

Hospice Overview

What is Hospice?	Hospice is end-of-life care offered to patients with a medically terminal condition. By definition, a terminal condition is such that if the illness were to advance normally, life expectancy would be less than 6 months.
Goal of Hospice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfort care addressing physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering. • Improving 'Quality of Life' • Respect for final wishes • Positive end-of-life experience
Who can receive care?	Patients with a terminal condition – care is provided to address all end-of-life needs. In addition, families and caregivers also receive emotional and spiritual support from the hospice care team. A doctor's order is needed to initiate hospice care.
Who gives care?	An inter-disciplinary team that includes medical doctor, nurse, social worker, home-health aide, chaplain, volunteer, and bereavement coordinator
Where is care provided?	Where patient resides: home, family home, nursing home, senior living facilities, etc. Hospice is a philosophy, not a place.
Who pays for care?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicare Part A Hospice • Medicaid • Insurance • Private Pay <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; margin-left: 20px;">Care includes all team services, palliative medication, certain medical equipment and basic care supplies.</div>
How long can one get care?	As long as the patient continues to decline and be 'terminal'. This is determined at the end of each benefit period (two 90-day periods, followed by unlimited 60-day periods).
What are the levels of hospice care?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine Care • Respite Care (temporary 5-day nursing home stay to provide caregiver relief) • Inpatient Care (short-term care in a hospital setting to manage symptoms) • Continuous Care (crisis care provided at home to manage symptoms).
What are some reasons for ending hospice care?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving out of their hospice's service area • No longer meeting 'terminal' eligibility criteria • Seeking treatment/cure

(over)

Frequently Asked Questions

Does entering hospice mean there is ‘no hope’?

There is always hope. In hospice, when one is facing a life-limiting illness, the focus of hope changes from ‘cure’ to ‘comfort’. Instead of hoping for an extended life (quantity of life), the hope changes to ensuring wellbeing for as long as one lives (quality of life).

Does hospice do anything to hasten or delay death?

No. Hospice accepts death as a natural part of life, but does not intervene in anyway to hasten or delay death.

Will hospice come to my house?

Hospice provides care wherever the patient lives. It is not a place, but a way or concept of care.

Will my primary doctor be involved in my care?

They can be, if they are willing. Some may choose to direct your hospice care, others may prefer only to be kept informed.

Is hospice care limited to six months?

No. Patients may receive hospice care as long as their condition remains ‘terminal’.

Is hospice only for people with cancer?

Hospice cares for patients with any advanced life-limiting illness such as cancer as well as congestive heart failure, renal and liver diseases, ALS, dementia, pulmonary disease, HIV/AIDS, and such.

With hospice care can I still leave the house?

Yes. With your doctor’s guidance, and provided it is safe to do so, you may do just about anything that keeps you full of life. It’s your choice!

Does hospice require me to have a DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) Order?

No. However, in order to support the hospice goal of comfort during end of life, and at the time of death, the team will discuss final wishes and help facilitate discussions to ensure patients and families are able to make choices based on medical options and also limitations specific to patient needs and wishes.

Online Information & Resources

Source: The National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization

Hospice FAQs:

www.nhpc.org/patients-and-caregivers/about-hospice-care/frequently-asked-questions-about-hospice/

Choosing a Hospice:

www.nhpc.org/patients-and-caregivers/about-hospice-care/choosing-a-hospice/

Source: Hospice Foundation of America

Choosing a Hospice: 17 Questions to Ask:

<https://hospicefoundation.org/end-of-life-support-and-resources/coping-with-terminal-illness/how-to-choose/questions-to-ask>

A Caregiver’s Guide to the Dying Process (17 pages, free to read online):

https://hospicefoundation.org/hfa/media/files/hospice_thedyingprocess_docutech-readerspreads.pdf