

## What is a Palliative Approach?

A palliative approach to care aims to improve the quality of life for residents with life-limiting illnesses and to support their families. The usual time to start a palliative approach is when treatments given to cure a condition are no longer working or when the resident chooses to stop their curative treatments. The focus of a palliative approach is on comfort and maintaining or improving quality of life so that residents can live as well as possible until they die in an atmosphere of care and support.

### Key messages

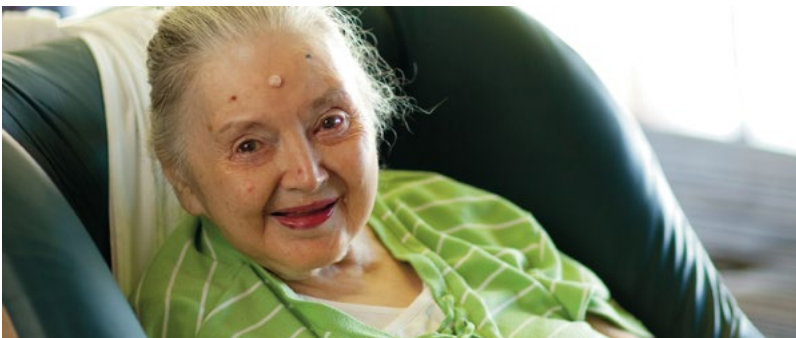
- The decision to commence a palliative approach should be made in collaboration with the resident, their family and the care team.
- A palliative approach aims to improve the resident's quality of life and comfort. The focus is on the resident's cultural, emotional, social and spiritual wishes as well as their care preferences, rather than on aggressive medical treatments.
- Care management includes good symptom control and attention to the resident's social and spiritual needs.
- A palliative approach can be provided in any setting, including residential aged care facilities.
- It is not limited to the last days or weeks of a resident's life.

### What can you do?

- Provide the care that you know the resident would want, as directed in their care plans.
- Listen carefully when residents talk about things that may be troubling them and report back to the nursing staff.
- Look out for any discomfort or changes in the resident's condition – e.g. fatigue, loss of appetite, loss of mobility, pain, confusion, and report back to the nursing staff.

### Why it works

- Supports the best possible care for the resident.
- Provides the resident and their family with care delivered by staff who they know and trust.
- Allows for early assessment and management of pain and other symptoms.
- Allows for open discussion about death and dying that can help ensure a 'good death' for the resident, in their place of choice.



### Related pages

[Introduction to a Palliative Approach](#) - clicking here will open a printable version of a flipchart that gives an introduction to a palliative approach (see pages 7-18).

[Being Part of the Care Process](#) - clicking here will take you to a video presentation (13 minutes) that discusses the role of the careworker in three key processes important in implementing a palliative approach to care.

[Suiting the Needs: A Palliative Approach in Residential Aged Care](#) - clicking here will take you to a video (12 minutes) that uses a fictional scenario to demonstrate a palliative approach.

### Relevant links

CareSearch - [www.caresearch.com.au](http://www.caresearch.com.au)

Residential Aged Care Palliative Approach Toolkit - [www.caresearch.com.au/PAToolkit](http://www.caresearch.com.au/PAToolkit)

Palliative Care Australia -

[www.palliativecare.org.au](http://www.palliativecare.org.au)

