



Hospice and Palliative Care: — **A Guide for Patients**

If you have been diagnosed with a life-limiting illness, call (334) 451-1693 to discuss palliative care at Baptist Medical Center South or (334) 395-5000 to speak with Baptist Hospice.

UNDERSTANDING
PALLIATIVE CARE AND HOSPICE

Q&A: HOSPICE AT
BAPTIST HEALTH

THE BAPTIST HEALTH
DIFFERENCE

Understanding Palliative Care and Hospice

BOTH TYPES OF CARE CAN MAKE LIFE EASIER FOR YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES, BUT THEY DO SO IN DIFFERENT WAYS. KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE ALLOWS YOU TO MAKE THE BEST DECISION FOR YOUR LONG-TERM CARE.

PALLIATIVE CARE IS...

- » **Available at any point during your illness.** You can begin palliative care at any point after diagnosis. The earlier you begin, the more time you have to understand treatment options and receive supportive services.
- » **Often provided along with curative treatment.** You can continue to undergo treatment and see your own doctors, if you want to. Specially trained palliative care providers will help control symptoms and pain related to your disease.
- » **Support for your medical, spiritual and emotional needs.** Your palliative care team can coordinate care between providers and help you understand options for treatment and symptom management. The team also helps determine goals for care and listens to any emotional and spiritual concerns that may arise as you undergo treatment.
- » **About giving you strength.** Palliative care offers you relief from the side effects of your disease, and that can boost your ability to tolerate treatment, which is one important reason to begin palliative care as early as possible.

HOSPICE IS...

- » **For patients with a terminal illness.** Generally, in order to qualify for hospice care, your doctors must determine that you have fewer than six months to live. However, hospice care can be extended if your prognosis changes.
- » **Focused on comfort and symptom control.** People who enter hospice no longer pursue curative treatment for their disease. The focus is on alleviating pain and managing symptoms to make your final days as comfortable as possible.
- » **Support for your medical, spiritual and emotional needs.** Your hospice care team is there to help you understand and plan for your last days, both emotionally and spiritually. The team also helps your family work through the emotions of letting go, while helping you all enjoy the time you have left together.
- » **About adding more life to every day.** Many people feel that entering hospice means they have given up on life. However, by easing your symptoms and making you comfortable, hospice allows you to live your final days to the fullest.



Q&A:

Hospice at Baptist Health

MELISSA COBB, RN, ADMISSION
NURSE AT BAPTIST HOSPICE, ANSWERS
PATIENTS' MOST COMMON QUESTIONS.

How do I know when it is time for hospice?

You and your family should begin considering hospice services when medical treatments are no longer capable of curing your condition and/or you no longer wish to seek treatment for your symptoms. Hospice services generally begin when your healthcare provider determines that you have a life expectancy of six months or less.

Will insurance cover hospice?

Yes. You will never receive a bill from Baptist Health for services provided within your hospice care plan.

Can I live alone while in hospice care?

Yes. Patients can continue to live alone until either they are no longer able to care for themselves or living alone becomes unsafe.

Does hospice go into nursing homes?

Yes. You can receive services wherever you live.

Is there a point when hospice staff will stay with me indefinitely?

If you are experiencing uncontrolled symptoms, a nurse will stay with you until symptoms are managed or you are comfortable.

How often will a hospice nurse and aide visit?

Every week, you will receive one to two visits from a hospice nurse and three to five visits from an aide.

Will the medical director make home visits?

Generally, no. However, the Baptist Hospice nurse practitioners will make home visits whenever necessary.

Can I go back to see my doctor?

Yes. You may visit your physician at any time.

Can I go back to the hospital?

Yes. It is your right to choose your course of treatment. However, Baptist Hospice will not cover the cost of a hospital stay unless you are a general inpatient (someone already receiving hospice care in the hospital).

What if my pain gets out of control?

Your doctor will order the appropriate pain medication, and your nurse will monitor its effectiveness and consult a physician if additional changes are necessary.

Can I still go shopping or out to eat while in hospice?

Yes. If you are medically able to do so, getting outside the house or nursing care facility can be a great way of breaking up the day, enjoying some fresh air and spending quality time with loved ones.

Do I have to come off hospice after six months?

Not generally. You would need to come off hospice only if you ceased to meet the original hospice criteria.



The Baptist Health

Difference

AT BAPTIST HEALTH, WE WORK WITH PATIENTS OF ALL AGES AND FAITH BACKGROUNDS TO DELIVER THE PALLIATIVE CARE OR HOSPICE SERVICES THEY NEED TO COPE WITH A SERIOUS ILLNESS.

Baptist Health is home to the only not-for-profit, faith-based, accredited hospice program in central Alabama. We also offer palliative care services at Baptist Medical Center South. Our specially trained providers work one-on-one with patients to tailor care plans that address physical, emotional and spiritual needs during what can be a stressful, emotionally charged period of life.

STRENGTH TO OVERCOME DISEASE

The palliative care team at Baptist Medical Center South is made up of physicians, nurses, pastoral care and social workers. All of our palliative care team members are board-certified in their respective fields and work closely with you, your family and your personal doctors to ensure you receive effective treatment for your illness while also offering expert treatment of pain and other symptoms. The team can also provide emotional and spiritual support for you and your family while helping coordinate care between different healthcare providers and home care services.

The goal of palliative care at Baptist South is to give you the strength and resources you need to overcome your illness.

COMFORT AT END OF LIFE

Baptist Hospice can provide care at home, and we provide general inpatient care at several nursing homes in the area. All Baptist Hospice aides are certified nursing assistants, and many of our hospice nurses are certified in both hospice and palliative care. We also work with the Montgomery Family Medicine Residency Program to not only receive help from residents but also pass on

our knowledge to future medical providers. We want our community to have access to compassionate hospice and palliative care for generations to come.

Beyond having a team who communicates regularly about your care with your doctor and family members, you and your family have access to Baptist Health's extensive network of emotional, spiritual and financial support. We can help mediate difficult conversations about end-of-life spiritual needs, finances and, for your family, bereavement support, so you can make the most of the time you have left together.

A Focus on Compassion, Not Cost

Baptist Health never bills patients for hospice care. We help all adults who are considered medically appropriate for hospice, regardless of their ability to pay.

"We're able to provide quality care throughout the year to people who need it," said Mona McDermott, LMSW, bereavement, social work and volunteer coordinator at Baptist Hospice. "That's our top priority at Baptist Health. We treat every person who's been told they're going to die with dignity and respect. We never focus on profit. The focus is on how we can provide quality, end-of-life care to our patients and their families."