
End of life and palliative care for older Victorians

Summary

- End of life and palliative care for older Victorians can be provided at home, in residential aged care or in an inpatient facility at a hospital.
 - Deciding to leave home can be difficult; talk with family members and your doctor
 - Family members or friends can still provide care for you if you have been admitted to an inpatient facility or residential care home.
 - Make your transition to inpatient care more comfortable by bringing some special items from home as well as music, photos and books.
 - Information is available in several languages for people from all communities.
 - You can record your preferences for care in an advance care plan.
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If you are living with a life-limiting illness, end of life and palliative care services can be provided to you at home. This may include visits from a range of service providers on an occasional or regular basis. Your needs determine what services you may require, not your diagnosis.

However, not everyone chooses to remain at home for end of life or palliative care, and you should not be 'persuaded' to receive home-based care if this is not right for you, or you don't have adequate care and support at home. You may choose to make this decision together with your family or people you live with. If you live alone you may like to discuss this with your GP, a trusted health professional or close friend.

There may be different levels of end of life care services available, depending on where you live. **End of life care and palliative care services at home** may include:

- support from a wide range of healthcare and community service providers such as the **Commonwealth Home Support Program** or district nurses
- allied health services such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, podiatry and music or art therapy
- nursing support and review
- medical support from your GP
- practical support and assistance from volunteers formally trained in end of life care
- emotional and spiritual support
- information and resources
- complementary therapies such as massage or aromatherapy
- support for family or those caring for you
- bereavement support.

There is support available in Victoria if you choose to receive **palliative care at home**. However, there may be times when you need more care than can be given at home, and you may decide to move into residential care.

If your condition fluctuates, worsens or becomes complex, you may need care in a hospital or an inpatient specialist palliative care unit. Depending on where you live, the closest palliative care unit may be based in a local hospital. Often you can return home after a period of inpatient care.

End of life and palliative care in a residential care facility

Depending on your needs, your doctor may suggest that you move into a residential care facility. By moving into a residential care home or supported disability accommodation you will get the longer-term care you need as well as managing your end of life care needs.

Residential care facilities sometimes have a doctor or specialist nursing staff. The facility can also involve the community palliative care service in your area to provide specialist care.

For residential aged care you will need to be assessed by the Aged Care Assessment Service. For more information see the [Residential aged care homes](#) fact sheet.

Information on palliative care in aged care facilities is available from the [palliAGED](#) website.

Your end of life and palliative care options

Deciding when to move into a residential aged care home, inpatient palliative care unit or hospital is not always easy. It is a good idea to talk through the different possibilities with your family and trusted health professional. If your condition deteriorates, or your family or friends are no longer able to care for you, you may need to consider options for inpatient or residential care.

For more information visit the page [Palliative care in a hospital or community residential home](#).

Information about palliative care services for [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is available here](#).

There is more [information for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities here](#), including information in several languages.

There is more information for people from the [LGBTI community here](#).

Make an advance care plan

Advance care planning is the process of making your care and medical treatment preferences known to your loved ones in the event that you cannot make these decisions yourself.

By putting a plan together, your family will know in advance about the level of healthcare and quality of life you would want if, because of your illness or medical condition, you are unable to participate in the discussions and make the decision for yourself.

You can talk with those close to you, your family, your doctor and treating team to make sure they are aware of what is important to you. For more information on starting a discussion with your family or friends visit [Dying to talk](#).

Where to get help

You can find end of life and palliative care services in Victoria at:

- [Better Health Channel](#) – use the 'Find a service' search option
- [Palliative Care Victoria](#) search directory
- [National Palliative Care Service](#) online directory
- [PalliAGED](#) service directory

This page has been produced in consultation with and approved by:

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