

Share:    

## Different Care Settings at the End of Life

The three most common places people at the end-of-life die are at home, in a hospital, or in a care facility. While not everyone has the chance to decide where they will die, people who know the end of life is approaching may be able to plan ahead. Several factors may help with this planning, including knowing the type of care you need and want, where you can receive this level of care, [advance care directives](#), [costs](#), and availability of family and friends to help.

### End-of-life care at home

Home is likely the most private setting for someone who needs end-of-life care. It allows for family and friends to come and go freely and may give the person who is dying a sense of comfort. Services such as visiting nurses as well as special equipment, such as a hospital bed or bedside commode, can be arranged to be at the home.



It's important for a caregiver or family member to work closely with the health care team to decide the type of [comfort care](#) needed at home in order to make the dying person as comfortable as possible. This type of care can often be provided by nursing assistants or family and friends without medical training. However, a doctor will continue to oversee the patient's health care plan. [Hospice care](#) is frequently used at home.

Caring for someone who is at home at the end of life can be physically, emotionally, and financially demanding for the people providing the care. Extra support from paid caregivers or home service providers, also known as [respite care](#), can help. If the person who is dying is returning home from the hospital, sometimes a hospital discharge planner, who is often a social worker, will be able to help with the logistics. Your [local Area Agency on Aging](#) might be able to recommend other sources of help.

### End-of-life care in hospitals

In a hospital setting, you will have access to medical professionals who understand the needs of a dying person. This can be very reassuring to both the person and their family.

In addition to the regular care team, some hospitals have [palliative and hospice care](#) teams that can assist with managing uncomfortable symptoms at the end of life, such as digestive issues or pain. These teams can also help with [making medical decisions](#) for patients or families.

## Advance care planning

No matter which end-of-life care setting you choose, it's important to make plans for this care in advance. Having these documents in place helps medical staff provide the care that you wish to receive at the end of life and helps family members avoid having to make difficult decisions about your care without your input. Learn more about [advance care planning](#).

## End-of-life care in nursing homes or other care facilities

Many people are in care facilities, such as [nursing homes](#), at the end of life. In a nursing home, nursing staff are always present. Unlike a hospital, a doctor is not in the facility at all times but is available when needed.

Some people are discharged from a hospital to a care facility, while others may already be living in one. If you have lived in a nursing home or [long-term care facility](#) for a while, you may choose to stay and receive end-of-life care there. You and your family may already have a relationship with staff who work there, which can help make the care feel more personalized than in a hospital.

If you are receiving [hospice care](#), the hospice team can assist the care facility staff with end-of-life care.

## You may also be interested in

- Learning about [hospice and palliative care](#)
- Reading about [making decisions for someone at the end of life](#)
- Exploring information on [paying for long-term care](#)

## For more information about care settings at the end of life

### Medicare

800-633-4227

877-486-2048 (TTY)

[www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov)

[www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

### Eldercare Locator

800-677-1116

[eldercarelocator@USAgings.org](mailto:eldercarelocator@USAgings.org)

<https://eldercare.acl.gov>

### CaringInfo

National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization

800-658-8898

[caringinfo@nhpco.org](mailto:caringinfo@nhpco.org)

[www.caringinfo.org](http://www.caringinfo.org)

**National Institute of Nursing Research**

301-496-0207

[info@ninr.nih.gov](mailto:info@ninr.nih.gov)

[www.ninr.nih.gov](http://www.ninr.nih.gov)

**Visiting Nurse Associations of America**

888-866-8773

[vnaa@vnaa.org](mailto:vnaa@vnaa.org)

[www.vnaa.org](http://www.vnaa.org)

This content is provided by the NIH National Institute on Aging (NIA). NIA scientists and other experts review this content to ensure it is accurate and up to date.

Content reviewed: January 31, 2022

[Return to top](#)

## Newsletters

Sign up to receive updates and resources delivered to your inbox.

**Sign up**

[nia.nih.gov](http://nia.nih.gov)

*An official website of the [National Institutes of Health](#)*