

WHY IS PALLIATIVE CARE NECESSARY FOR PATIENTS?

Palliative care can be defined as a specialized medical care offered to patients with serious and terminal illnesses. It focuses on ensuring patients are relieved of stress and symptoms of any serious illness and/or treatment. It is normally given to terminally ill patients if it seems that it will help manage pain and improve their quality of life.

The main objective of palliative care is to boost the quality of life for both the family and the patient. Palliative care is offered by a trained team of nurses, doctors and other specialists who work with the patient's primary care doctors in order to provide extra support. It can help the patient deal with the side effects of the medical treatments they are receiving. It also helps as a support system for the patient and the family.

It is recommended at any stage of serious illness, and can be easily offered alongside other curative treatments. Palliative care is indicated for patients with any serious illness and who have physical, psychological, social, or spiritual distress as a result of the treatment they are seeking or receiving. It increases comfort by decreasing pain, stress and controlling symptoms.

It treats patients suffering from chronic and serious illness, such as congestive heart failure, cancer, AIDS, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), kidney failure, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and many more. The key to effective palliative care is to provide a safe way for the individual to address their physical and psychological distress

Palliative care addresses the following health problems and symptoms:

1. Anxiety
2. Confusion
3. Depression
4. Fatigue
5. Family stress and fear
6. Legal issues
7. Financial matters
8. Insurance and medical forms
9. Loss of appetite
10. Weight loss

11. Body weakness
12. Insomnia
13. Constipation
14. Pain

What are the benefits of palliative care?

1. The most noticeable benefit of palliative care for a patients, especially cancer patients, is the relief of physical symptoms. When a cancer patient receives counseling or a therapeutic massage, the patient feels physically and mentally better.
2. Chemotherapy, radiation or surgery fall under the category of curative care (a form of palliative care). They are carried out to remove any cause of cancer to limit it from spreading. This causes the patient to be under physical and emotional distress. The main goal of palliative care is to reduce these side effects and improve the patient's well being.
3. Boost the quality of life- This can be achieved in several ways. Palliative care focuses on signs and symptoms such as shortness of breath, pain, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, and difficulty in sleeping. The care team will provide medications to alleviate these symptoms. This assists the patient(s) gain strength to move on with daily life and improves their ability to withstand medical treatments.

What is the role of the palliative care team?

It is normally coordinated by a team led by a clinical board certified in palliative medicine and hospice. They develop a unique plan of care depending on the goals of the family and patient. They may also work with other care provider such as a chaplain, social worker and other specialists such as a music therapist, counselor, and/ or a registered dietician to ensure that the family and the patient are receiving the correct treatment.

They work together with the patient's primary care physicians. The palliative care team can provide care to the patient at all times during the course of the terminal illness; during or following preventive treatment.

What is the duration of palliative care?

Palliative care can start at diagnosis stage and continue alongside patient's curative care. Hospice care starts when curative therapies stop controlling the disease. The patient agrees with his or her physician to stop the curative treatment, if the side effects of the therapy, outweighs the benefits.

Where Can I acquire More Information about palliative care?

You should ask your private care specialist or physician whether you should receive palliative care. Its consultation is free of charge and it will determine your personalized care plan. You can also use the World Wide Web to do a bit of research and inform yourself on palliative care.