

Supportive and Palliative Care

What is Supportive and Palliative Care?

Supportive and Palliative Care is a medical specialty that provides specialized and comprehensive care to people living with serious illnesses. It focuses on relieving the symptoms and stress of serious illness. The goal is to improve the quality of life for all patients and their families.

Palliative Care is provided by a team of palliative care physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains, and others who work together with a patient's other physicians to provide an extra layer of support. It is appropriate at any age and at any stage in a serious illness and can be provided along with curative treatment.

How Can Supportive and Palliative Care Help My Family and I?

A consult with the Supportive and Palliative Care team can help manage distressing symptoms such as pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, nausea, depression, and anxiety. Since patients and families experience serious illness together, our interdisciplinary team strives to understand what patients and families need, provides education about what a loved one is experiencing, and offers emotional, psychological, and spiritual support. Palliative Care also provides counseling around difficult medical decision-making, often occurring in family units, and coordination of care across health care settings.

When Should I Seek Supportive and Palliative Care?

Supportive and Palliative Care is a part of a patient's overall care, and is appropriate the moment a patient is diagnosed with a serious illness. We work alongside the patient, family, and specialized medical team, as patients pursue therapies and interventions designed to fight the serious illness. Palliative Care can start at the beginning, middle, or

at the end. The biggest benefit has been shown to be in the beginning, with patients not only living longer, but with higher quality of life.

Is Supportive and Palliative Care the Same as Hospice?

No, Supportive and Palliative Care provides care at **ANY** stage of a serious illness. Patients can receive Supportive and Palliative Care while also receiving curative treatments and interventions.

Hospice is available when a patient's prognosis is estimated to be six months or less, and the focus of care has shifted from curative interventions and aggressive treatments to symptom management, comfort, and quality of life. Hospice provides patients and families with the support they need as they focus on comfort and quality.