



## HOW TO CARE AT THE END OF LIFE BROCHURE SERIES: 4

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](http://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](http://www.caresearch.com.au)



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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.



Each year around 60,000 people will die an expected death in Australia. Most of these people will be cared for at home for some, or all, of this time. Yet many of those who will provide care in the home will never have looked after someone who is seriously ill before.

## CARING AT THE END OF LIFE

Family members often help and care for each other. However, when there is a serious illness in the family, caring for this person becomes a priority. Over time they may need more physical and emotional support.

A carer is someone who takes on the responsibility of looking after the person who is ill. This caring role may be undertaken by people who do not necessarily think of themselves as a 'carer'.

They may simply see themselves as a spouse, friend, neighbour, extended family, sibling, child, parent, etc...

This role may not be something that they thought they would ever be asked to do. Many people see it as part of their relationship with another person.

Some people take it on willingly while others are unsure or feel a sense of obligation. Other people do not feel capable of taking on the role or do not want to.

## SPECIFIC CARING TASKS

Caring can cover many things such as

- > managing household tasks like cooking, shopping, washing and cleaning
- > helping with financial matters such as bill paying
- > providing transport for the patient and going with them to medical appointments
- > helping the patient manage their personal hygiene
- > managing medications in the home
- > communicating with family and friends

When caring for a person at home, special equipment and materials may be needed. This can make the patient feel more comfortable and enable them to be cared for more safely and easily at home. The family carer may need to learn how to use this equipment safely and properly.

## CARING FOR THE CARER

Providing physical and emotional care for a person when they are seriously ill is demanding. Looking after someone, whether on a full-time or part-time basis is not easy. There are a lot of things to take into consideration, and a lot of things to learn. Many people who take on the family carer role find it satisfying and rewarding. Others may find it very challenging. It is easy to feel tired and overwhelmed.

Respite services and other supports can help family carers. Health professionals can provide information on these services.

The CareSearch website provides information and links to many resources for carers.

