

# **Understanding Hospice Care**

## **What is Hospice?**

Hospice is specialized care for people with a life-limiting illness who prefer to focus on comfort and quality of life. Care is centered on relief of pain and symptoms, emotional and spiritual support, and preserving meaningful moments at home or wherever you live.

Hospice recognizes that the end of life is not just a medical event but a deeply personal, emotional, and spiritual journey. It provides comprehensive support for patients and families to live with dignity and peace in every remaining moment.

## **How is Hospice Different from Palliative Care?**

Both hospice and palliative care focus on comfort and quality of life. Palliative care can begin at any point during a serious illness—even while receiving curative treatments. Hospice begins when a physician certifies that a patient's life expectancy is six months or less if the illness follows its usual course. At that point, the plan of care shifts from curative treatment to comfort-centered care.

Hospice care is not about giving up—it's about shifting focus to what truly matters: meaningful time, comfort, and peace.

## **Our Approach at Hospice and Beyond**

At Hospice and Beyond, we surround the patient and family with a compassionate interdisciplinary team that includes a physician, nurse, hospice aide, social worker, chaplain, bereavement specialist, volunteers, and therapists as needed.

Together, we create an individualized plan of care that reflects your goals, values, and personal wishes. Our team provides 24/7 on-call support, education for caregivers, and guidance through physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

We believe that every person deserves to live fully, even in their final stages of life — with comfort, dignity, and respect.

## **Family Caregiving is the Heart of Hospice**

Family is central to the hospice experience. When loved ones are available, we teach and support them as partners in daily care. We guide them in symptom management, comfort techniques, emotional support, and communication with the care team.

If a primary caregiver is not available, our social worker will help explore options such as private-duty caregivers, community-based services, or respite programs. Before you pay out of pocket, we will help you understand what is covered and what resources are available to assist with your care plan.

Our goal is to make sure that no family feels alone or unsupported — every question matters, and every emotion is valid.

## **Pressure Ulcers (Bedsores)**

Pressure ulcers, also called bedsores, can develop when someone stays in one position for too long. They often appear on the heels, hips, tailbone, or elbows. In hospice care, our goal is to keep your skin healthy and prevent discomfort.

### **Protecting Your Skin with Comfort and Care**

#### **Warning Signs**

- Changes in skin color or texture
  - Swelling or tenderness
  - Skin that feels warmer or cooler than nearby areas
  - Redness or soreness that doesn't fade
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#### **Common Causes**

- Pressure from lying or sitting on hard surfaces (beds, wheelchairs)
  - Moisture from sweat or incontinence
  - Limited movement or muscle spasms
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#### **How to Help Prevent Pressure Ulcers**

- **Change position regularly:** Turn or shift at least every two hours.
- **Use support surfaces:** Special pads or mattresses can help relieve pressure.
- **Keep skin clean and dry:** Gently cleanse, pat dry, and use light moisturizer.
- **Eat and drink well:** Proper nutrition supports healthy skin.

- **Check daily:** Look for early changes and report any redness or pain right away.

## **When to Call the Nurse**

Your hospice nurse will routinely check the skin to detect early signs of pressure areas. If you notice any new redness, swelling, or open skin, contact your nurse immediately. Early attention leads to the best comfort and outcomes.

## **Comfort-Focused Skin Care in Hospice**

In hospice, skin care is more than a medical routine — it's an essential part of keeping the patient comfortable, calm, and supported. Gentle touch, warm cleansing water, soft linens, and soothing moisturizers all help protect fragile skin and improve quality of life. Caregivers are encouraged to observe the skin daily, padding any bony areas and adjusting blankets or clothing that may cause friction. Hospice teams also teach families simple techniques that prevent irritation, promote circulation, and reduce discomfort. With consistent attention and thoughtful care, skin remains healthier, and the patient experiences greater ease and peace throughout the day.

# Pain Management

## Pain Management

### Comfort, Dignity, and Relief in Every Moment

At Hospice and Beyond Palliative Care LLC, our goal is to ensure that every patient experiences comfort and dignity at all times. Pain management is a vital part of hospice care, helping patients live each day with the greatest possible ease and peace.

### Understanding Pain

Pain can be physical, emotional, or spiritual. It may come from illness, movement, anxiety, or other causes.

Everyone feels pain differently — that's why it's important to tell your hospice nurse or caregiver how you feel, even if the pain seems small.

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### How Hospice Manages Pain

Your hospice team will assess and manage your pain through a personalized plan that may include:

- **Medications:** Such as opioids and non-opioid medicines to relieve discomfort safely.
  - **Non-medication support:** Relaxation, repositioning, massage, soft music, warm blankets, and emotional or spiritual care.
  - **Regular assessments:** Nurses will check pain levels often and adjust medications as needed.
  - **24/7 support:** The hospice team is available anytime for pain or symptom changes.
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### What Patients and Families Can Do

- Communicate openly: Let your nurse know if pain increases, changes, or becomes hard to manage.

- Keep a pain log: Note when and where pain occurs, and what helps.
  - Follow the care plan: Take medications exactly as prescribed.
  - Stay comfortable: Use pillows, gentle movements, or calming activities.
  - Ask questions: Your comfort and understanding are our priority.
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## **Our Promise**

Your comfort matters. The Hospice and Beyond team is dedicated to relieving pain with compassion, respect, and individualized care — ensuring that every life is honored and every moment is meaningful.

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## **Honoring Your Comfort at Every Stage**

Pain management in hospice is not only about easing physical discomfort — it is about protecting your sense of peace, control, and dignity. Our team continually adjusts your care based on your feedback, ensuring that treatments remain gentle, effective, and aligned with your wishes. Whether your pain is constant or comes and goes, we respond quickly with compassion and clarity. Every adjustment we make is guided by your comfort, helping you remain as present and relaxed as possible. You are never alone in this process — your voice leads the way, and we follow with unwavering support.

# **Neglect and Exploitation**

## **Protecting Every Patient with Respect and Dignity**

At Hospice and Beyond Palliative Care LLC, every patient has the fundamental right to feel safe, valued, and protected. We are deeply committed to maintaining an environment where dignity is honored, voices are heard, and vulnerabilities are safeguarded. Our team acts with integrity and compassion to ensure that no individual in our care is ever exposed to neglect, abuse, or exploitation. Your safety is not an option — it is a promise.

### **What Is Neglect and Exploitation?**

- **Neglect** is the failure to provide basic human needs — including food, water, hygiene, comfort, safety, medication, or emotional support.
- **Exploitation** involves taking advantage of someone for personal benefit, such as misusing their money, property, identity, or personal resources.
  - **Abuse** may be physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, or financial. It includes any action or behavior that causes pain, fear, humiliation, or distress.

Understanding these terms helps families, caregivers, and patients recognize concerning behavior early so protective steps can be taken immediately.

### **Warning Signs to Watch For**

- Unexplained bruises, injuries, or sudden changes in behavior
- Poor hygiene, weight loss, dehydration, or unsafe living conditions
- Missing money, valuables, or discrepancies in financial records
- Noticeable fear, withdrawal, or discomfort around specific individuals
- A caregiver limiting communication with family or refusing access to the patient

These signs should never be ignored. Early awareness prevents harm and protects the patient's physical and emotional well-being.

## How Hospice Helps Protect You

Our hospice team is trained to identify, address, and prevent all forms of abuse, neglect, or exploitation. We follow strict reporting procedures and act immediately to safeguard any patient who may be at risk. This includes:

- Conducting routine safety assessments
- Ensuring regular contact with patients and families
- Maintaining strict confidentiality
- Collaborating with protective agencies when necessary
- Providing emotional support and reassurance through every step

Your safety is always our top priority.

## What You Can Do

- **Speak up:** Report any concerns directly to your hospice nurse, social worker, or any trusted team member.
  - **Stay observant:** Watch for changes in mood, behavior, physical condition, or financial activity.
  - **Stay involved:** Regular communication with hospice staff helps ensure complete transparency and protection.
  - **Know your rights:** You deserve care that is respectful, compassionate, and free from harm.

No concern is too small. Your voice helps keep you — and others — safe.

## Reporting Concerns

### Hospice and Beyond Palliative Care LLC

 346-690-9032

 [beyondhospicehpcare@gmail.com](mailto:beyondhospicehpcare@gmail.com)

You may also contact **Adult Protective Services (APS)** or your **state health department** if you ever feel unsafe or uncertain about a situation.

## **Infection Control**

### **Keeping Patients and Families Safe at Home**

At Hospice and Beyond Palliative Care LLC, infection control is essential for keeping patients, families, and caregivers safe and comfortable. Many patients receive care at home, where simple daily precautions help prevent infections and support a clean, healing environment.

### **Why Infection Control Matters**

Infections can cause discomfort, delay healing, or lead to serious complications. Because many hospice patients have weakened immune systems, following good hygiene and safe care practices protects everyone in the home.

### **Ways to Prevent Infection at Home**

#### **1. Hand Hygiene**

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash before and after touching the patient, preparing food, giving medication, or changing dressings.
- Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.

#### **2. Maintain a Clean Environment**

- Keep the patient's room clean, well-ventilated, and clutter-free.

- Clean commonly touched surfaces (doorknobs, tables, remotes) daily.
- Change linens and towels regularly.

### 3. Safe Handling of Medical Supplies

- Store medications and supplies in clean, dry areas away from pets and children.
- Dispose of gloves, dressings, and medical waste in a covered trash container.
- Never reuse disposable items such as gloves or syringes.

### 4. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Wear gloves when touching blood, body fluids, or open wounds.
  - Use masks if the patient or caregiver has a cough, cold, or respiratory illness.

### 5. Wound and Skin Care

- Follow the hospice nurse's instructions when changing dressings.
- Keep wounds clean, dry, and covered unless directed otherwise.
- Report redness, swelling, or drainage to the nurse immediately.

## 6. Food Safety

- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly.
- Cook foods to safe temperatures.
- Avoid leaving perishable foods at room temperature.

**When to Contact the Nurse:** Call your hospice nurse immediately if the patient develops:

- Fever, chills, or sweating
- New or worsening pain
- Redness, warmth, or drainage from a wound
- Shortness of breath or unusual coughing
- Sudden confusion or weakness

### **Our Commitment:**

At Hospice and Beyond Palliative Care LLC, we believe infection control is an act of compassion. By practicing good hygiene, cleaning the environment, and reporting early signs of infection, we promote safety, comfort, and peace of mind for every patient and family.