

Step 1: Talk to Your Doctor

The first step is to talk to your doctor. Most of the time, you have to ask your doctor for a palliative care referral to get palliative care services. Whether you are in the hospital or at home, a palliative care team can help you. Here are some tips to help you talk to your doctor:

- Tell your doctor you are thinking about

palliative care, and ask where palliative care is available in your area.

- Ask your doctor to explain your illness and any past, current and future treatments and procedures.
- Explain to your doctor exactly what quality of life means to you. This list may include: being able to spend time with loved ones; relief from any pain and other symptoms; having the ability to make your own decisions for care and where you want to be treated (home vs. in the hospital).
- Be sure your doctor is aware of any personal, religious or cultural beliefs, values or practices that are important to consider in your care and treatment decisions.
- Tell your doctor which treatments you may or may not want.
- Mention that you would like time to discuss future planning for your care. You should do this even if you're well or it's early in your illness.
- If you have completed a living will or health care proxy, be sure to tell your doctor and provide him or her with a copy.
- Finally, at any point in your illness if you are experiencing symptoms and stress, ask your doctor for the palliative care referral!

Comfort,
Support,
Dignity



Columbia
County
HEALTH SYSTEM

Palliative
CARE

COLUMBIA COUNTY HEALTH SYSTEM

PALLIATIVE CARE PROGRAM

1012 S. 3RD STREET

DAYTON, WA 99328

509-382-3212

*To Speak to Someone about
Palliative Care Services*

Contact

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Palliative Care Coordinator

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- Supportive Care
- Spiritual Care
- Advance Care Planning
- Symptom Man-

What Is Palliative Care?

Palliative care (pronounced pal-lee-uh-tiv) is specialized care for people living with serious illness. Care focused on relief from the symptoms and stress of the illness-whatever the diagnosis. The goal is to improve and sustain quality of life for both the patient and the family. It is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness and can be provided along with active treatment. Palliative care facilitates patient autonomy, access to information, and choice. The palliative care team helps patients and families understand the nature of their illness, and make timely, informed decisions about care.

Improves Quality of Life

Palliative care teams specialize in treating people suffering from the symptoms and stress of life-limiting illnesses such as cancer, congestive heart failure (CHF), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), kidney disease, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and many more. This type of care treats pain, depression, shortness of breath, fatigue, constipation, nausea, loss of appetite, difficulty sleeping, anxiety and any other symptoms that may be causing distress. The team will help care for you by developing a patient centered care plan that meets your goals, wishes, and needs.

Close Communication

The palliative care team will also spend time talking to you and listening. By deeply exploring your personal goals, the palliative care team will help you match those goals and options. This gives you more control over your care.

A Partnership of the Palliative Care Team, Patient, and Family

Palliative care teams are specialists who work together with you, your family, and your doctors. They provide an extra layer of support when you need it most. In addition to treating your symptoms, the palliative care team spends as much time as necessary communicating with both you and your family.

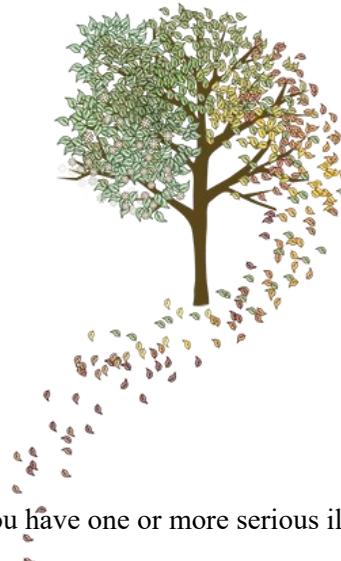
Talking to Your Doctor

If you or a loved one is facing a life-limiting illness, you may benefit from palliative care. You can have palliative care at any point in your illness. Take the quiz if you're not sure. Then speak to your doctor, and ask if a Palliative Care Consult is right for you. Bring this **handout** with you!

Take the Quiz:

Is Palliative Care Right for You?

Answer the following questions to determine whether palliative care might be right for you or someone close to you. Remember, you can receive palliative care at any point in your illness.



1. Do you have one or more serious illnesses such as:

- Cancer
- Congestive heart failure (CHF)
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema, lung disease
- Kidney failure
- Liver failure
- Neurological diseases (e.g., ALS, Parkinson's)
- Dementia

2. Do you have symptoms that make it difficult to be as active as you would like to be, or impact your quality of life? These symptoms might include:

- Pain or discomfort
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Lack of appetite
- Nausea
- Constipation

3. Have you, or someone close to you, experienced the following:

- Difficult side effects from treatment
- Eating problems due to a serious illness
- Frequent emergency room visits
- Three or more admissions to the hospital within 12 months, and with the same symptoms

4. Do you, or someone close to you, need help with:

- Knowing what to expect
- Knowing what programs and resources are available
- Making medical decisions about treatment choices/options
- Matching your goals and values to your medical care
- Understanding the pros and cons (benefits/burdens) of treatments (e.g., dialysis, additional cancer treatments, surgery, etc.)

5. Do you, or someone close to you, need help with:

- Coping with the stress of a serious illness
- Emotional support
- Spiritual or religious support
- Talking with your family about your illness and what is important to you

If you answered yes to any of these questions, bring this brochure with you to your next doctors appointment.