

Hospice at Home



Dying is Inevitable, Suffering is Optional

**How to Care for the Dying Patient
and Control End of Life Symptoms**

Table of Contents

2) Recognizing When the End of Life Is Approaching

2) End of Life Signs

- Diminished Energy
- Loss of Appetite
- Cheyne-Stokes Breathing
- Body Temperature
- Seeing People from the Past

3) End of Life Nutrition

- A Medical, Not Philosophical, Reality
- Nutrition Boosters
- Disease Specific Diets
- Other Dietary Considerations
- Eliminations
- Herbs and Nutritional Supplements

7) Pain Management

7) Symptom Control

10) What to Do in the Final Moments

10) What Happens in the Final Moments

11) After the Passing

12) Conclusion

How to Care for the Dying Patient and Control End of Life Symptoms

Though each person's process is unique, there are certain signs and symptoms that generally appear as the end of life approaches. This report is designed to assist you in recognizing and being prepared for them so you take care of yourself and best care for your loved one.

Recognizing When the End of Life Is Approaching

When a patient enters hospice care it's impossible to know exactly when their passing will occur. In general, to be recommended for hospice the prognosis is less than six months. However, in the end stages of life there are certain signs that usually appear which signal that there are anywhere from a few days to a couple hours left.

END OF LIFE SIGNS

The following indicators will almost always appear. Please be aware that they are not an exact timetable. There is a general timing to give you a sense of where the patient may be in the process, however each person is unique.

Diminished Energy

Usually the first indicator that the patient is moving more quickly toward passing is that the patient's energy diminishes and they begin sleeping much more. As this happens, they also turn their focus more inward. They will be less concerned with things like the news or the television. This may signal there is a week or two weeks before the end, and that's when it is wise to begin preparing yourself and loved ones for the final moments.

Loss of Appetite

Along with less energy, there is a diminishing of the appetite. Though this may be a symptom throughout the illness, at some point there will be a marked change. When it gets down to the last few days, there is a complete loss of appetite.