care. A palliative care specialist will take the following issues into account for each patient:

- **Physical-** Common physical symptoms include pain, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, constipation, shortness of breath, and insomnia.
- **Emotional and coping-** Palliative care specialists can provide resources to help patients and families deal with the emotions that come with diagnosis and treatment of a serious illness. Depression, anxiety, and fear are only a few of the concerns that can be addressed through palliative care. Denial, burden and fear (of unknown, pain or death) also gets addressed .
- **Spiritual-** With a diagnosis of serious illness, patients and families often look more deeply for meaning in their lives. Some find the disease brings them closer to their faith or spiritual beliefs, whereas others struggle to understand why this happened to them. An expert in palliative care can help people (or refer you to people of your faith) explore their beliefs and values so that they can find a sense of peace or reach a point of acceptance that is appropriate for their situation.
- **Caregiver needs.** Family members are an important part of patient care. Like the patient, they have changing needs. It's common for family members to become overwhelmed by the extra responsibilities placed upon them. Many find it hard to care for a sick relative while trying to handle other obligations, such as work, household duties, and caring for other family members. Uncertainty about how to help their loved one with medical situations, inadequate social support, and emotions such as worry and fear can also add to caregiver stress.

These challenges can compromise caregivers' own health. Palliative care specialists can help families and friends cope and give them the support they need. Palliative care provide support to the family by teaching them bedside techniques, providing information on wound care, feeding through ryles tube, care of catheter, stoma bag etc. Palliative care provides also provide psychological help by addressing issues like burnout, guilt and helplessness.

- **Practical needs.** Palliative care specialists can also refer you to other professionals, organizations to assist with financial and legal worries, insurance questions, and employment concerns. Discussing the goals of care is also an important component of palliative care. This includes discussion about further ICU or ventilator needs, facilitating communication among family member, caregivers, and other members of the healthcare team.

How do I contact Palliative Care teams near me?

At Romila Palliative Care Center, we cover an area from Dadar to Borivali in Mumbai. There are other palliative care providers in Mumbai: <https://snehamumbai.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/List-of-Organisations-Hospitals-and-Private-Practitioners-working-on-Palliative-Care.pdf>

How do I contact Romila Palliative Care?

Our phone helplines are available from 9 am to 5 pm from Mondays to Fridays and up to 1 pm on Saturdays. Please contact +919029006333, +918657462970 or +918657462970. Alternatively you can email with queries to pouru.wadia@snehamumbai.org. We also have OPDs in Bhabha Hospital, Holy Family Hospital and Kandivali Hitwardhak Mandal Hospital.

Which healthcare providers provide palliative care?

Palliative care is a specialized type of care, and a palliative care team usually includes doctors, nurses and counsellors. Other healthcare professionals are also associated with the palliative care team. At Romila Palliative care, we have, in addition to these, the services of a nutritionist, occupational and physiotherapist and trained volunteers.

Do Palliative Care services provide home based care?

Yes, some palliative care services like Romila Palliative Care provide home based care. This is an additional layer of support for patients and families of those with serious illness, especially if the patient is unable to visit the hospital. The home palliative care teams help with pain and symptom relief, care of bedridden patients, catheter and wound care, and end of life care.

Do Palliative Care teams offer Support groups?

Romila Palliative Care has a support group for Breast Cancer patients, who meet once a month.

Does receiving Palliative Care mean I am giving up or dying? Will Palliative Care make me die sooner?

No! Studies have shown that patients with appropriate pain and symptom management often live longer and enjoy a better quality of life than those without. According to the World Health Organization, palliative care is applicable anytime during the course of an illness, early or late. You can have palliative care while you are undergoing treatments that may cure or reverse the effects of your illness. In fact, palliative care can help you cope with aggressive treatments by getting your pain and symptoms under control to help you fight the disease.

What is a hospice and when do patients need one?

A hospice is a medical institution for patients with cancer and other serious illnesses. There are a few reasons why a patient may need hospice care. Some terminally ill patients need medical care, but not in the environment of an ICU with machines and monitors around, but comfort care given by nurses and doctors, all the while having their family with them. Sometimes patients need support that is not available at home, e.g. daily dressing for deep fungating wounds, wounds with maggots etc. Sometimes, families of patients with chronic serious conditions like paraplegia, bedridden patients etc. may need a break from constantly caring for these patients. In such, some hospices offer the facilities of 'respite care' where the patients are admitted and taken care of by the hospice staff for a few days, so that the family can rest for that while.

Are there hospices in the city?

Yes, but mainly for cancer patients only. Below are their addresses

1. Shanti Avedna Sadan

216, Mount Mary Road,
Bandra West, Mumbai 400050
Tel: (91) 22 26427464 / 26451702
Website - <http://www.shantiavednasadan.in>

2. Stella Hospice Centre

401201, Maley Wadi Varcha Mala, Vasai West, Vasai,
District Thane, Maharashtra 401201
Tel: 0250-2328605/6

3. Cipla Palliative Care & Training Centre

Contact Person- Dr. Manjiri Dighe
Survey No 118/1, Off Mumbai-Bangalore Highway
Warje, Pune :-411058
Tel: 020-25231130/31

What happens when my loved one dies?

Palliative care includes support of the family after the death of a loved one. It may be important to patients that their loved ones will be supported during the emotional time around their deaths. We offer bereavement support to families of patients we have looked after and have passed away. This includes support to help people cope with the loss of a loved one, information about the normal grief process, help with specific problems or referral to other resources if needed.