

Palliative care resources for GPs

Palliative care is person and family-centred care provided for a person with an active, progressive, advanced disease, who has little or no prospect of cure and who is expected to die, and for whom the primary treatment goal is to optimise the quality of life.



How CareSearch helps GPs

General practices provide ongoing care for a large number of patients with chronic, debilitating, malignant and non-malignant diseases that are eventually fatal.

General Practitioners (GPs) have an essential role in providing palliative care and end-of-life care to patients and their families.

CareSearch provides evidence-based palliative care information and resources to support everyone across the life-course.

In addition to providing access to high level Clinical Evidence, and tools for Finding Evidence, CareSearch provides practical guidance and tips on palliative care topics through the Information for GPs section.

Learn more at www.caresearch.com.au

Information for GPs	TIP
Patient assessment	Use a simple tool to methodically review symptoms in palliative care patients e.g, the PEPSI COLA tool and the Distress Thermometer.
Planning palliative care	Most patients expect their doctor will raise palliative care issues when needed. Find an opening statement to use.
Symptom management	8 common symptoms are experienced by patients: Appetite, Bowels, Breathing, Delirium, Fatigue, Nausea and Vomiting, Pain, and Sleep.
Clinical decisions	Think about route of administration: loss of the ability to swallow is an inevitable part of deterioration.
The dying patient	Opioid conversions can be calculated using the EviQ opioid calculator.
Bereavement	Although the use of medications and medical services often increases in the bereavement period, the most at risk patients may not seek medical assistance.
Practice management	In general, injectable medications that do not require dilution or a separate diluent can safely be given subcutaneously, with the exception of prochlorperazine and diazepam.
Professional practice	In a busy general practice setting it is common for GPs to 'soldier on' despite a level of distress. However, accumulating stressors can lead over time to burnout.

An online, evidence-based guidance and knowledge resource about palliative care in aged care, palliAGED is primarily for health professionals and the aged care workforce.

How palliAGED helps GPs

palliAGED incorporates and updates information contained in the Guidelines for a Palliative Approach in Residential Aged Care (APRAC) and the Guidelines for a Palliative Approach for Aged Care in the Community Setting (COMPAC).

Applying the CareSearch evidence-based model, palliAGED specialises in the palliative care needs of older people.

Tip: As a general rule, 'as needed' doses should be between one sixth and one twelfth of the total daily dose.

palliAGED is divided into four sections including the **Practice Centre** where you will find **For GPs** and **Evidence in Practice**. Improve your understanding and access practical tools, tips and resources relevant to the care of older people with palliative care needs.

Tool: Supportive and Palliative Care Indicators Tool (SPICT™) is used to help identify people at risk of deteriorating and dying with one or multiple advanced conditions.

Examples of palliAGED Content

For GPs	Support for GPs in understanding the available services and structures that assist in providing palliative care.
Evidence in Practice	Practical guidance on what those working in aged care can do across 35 separate topics. Each page links to a companion Evidence page in the Evidence Centre.
Evidence Centre	A concise synopsis of best evidence in a palliative care/aged care context. Each page has a companion page with practical information found in the Evidence in Practice Centre.
Symptoms and medicines	A single gateway to information on the 8 most commonly encountered symptoms, and information on prescribing and management of medications in palliative care.
palliAGED gp App	Smartphone app to support clinical processes of advance care plan, case conference, and terminal care management plan. Also supports prescribing in the terminal phase.

palliAGED also includes a freely available smartphone app to guide decision making in palliative care.

Learn more at www.palliaged.com.au