

Understanding Palliative Care

What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care is also known as pain and symptom management or comfort care. Its focus is on improving your quality of life by reducing the physical and emotional stress often associated with a serious illness.

How Does Palliative Care Work?

Palliative care is delivered by a team of professionals that work with your doctor to provide an extra layer of support for chronically ill patients. At VNA of Somerset Hills, a palliative care specialist will assess your current condition and assist you in creating personal goals for a better quality of life. Once these goals have been determined, our specialist will create a plan of care to be carried out by the healthcare team. The team may include your doctor, a nurse, social worker, therapist, pharmacist, nutritionist, chaplain and others.

Who Can Benefit From Palliative Care?

- People with a serious illness who desire relief from pain or symptoms
- People with intense emotional or mental distress
- Frail elders living with the health concerns of aging
- Family members overwhelmed by the demands of daily caregiving

Do I Have to Give Up My Doctor?

No. Our palliative care team works in partnership with your primary care doctor. Your doctor will continue to direct your care and treatment plan.

Can Palliative Care Help Assist Family Members in Coping?

Yes. Family members can become overwhelmed caring for someone with a serious illness. Inadequate social support, worry and fear can often increase stress that can affect a family member's own health. Patient support provided through palliative care helps family members cope with these challenges along with their caregiver responsibilities.

What is the Difference Between Palliative Care and Hospice?

Palliative care is appropriate at any stage of a serious illness. You can continue to undergo curative or aggressive treatment when on palliative care.

Hospice care includes pain and symptom management for patients at the end of life. People who choose hospice services are no longer receiving curative medical treatment.

Is Palliative Care Covered by Insurance?

Only the initial evaluation to determine the patient's eligibility for palliative care is usually covered by Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance. If services are needed, the VNA — as a nonprofit, mission-based organization — will provide palliative care services at no cost to qualified patients. Always check your coverage before agreeing to any healthcare service.



Benefits of Palliative Care

Palliative care provides support to patients and families by managing pain and symptoms related to a serious illness. High-quality palliative care can make a big difference in a person's quality of life.

- Reduce Pain and Suffering
- Relieve Depression and Anxiety
- Strengthen Emotional and Spiritual Support
- Enhance Family/Caregiver Support
- Improved Understanding of Disease Treatment Choices
- Increase Patient Satisfaction
- Improve Communication Between Patient, Family and Physician
- Restore Confidence and Trust