

Palliative care and hospice options to consider

When you or someone you love is living with a serious illness, it helps to understand your care choices. Palliative care and hospice care are two options that can provide support and comfort. Knowing the differences can help you make informed decisions.

What is palliative care?

Palliative care helps ease the pain, symptoms, and stress caused by a serious illness. You can receive palliative care while continuing treatments that are meant to manage or treat your condition. Palliative care can be started at any stage of illness and continue for as long as it is needed. The goal is to help you feel more comfortable and improve your quality of life.

Palliative care may include:

- Pain and symptom relief
- Ongoing support (hours and services may vary by provider)
- Help understanding treatment options
- Care goal setting and coordination
- Emotional and spiritual support

What is hospice care?

Hospice care focuses on comfort and quality of life when treatment is no longer helping. It is usually for people with a life expectancy of six months or less and used to provide comfort. Hospice care supports patients and their families during this time.

Hospice care may include:

- Pain and symptom relief
- Support available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Medical equipment and medications to manage symptoms
- Emotional, spiritual, and family support
- Grief and counseling services



What are the key differences between hospice and palliative care?

Palliative care	Hospice care
Available at any stage of illness	For end-of-life care (6 months or less)
Can be given while getting treatment	Focuses on comfort, not cure
Can be used for any amount of time	Length of care depends on eligibility and your health needs
Helps manage symptoms and stress	Provides support for patients and family

Where is care provided and who is involved?

Palliative and hospice care can be provided in many places, including at home or in a hospital, nursing or assisted living facility, or specialized care center.

Both types of care are provided by a team of healthcare professionals who work together to support your needs. This may include doctors and nurses, social workers, chaplains or spiritual care providers, and other support staff. It is important to know that while these are similar types of care, a person cannot receive both at the same time.

Will insurance cover this care?

Palliative care is usually covered by Medicare (Part B), Medicaid, and most private insurance plans. Coverage depends on your specific plan, and some treatments, medications, or services may not be included. Co-pays or out-of-pocket costs may also apply.

Hospice care is widely covered. Medicare, Medicaid (in most states), and many private insurers offer a hospice benefit for care related to terminal illness. Certain medications, equipment, or services may not be included depending on the plan.

Your care team can help you understand your coverage and when each type of care may be right for you.



We are here to help

Your care team can help answer your questions about hospice and palliative care. Reach out for any support you need.