

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



People vary in their knowledge, understanding and beliefs about death and dying. They also differ in what they want to know and how much information they want. For many, knowing what to expect can help take some of the fear and anxiety away. For others, too much information can be worrying.

PLACE OF CARE / PLACE OF DEATH

Many people say they would prefer to be cared for and die at home. Home can mean different things to different people. It may be the house in which they have lived for most of their life. It could be a residential aged care facility or a special place that has personal, cultural or spiritual meaning.

Others want to be cared for in a hospital or hospice. Some people who are already in a hospital or hospice may ask to go home to die.

Preferences and choices can also change over time. Therefore, there needs to be continuing discussions about what is the best place for care.

CARING AT THE END

Over time as the illness progresses, there may be more caring needs. There may be new symptoms or symptoms may change in frequency and severity. Doctors and nurses can help in managing any change in symptoms.

As many people have little or no prior experience of dying and death, it can be useful to talk with health professionals about what will happen. It may be important for some to have detailed information about what to expect. For others knowing that advice and support is available is reassurance enough.

There are common changes that most people will go through near death depending on the nature of their illness. People often eat and drink less, and spend more time sleeping. They may also have a change in complexion or skin colour and in circulation or breathing patterns. However, each person's death is individual, just as their life is.

The doctor, community or palliative care nurse can explain what these changes mean and what stage has been reached. It is useful to maintain close contact with the nurses and other health professionals who can provide support and guidance. This can help people to feel less alone. They can also provide useful advice on how to manage any particular caring matters.

Make sure that you have talked about what needs to happen after death. Keep the phone numbers for the doctor or community nurse nearby.

There is information on caring and preparing for the end of life on the CareSearch website that can help.

