

Improving Your Quality of Life Throughout a Cancer Diagnosis

Palliative (supportive) care is for anyone with a serious illness, regardless of age, stage, treatment status or prognosis.

Palliative care is specialized medical care that focuses on providing relief from the side effects and emotional stress of a serious illness such as cancer. The goal is to improve the quality of life for you, your caregiver or care partner and your family. For best results, you can include palliative care early and often throughout cancer treatment and beyond.

Palliative care specialists may include doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains and other healthcare professionals. These specialists will work with you and members of your treatment team to provide another layer of support during and after cancer treatment.

BENEFITS OF PALLIATIVE CARE

Palliative care offers many ways to help you feel better physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually during cancer treatment and throughout survivorship.

Most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid, cover palliative care.

Many patients are referred to palliative care to address side effects that are interfering with treatment or quality of life.

The type of services or support your palliative care team will suggest depends on the side effects you are experiencing and your treatment goals.

Palliative care can assist with:

- Pain and symptom management
 - Visit www.LLS.org/booklets and filter by "Side Effect Management" to view the full list of side effects resources.
- Assistance with making medical decisions
 - Visit www.LLS.org/WhatToAsk to download printable lists of questions to guide you when talking with members of your healthcare team.
- Coordination with other healthcare professionals to best address your individual needs
 - Talking with your medical team to ensure you have a personalized treatment plan that focuses on what matters most to you
 - Help with practical issues, such as finances, transportation, prescription assistance or referrals to community resources
 - Working with others, such as physical therapists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, child-life specialists, dietitians or others
 - Help talking with family members, including children, about your illness and treatment decisions



- Advance care planning
 - This is the process of considering, discussing and documenting your preferences for future medical care. To learn more, visit www.LLS.org/booklets to view *Advance Care Planning*.

You will work with your palliative care team to develop an individualized plan that addresses your needs. Palliative care can be provided in a hospital, outpatient clinic or sometimes at home.

Palliative care is for anyone with a serious illness, regardless of age, stage, treatment status or prognosis. Struggling with side effects of cancer or its treatment? Ask for a referral to palliative care.

Integrating palliative care at every stage after a cancer diagnosis improves quality of life. Although palliative care does not treat or cure cancer, it makes the symptoms and side effects of cancer and its treatment easier to manage. Palliative care given alongside curative therapy improves well-being during treatment.

Many people continue to benefit from palliative care after treatment ends and into long-term survivorship or through end of life. Hospice care (end-of-life care) is a form of palliative care. To learn more about hospice, visit www.LLS.org/booklets to view *Hospice Care*.

With palliative care, you can maintain a better quality of life during and after cancer treatment.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR HEALTHCARE TEAM

- What palliative care services are available in my area?
- Who will make up my palliative care team?
- Will my insurance cover palliative care?
- How might palliative care help me better manage stresses, symptoms and side effects?
- How might palliative care help my family, caregiver or care partner too?
- Will you refer me to a palliative care specialist?
- Where can I find more information on palliative care?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Visit the following other helpful organizations for more information about palliative care:

- Get Palliative Care: getpalliativecare.org
- CaringInfo: www.caringinfo.org



GET ONE-ON-ONE SUPPORT

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's **Information Specialists**, highly trained oncology social workers and nurses, can provide information and support and connect you to our **Clinical Trial Support Center** and **Registered Dietitians**.

- Call **800.955.4572** Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. (ET)
- Visit www.LLS.org/PatientSupport

Acknowledgement

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