



LIVING WITH A TERMINAL ILLNESS

AT THE END OF LIFE BROCHURE SERIES: 3

CareSearch is a website that has been developed to help patients and their families find quality information about palliative care. Pages can be downloaded or printed to read later. You can find these pages at www.caresearch.com.au in the Patient-Family section.



Further information:

CareSearch is an online resource funded by the Department of Health and Ageing to help patients and their families find helpful information about palliative care. There are over 600 pages in the website and over 100 have been written specifically for patients, family members and others in the community. These pages include links to other quality web resources and provide information on state and national services and organisations.

It is free to use and available now at
www.caresearch.com.au

1. CareSearch is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing as part of the National Palliative Care Program.
2. CareSearch is managed by the Department of Palliative and Supportive Services, Flinders University.



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Many people are living with a serious illness that cannot be cured. There are things that they, and their families, will need to consider.

PLANNING

It is a good idea to think about what is important now as well as planning for how to cope as things change. Being well informed helps to make any preparations and decisions easier. Planning can include many things such as:

Talking to people about your wishes and arrangements

- > What should be in an advance care directive
- > Writing a will or planning the funeral

Deciding whether to continue working

- > Both the person who is ill and the family carer need to consider whether they want to, or need to, keep working

Managing financial matters

- > Considering costs of care
- > Checking superannuation and insurances
- > Seeking carer or illness benefits

CHANGES OVER TIME

Having a serious illness will bring about changes. Learning what is likely to happen and how things could change can reduce anxiety. It can help in making important decisions, such as whether this is the right time to take a special trip.

EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES

If you have a serious illness, experiencing complicated feelings and emotions is common. It is sometimes difficult being cared for when you were previously independent. Facing your own fears and the fears and emotions of other people can also be challenging.

Families and friends can also experience intense feelings when someone close, is seriously ill or dying. Some people will start to grieve over the loss even before the person has died.

People cope with these feelings and emotions differently. While some people talk openly, other people do not. Many discussions may be difficult and emotional.

MANAGING SYMPTOMS

Palliative care helps manage physical symptoms such as pain or breathlessness as well as helping with emotional, social and spiritual concerns.

Many Australians use complementary therapies. Let health professionals, such as GPs and community nurses, know if any complementary therapies are being used. They will be able to check if there could be side effects or interactions with medications or medical treatments.

There is more information about living with a terminal illness and helpful resources such as pain diaries or medication charts on the CareSearch website.

