

End of life care

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at ndht.pals@nhs.net.

The doctors and nurses will have explained to you that there has been a change in your relative or friend's condition. They believe that the person you care about is now dying and is in the last days or hours of life.

The End of Life Care Plan is a document which supports the doctors and nurses to give the best quality of care. All care will be reviewed regularly.

You and your relative or friend will be involved in the discussion regarding the plan of care with the aim that you fully understand the reasons why decisions are being made. If your relative or friend's condition improves then the plan of care will be reviewed and changed. All decisions will be reviewed regularly. If after a discussion with the doctors and nurses you do not agree with any decisions, you may want to ask for a second opinion.

Communication

We have included some information in this leaflet as it is sometimes difficult to remember everything at this sad and challenging time. The doctors and nurses will ask you for your contact details as keeping you updated is a priority.

Medication

Medicine that is not helpful at this time may be stopped and new medicines may be prescribed. Medicines for symptom-control will only be given when needed, at the right time, and in just enough quantity to help the symptoms.

It may not be possible to give medication by mouth at this time. If so medication may be given by injection or sometimes, if needed, by continuous infusion by a small pump called a syringe driver.

Reduced need for food and drink

Loss of interest and a reduced need for food and drink is part of the normal dying process. When a person stops eating and drinking, it can be hard to accept even when we know they are dying. Your relative or friend will be supported to eat and drink for as long as possible. If they cannot take fluids by mouth, fluids given by a drip may be considered.

Fluids given by drip will only be used where it is helpful and not harmful. This decision will be explained to you, your relatives or friends.

Religious and spiritual needs

A part of care includes the need for staff to determine the wishes of you and your relative or friend as regards to religious or spiritual needs.

You may be asked if you or your relative or friend have a religious tradition or belief and you may want to consider specific support from a chaplain or religious advisor, regarding special needs now or at the time of death or after death.

Not everyone who dies has a formal religious tradition. The staff will explore any other values, beliefs, wishes or desires that you or your relative/friend may have at this time.

Facilities

You will be given information with regards to facilities on the ward if your relative/friend is an inpatient. e.g. visiting times, car parking and beverage facilities. If you would like any additional information, please ask us.

Comfort

The doctors and nurses will not want to interrupt your time with your relative or friend. They will make sure that as far as possible any needs at this time are met. Please let them know if you feel those needs are not being met for whatever reason.

You can support care in important ways such as spending time together, sharing memories and news of family and friends.

Caring well for your relative or friend is important to us. Please speak to the doctors or nurses if there are any questions that occur to you, no matter how insignificant you think they may be or how busy the staff may seem. This may all be very unfamiliar to you and we are here to explain, support and care.

Where service is provided

North Devon District Hospital, community hospitals and in the patient's home.



You can contact the ward directly on

Further information and support

You may also find it helpful to talk to:

Bereavement Office

North Devon District Hospital
Raleigh Park
Barnstaple
Devon
EX31 4JB
Tel: 01271 322404

Cruse Bereavement Care

Helpline: 0844 477 9400

Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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