



## Specialist palliative care in Queensland

Some people with a life-limiting illness require specialist palliative care provided by health professionals with expertise in symptom control, psychological, social, spiritual and cultural care. Specialist palliative care supports people at any age who are experiencing severe or complex symptoms due to a life-limiting illness. A referral is required to access specialist palliative care services.

## Planning for the future

Advance care planning is the process of making what's important to you clear in the event that you cannot make or communicate decisions about your treatment and care. It is never too early to plan.

Speak with your general practitioner, healthcare providers, family and carers about what is important to you. Visit [qld.gov.au/careatendoflife](http://qld.gov.au/careatendoflife).



## More information

You may find it useful to talk with the following people about care at the end of life. Their contact details can be recorded below:

Doctor / General Practitioner

Nurse

Social Worker

Advance Care Planning Facilitator

Palliative Care Service

Other

To find out more visit [qld.gov.au/careatendoflife](http://qld.gov.au/careatendoflife)  
Or contact **PalAssist** on 1800 772 273

**PalAssist** is a free Queensland 24-hour telephone and online service for palliative care patients, carers, family and friends seeking practical information and emotional support.



# Understanding care at the end of life



**care**  
at end of life

Information for patients,  
family members and carers



Start your conversation at  
[qld.gov.au/careatendoflife](http://qld.gov.au/careatendoflife)

Dying is an inevitable part of life. No two end of life situations are the same. There are many types of support available to assist patients, family and carers through all end of life stages. Care you receive is based on your specific needs, not your diagnosis.



## Conditions that can't be cured

Despite advances in modern medicine, everyone will die one day. Treatment is available for most medical conditions; however, some cannot be fixed. A life-limiting or terminal illness is an incurable condition that will eventually lead to a person's death.

## What is care at the end of life?

Care at the end of life is a broad term that encompasses all the different types of care and support provided for people with a life-limiting illness.

It helps people to live as well as possible until they die, with a focus on:

- symptom control
- independence and autonomy
- social, emotional, spiritual and cultural wellbeing
- planning for the future
- supporting family and carers.

Care focused on quality of life can be provided at any time, from diagnosis of a life-limiting illness through to the last months, weeks and days of life. It is available for everyone regardless of age, culture, background, beliefs or where you live, as well as family and carers.



## Care that supports your needs

Care at the end of life can include:

- advance care planning
- palliative care or specialist palliative care
- medical reviews, scans, blood tests, medications and procedures
- relief of pain and other physical symptoms
- counselling and emotional support
- cultural and spiritual support
- linking you and your carers with financial assistance and estate planning
- in-home nursing support
- help accessing equipment to support you at home
- cleaning, meals and home maintenance
- help with accessing information
- short-term respite care
- bereavement support for family and carers.

## Who provides care at the end of life?

A range of people may be involved in providing care at the end of life, including:

- doctors, nurses and allied health professionals
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers
- spiritual carers and chaplains
- professional carers: including aged care, disability and community carers
- family members, carers and volunteers.

## Where services are provided

Care at the end of life can be delivered:

- at home with community-based support services
- in a residential aged care facility
- in hospital, for both inpatients and outpatients
- community health centres
- at a specialist palliative care unit or hospice.

## Palliative care

Palliative care is healthcare that focuses on improving the quality of life and quality of care for people with a life-limiting illness, as well as families.

It includes:

- the prevention and relief of suffering
- communication about goals of care
- the early identification, assessment and treatment of physical, psychological, emotional, social and spiritual symptoms.

Palliative care does not aim to slow down or speed up the dying process. Rather it helps people live as actively as possible until death by enhancing their quality of life.

You do not need to stop other treatment while receiving palliative care, but you can choose to if you wish.

