



PATIENT AND FAMILY **HANDBOOK**

NEW AGE
"for they shall be comforted" **HOSPICE**

CALL US FIRST!
WE ARE HERE TO HELP
CALL US ANYTIME
24 HOURS A DAY
7 DAYS A WEEK

Call when:

- Pain is out of control
- Unexpected changes occur (falls, injury)
- Patient is declining and symptoms are unmanageable
- Patient is approaching death
- Death has occurred



Contact Information

24/7 Nurse Call Line

832-369-6970

Our mission is to walk beside you and your loved ones with compassion, respect, and dignity. We are here to provide comfort, to support your choices, and to honor your values. Hospice care is not about giving up—it is about focusing on what matters most to you, whether that is comfort, meaningful time with family, or living each day with dignity and peace.

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Dear Patient and Family

On behalf of the entire New Age Hospice team, we want to warmly welcome you. We understand that entering hospice care is a deeply personal decision; one that comes with many emotions and questions. Please know that you are not alone on this journey.

This handbook has been created as a guide and resource for you and your family. Inside, you will find helpful information about our services, what to expect, and how our team can support you in practical and emotional ways. Most importantly, know that our staff and volunteers are always here to answer questions, provide guidance, and offer a listening ear. Your care is our priority, and your family is part of ours.

Thank you for allowing us the privilege of caring for you during this important season of life. With warmth and respect,

Your New Age Hospice Team

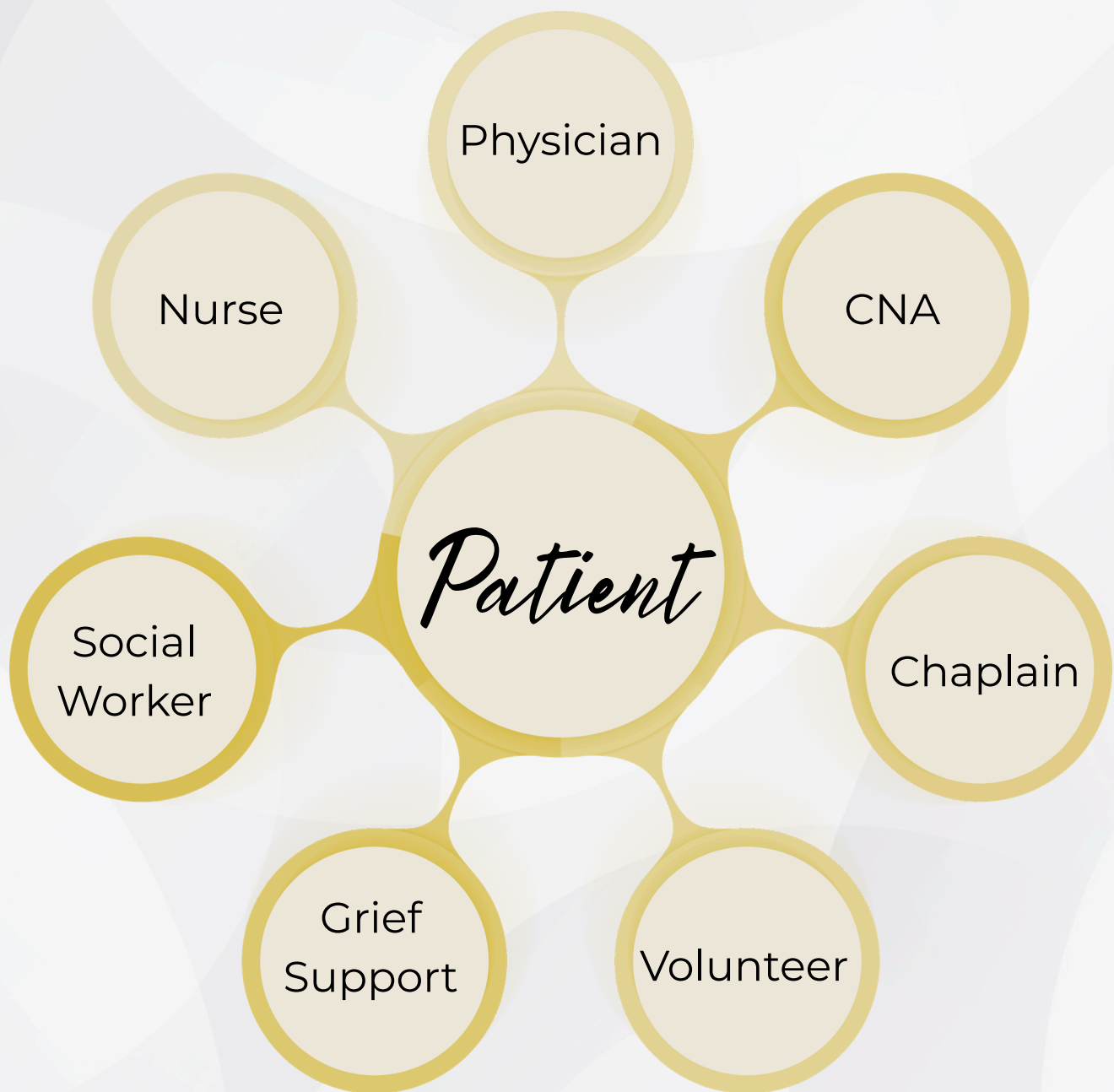
Your Hospice Team

At New Age Hospice, care is provided by a team of professionals and volunteers who work together to support you and your family. Each member of the team has a special role in making sure your needs—physical, emotional, and spiritual—are met.

- **Hospice Physician / Medical Director** – Oversees your medical care and works with your personal doctor to ensure comfort and quality of life.
- **Nurse (RN/LVN)** – Provides regular visits, monitors symptoms, manages medications, and coordinates care with the rest of the team.
- **Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) / Hospice Aide** – Assists with personal care needs such as bathing, grooming, and daily comfort.
- **Social Worker** – Offers emotional support, counseling, and helps with resources such as advance care planning, community services, and family support.
- **Chaplain / Spiritual Counselor** – Provides spiritual support, prayer, and encouragement based on your individual beliefs and values. Can perform funerals.
- **Bereavement Counselor** – Offers grief support to family and loved ones during care and for at least 13 months after loss.
- **Volunteers** – Specially trained community members who provide companionship, run errands, assist with light household tasks, or simply sit with patients to give caregivers a break.

Together, we are here to ensure that you and your loved ones feel supported, cared for, and never alone.

Patient Centered Care



Eligibility and Coverage

Eligibility for Hospice Care

Hospice care is available for patients who:

- Have a life-limiting illness with a prognosis of six months or less if the disease follows its normal course (as certified by a physician).
- Choose comfort-focused care rather than curative treatments.
- Desire support for themselves and their families to improve quality of life.

It's important to remember that hospice care is not about giving up hope—it's about shifting the focus toward comfort, dignity, and meaningful time with loved ones.

Coverage

Most hospice services are fully covered by:

- Medicare (Part A)
- Medicaid (state programs)
- Most private insurance plans
- Veterans' benefits

Covered services may include:

- Physician and nursing care, medications related to the terminal illness and symptom management, medical equipment (hospital bed, oxygen, walkers, etc.) and supplies (incontinence products, gloves, disposable items, etc.), hospice aide and personal care services, counseling and spiritual support, volunteer services, bereavement support for the family after a patient's passing

Our team can help you navigate your coverage and answer questions about any costs that may apply. We are here to walk beside you, so you can focus on love, not just responsibility.

Levels of Hospice Care

Hospice offers different levels of care to meet patients' changing needs:

Routine Home Care

- The most common level of care.
- Provided wherever the patient lives—home, nursing facility, or assisted living.
- Regular visits from the hospice team for symptom management, support, and education.

Continuous Care (Crisis Care)

- Short-term, around-the-clock nursing support.
- Used during times of medical crisis to manage uncontrolled symptoms at home.

General Inpatient Care (GIP)

- For symptoms that cannot be managed at home.
- Provided in a hospital, hospice inpatient unit, or skilled nursing facility until symptoms are under control.

Respite Care

- Short-term care in a facility (up to 5 days).
- Gives family caregivers a much-needed break while ensuring the patient receives quality care.

Hospice care is not one-size-fits-all. It meets you where you are, with different levels of support that change as your needs change—ensuring comfort, dignity, and peace at every step.

Services and Equipment

To ensure comfort, safety, and dignity, hospice provides medical equipment and supplies related to your illness and symptom management. These are delivered directly to your home or care setting and maintained by the hospice team.

Commonly Provided Equipment

- Items to add comfort
- Hospital bed, Pressure-relief mattress
- Wheelchair, Walker or cane
- Bedside commode, Shower chair
- Oxygen equipment
- Nebulizer or suction machine
- Over-bed table

Commonly Provided Supplies

- Incontinence products (pads, briefs, underpads)
- Gloves and disposable protective items
- Wound care dressings
- Catheters and related supplies
- Syringes or other medication administration supplies
- Special nutritional supplements (when prescribed)

*While hospice covers many medical needs, it does **not** provide items considered **unrelated to the terminal diagnosis** or **basic daily living needs**, such as:*

Room and board (in a private home, assisted living, or nursing facility), household items (toiletries, laundry detergent, paper goods, etc.), non-prescription medications not related to the terminal illness (such as vitamins, cold medicine, or over-the-counter pain relievers, unless recommended by the hospice team), food and regular groceries not prescribed as special nutrition for medical needs, long-term, non-medical caregivers or sitter services.

The Hospice Process:

What to Expect

Choosing hospice care is a meaningful step toward comfort, dignity, and support for both patients and families. At New Age Hospice, we want you to feel informed and reassured about what this journey looks like.

Admission and First Visit - A team member will meet with you and your family. Together, we review your medical history, current needs, and your goals and complete consents for care. We answer questions, explain services, and begin creating a personalized plan of care.

Your Plan of Care - The plan is developed with input from you, your family, your physician, and the hospice team. It includes medical, emotional, and spiritual support tailored to your wishes. The plan is updated regularly as needs change.

Ongoing Support at Home (or Place of Residence) - Nurses visit regularly to manage symptoms and medications. Hospice aides provide personal care such as bathing and grooming. Social workers offer counseling, community resources, and family support. Chaplains provide spiritual care according to your beliefs. Volunteers may offer companionship, errands, or caregiver breaks.

24/7 Availability - A hospice nurse is always on call, day or night, for urgent needs. Families can call at any time with questions or concerns.

Managing Changes - If symptoms become difficult to manage at home, short-term inpatient or continuous care can be arranged. Equipment, medications, and supplies are adjusted as needed.

Family Support - Caregivers receive education on what to expect and how to provide daily support. Respite care is available to give families a needed break and to help avoid caregiver burnout.

Bereavement and Grief Support - Hospice care continues for families after a loved one passes. Bereavement counselors offer support for at least 13 months following loss.

Getting Organized

Taking time to organize important documents and information will make caregiving smoother and less stressful. Having everything in one place means you'll know where to find what you need when you need it.

Patient Records

Gather copies of key documents and keep them in a safe:

- Driver's license and Social Security card
- Insurance cards
- Veterans ID and discharge papers (if applicable)
- Banking and investment records
- Mortgage, lease, and utility bills
- Retirement account information
- Patient's will or estate documents

Advance Care Planning

- Patients are encouraged to complete a Medical Durable Power of Attorney, naming someone they trust to make healthcare choices if they are unable to do so.
- Discuss and record wishes about treatments such as resuscitation, so care matches the patient's values.

Phone Numbers & Addresses

- Hospice team contacts
- Family and close friends
- Physicians and other healthcare providers
- Pharmacies and important services

Power of Attorney for Finances

- A Financial (Durable) Power of Attorney allows someone to manage bills, banking, and records if the patient can no longer do so.
- This is separate from the Medical Power of Attorney.
- Talk with your attorney or the hospice social worker to set this up if needed.

To Do List/Notes

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A Note for Caregivers

Being a caregiver takes strength, patience, and compassion. It is a gift of love, but it can also be tiring and overwhelming at times. You may feel unsure of how to balance caring for your loved one while also caring for yourself. Please remember—you are not alone. The New Age Hospice team is here to guide and support you every step of the way.

This handbook is designed to give you practical tools and simple strategies to help with daily care, organization, and communication. Keeping things clear and manageable is often the best approach. A written list, a calendar for medications, or even a small whiteboard for quick notes can make daily routines easier and less stressful.

As you step into the caregiver role, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Ask your loved one about their needs and preferences when possible.
- Learn what to expect from their illness and how symptoms may change.
- Treat them with dignity—talk, share, and engage as normally as you can. Do not assume they can not hear or understand.
- Take care of yourself: rest, eat well, and lean on friends, family, or respite care when needed.
- Stay flexible—plans and routines may change daily.
- Watch for signs of emotional strain, loneliness, or fatigue in yourself, and reach out for help.

Most importantly, never hesitate to ask for support. Hospice care is a team effort, and you are not expected to do this alone. We are here to provide comfort, guidance, and solutions so that you and your loved one can focus on what matters most—time together.



The Heart of Caregiving

The heart of caregiving is patience, kindness, and remembering that even the simplest moments matter. A gentle touch, a shared smile, or simply sitting quietly together can bring comfort and peace.

Caregiving is not measured by grand gestures, but by the love and presence you give in each moment. These small acts, done with compassion, create memories that last and remind your loved one that they are cherished.

Caregiver Responsibilities & Support in Daily Living

Family caregivers are an essential part of the hospice team. At New Age Hospice, we walk beside you, helping you care for your loved one with dignity, comfort, and support.

Caregiver Responsibilities May Include:

- Medication support – Giving medicines as directed by the nurse, keeping track of schedules, and reporting any changes in symptoms.
- Comfort care – Helping with positioning, providing blankets or pillows, and noticing changes in comfort.
- Nutrition and hydration – Assisting with meals or fluids, and following the care team's guidance.
- Observation – Watching for changes in breathing, skin color, alertness, or mood, and communicating with the hospice nurse.
- Emotional support – Offering a calm presence, listening, and providing reassurance to the patient.
- Communication – Calling the hospice team with questions or when needs arise, especially if there are sudden changes.

Assisting with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs):

Hospice aides and family caregivers may work together to help with:

- Bathing, grooming, and personal hygiene
- Dressing and changing clothes
- Toileting and incontinence care
- Safe movement and transfers (bed to chair, walking, etc.)
- Eating and drinking support
- Light comfort measures (changing linens, tidying patient space)

Medication Safety & Disposal

Medication Safety

- Always check the **name and dose** on the medication label.
- Read the instructions carefully and be sure you understand why the medicine is prescribed.
- Give medications **exactly as directed** by the hospice nurse or physician.

Safe Disposal at Home

Never flush medications down the toilet or sink—they can harm the water supply. Instead, follow these steps:

- Empty pills, liquids, or creams into a zip-top bag or plastic container with a lid.
- Mix with an unappealing substance (kitty litter, coffee grounds, dirt, or sawdust).
- Add a small amount of water, soda, or vinegar to make the mixture unusable.
- Seal the bag/container and place it inside another unmarked bag before putting it in the trash.
- Use a marker to cross out personal information on empty prescription bottles, then place bottles in the trash.

If you have questions about a medication or how to dispose of it, your hospice nurse can guide you.



Helping with Daily Care

These activities are called Activities of Daily Living (ADLs). They help your loved one stay comfortable, clean, and dignified. Always move at a slow pace, explain what you are doing, and ask for help from the hospice team if you are unsure.

Bathing, Grooming, and Personal Hygiene

- Gather supplies before starting (towels, washcloths, soap, lotion, razor, toothbrush).
- Keep the room warm and maintain privacy.
- Use gentle, short strokes with a warm, damp washcloth. Clean and dry one area at a time.
- Apply lotion to keep skin soft and prevent dryness.
- Brush teeth or provide mouth swabs if brushing isn't possible.
- Shave or comb hair if desired, always checking with the patient for preferences.

Dressing and Changing Clothes

- Choose loose, soft clothing that's easy to put on and remove.
- Lay clothes out in order (underwear first, outer layers last).
- Dress the weaker or affected arm/leg first; undress it last.
- Allow your loved one to do as much as they are able to maintain independence.

Toileting and Incontinence Care

- Provide privacy but remain nearby if assistance is needed.
- Use bedside commodes, urinals, or bedpans when walking is difficult.
- Wear disposable gloves when assisting.
- Cleanse gently with wipes or warm water after toileting.
- Change incontinence pads or briefs promptly to prevent skin irritation.
- Apply barrier cream to protect skin if recommended by the nurse.

Safe Movement and Transfers (Bed to Chair, Walking, etc.)

- Explain each step before moving.
- Use non-slip shoes or socks.
- Bend at your knees, not your waist, and keep your back straight.
- Support the patient under the arms or with a gait belt if provided.
- Move slowly—pause if the patient feels dizzy or weak.
- Ask the hospice team for training on special equipment like Hoyer lifts, walkers, wheelchairs, or transfer boards.

Eating and Drinking Support

- Sit your loved one upright to prevent choking.
- Offer small bites and sips, allowing plenty of time to swallow.
- Use straws or special cups if recommended.
- Watch for coughing, pocketing food, or signs of difficulty swallowing—report these to the nurse.
- Keep water nearby and encourage small, frequent drinks to prevent dehydration.
- Respect when your loved one eats less—loss of appetite is common at the end of life.

Light Comfort Measures (Changing Linens, Tidying Patient Space)

- Change linens when soiled, or more often if it improves comfort.
- Roll the patient gently to one side when changing sheets to avoid strain.
- Keep the bedside table within easy reach (glasses, tissues, phone).
- Reduce clutter and keep pathways clear to prevent falls.
- Add personal touches—photos, favorite blankets, etc—for comfort.



Disposal of Soiled Linens and Supplies

Maintaining good hygiene is an important part of keeping your loved one comfortable and preventing skin irritation or infection. Hospice staff will guide you, but here are some helpful steps for safe disposal of soiled linens or supplies.

Cleaning Soiled Linens

- Wear disposable gloves when handling soiled sheets, towels, or clothing.
- Roll soiled items inward to contain mess and place them directly into a designated laundry bag.
- Wash linens in hot water with regular detergent; add bleach if appropriate for the fabric.
- Dry items thoroughly before reuse to prevent odor and bacteria.
- Keep clean linens ready so you can make a quick change when needed.

Disposing of Bodily Fluids & Supplies

- Use disposable bed pads or protective briefs to help contain waste.
- Place soiled pads, gloves, wipes, and other disposables in a plastic bag, tie securely, and place in household trash.
- Wash reusable basins, commodes, or bedpans with hot soapy water after each use; rinse well and let air dry.
- Disinfect commodes or equipment regularly with a diluted bleach solution (1 part bleach to 10 parts water).
- Always wash your hands thoroughly after disposal.

Home Safety

We are committed to keeping you and your loved one safe. Team members can help you with simple home adaptations if needed.

Preventing Infections

- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Keep hand sanitizer with at least 65% alcohol nearby.
- Use disposable gloves when handling blood or body fluids.
- Disinfect food prep areas, tables, and counters regularly.

Preventing Fires

- Never smoke or use open flames (candles, gas stoves) near oxygen. If someone smokes, turn oxygen off and move it to another room.
- Make sure frail patients do not use ovens, microwaves, or stoves unless safe to do so.
- Never leave items unattended on stovetops.
- Inspect cords for fraying and avoid overloading outlets or cords.

Preventing Falls on Stairs

- Keep stairs well-lit and clear of clutter.
- Install sturdy handrails—ideally on both sides.
- Wear shoes with grip; avoid only socks or smooth-soled footwear.

Preventing Trips or Slips

- Remove small rugs or secure them with double-sided tape or rubber matting and tack down loose carpet edges.
- Be cautious of pets, which are a common cause of falls.

Bathroom Safety

- Use non-slip mats or textured strips in tubs and showers.
- Install grab bars near the toilet, tub, and shower.
- Test water temperature with your hand before use.
- Place a night light in the bathroom.
- Use a non-slip bathmat outside the tub/shower.

Emergency Plan

Emergencies can feel overwhelming, but having a plan in place helps everyone stay calm and safe. The following steps outline what to do if an urgent situation arises.

Call Hospice First

- Always call New Age Hospice before calling 911, unless there is an immediate life-threatening emergency (fire, severe injury, etc.).
- Our 24/7 nurse line will guide you through what to do and can send a nurse to your home if needed.
- Keep the hospice phone number posted by the phone and saved in your cell phone.

Medical Emergencies

If your loved one:

- Has sudden difficulty breathing
- Experiences severe pain not relieved by prescribed medication
- Shows sudden changes (confusion, agitation, unresponsiveness)

Call the 24/7 nurse line. They will advise you on medications to give, comfort measures, and whether an in-person visit is needed.

Fire or Home Hazard

- Get everyone to safety right away.
- Call 911, then notify the hospice team once you are safe.
- Do not try to move medical equipment during an active fire or hazard.

Power Outage

- Notify the hospice team, especially if oxygen or electrical medical equipment is in use.
- Have a flashlight and backup batteries available.
- Avoid using candles near oxygen equipment.

Keep Important Information Handy

Post or keep a folder in an easy-to-reach spot with:

- Hospice phone numbers
- Patient's medication list
- Advance directives / DNR orders
- Emergency contacts
- Address and directions for your home (to guide emergency responders if needed)

Family & Caregiver Roles

- Assign a family member or caregiver to call hospice.
- Another person should stay with the patient to provide comfort.
- Have one person responsible for gathering any needed supplies or documents.

Emotional Support During Emergencies

Emergencies can feel frightening. Remember:

- Take slow breaths and focus on one step at a time.
- Hospice staff are trained to handle urgent situations and will walk you through what to do.
- You are not alone—support is just a phone call away.

Planning ahead helps reduce stress and keeps everyone safe. Please review this plan with your hospice nurse and ask if you'd like a personalized version for your home and family needs.



Understanding Changes in Your Loved One

As illness progresses, your loved one may experience changes in their body, mind, and daily habits. These changes are natural at the end of life. Knowing what to expect can help you respond with comfort and compassion.

Behavior

- What may happen: Restlessness, confusion, or agitation may occur, especially as the body weakens.
- How to help: Keep the environment calm and safe. Speak in a gentle tone. Notify the hospice nurse if behavior changes suddenly, as medication adjustments may help.

Socialization

- What may happen: Your loved one may withdraw, speak less, or prefer quiet time alone.
- How to help: Respect their need for rest, but let them know you are near. Simple presence—sitting quietly, holding a hand—can be very comforting.

Appetite

- What may happen: Interest in food and fluids decreases, sometimes stopping altogether.
- How to help: Offer small sips or bites if desired, but never force food or drink. Moistening the mouth with swabs or ice chips can provide comfort. Loss of appetite is a natural part of the body's decline.

These changes are part of the natural process of the body slowing down. Your hospice team will guide you and provide support at every stage. You are not alone.

Elimination

- What may happen: Bowel movements and urination often decrease as eating and drinking slow. Incontinence may develop.
- How to help: Use protective pads, briefs, or commodes. Keep the skin clean and dry. Call the nurse if constipation or discomfort occurs—they can provide medication or guidance.

Breathing

- What may happen: Breathing may become irregular, shallow, or noisy. Periods of no breathing (pauses) are common.
- How to help: Keep your loved one propped up with pillows or on their side. A fan or open window may help. The hospice team may provide medication or oxygen for comfort. Remember, changes in breathing are usually not distressing to the patient, even if they appear so.

Body Temperature

- What may happen: Hands, feet, or skin may feel cool, mottled, or clammy; fevers may also occur.
- How to help: Use light blankets to keep your loved one comfortable (avoid electric blankets or heating pads). Adjust room temperature if needed. Notify the nurse of sudden temperature spikes.

Cognition

- What may happen: Confusion, forgetfulness, or unresponsiveness may increase. Your loved one may see or talk to people not present.
- How to help: Speak calmly, identify yourself when entering, and continue talking to them—they may still hear you. Avoid arguing or correcting—simply reassure and comfort.

Sleeping

- What may happen: Patients spend more time resting and may eventually sleep most of the time.
- How to help: Let them rest as needed. Visit and speak gently when they are awake, but do not try to keep them alert. Touch and presence still matter, even during sleep.

What to Expect as Life Nears Its End

Every person's journey is unique, and no one can predict the exact timing or sequence of changes. However, many people share certain physical, emotional, and spiritual signs as the body begins to slow down. Knowing what may happen can help you prepare and bring comfort to your loved one.

One to Three Months Before

- Less interest in people, activities, and surroundings
- Fewer conversations or quieter communication
- Eating and drinking less than usual
- Needing more rest and sleeping longer

One to Two Weeks Before

- Periods of confusion or disorientation
- Use of symbolic language (such as "I want to go home")
- Talking with or seeing loved ones who have already passed
- Physical changes may include:
 - Irregular breathing patterns
 - Changes in pulse, blood pressure, or body temperature
 - Cool or mottled skin
 - Decreased appetite and fluid intake

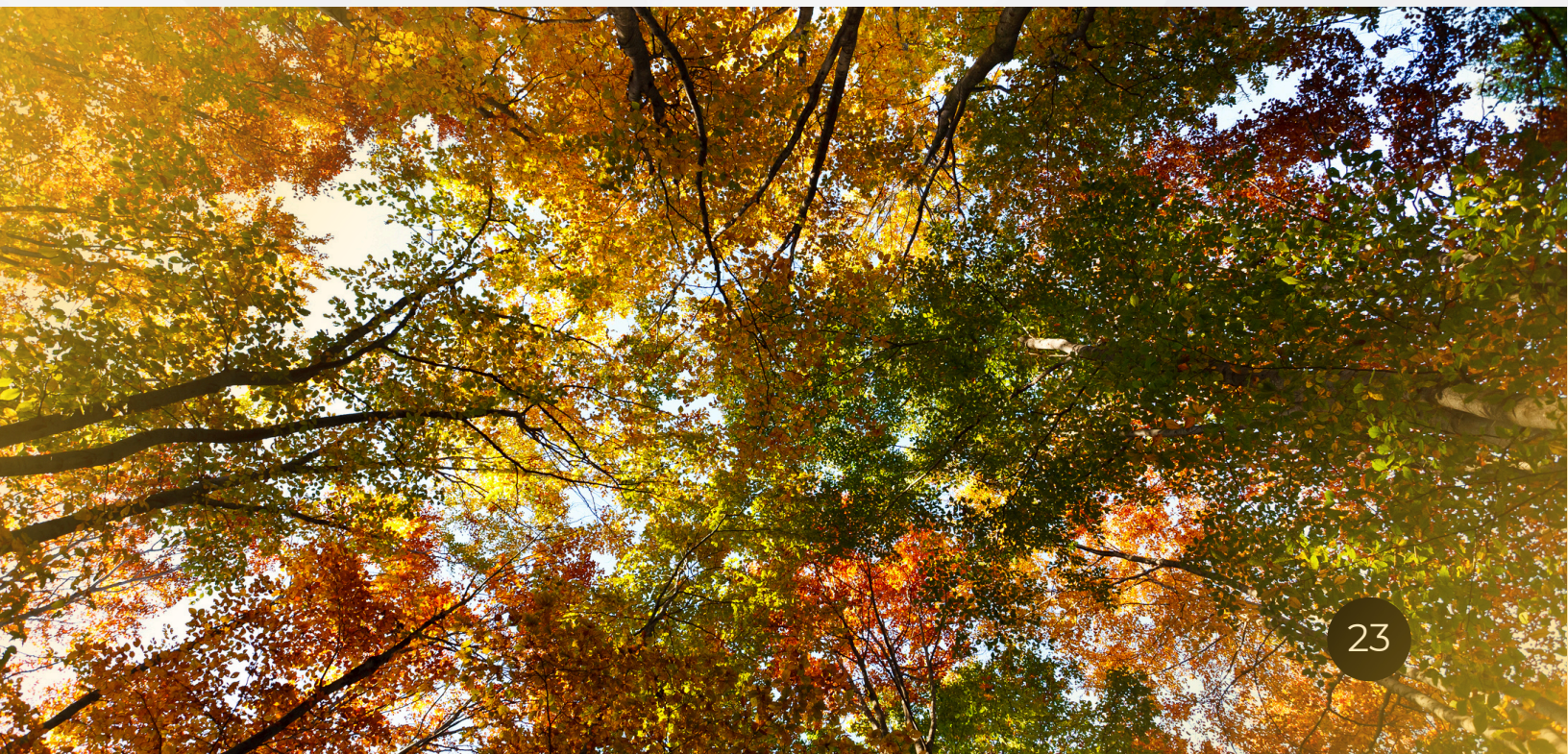
Days to Hours Before

- Sleeping most of the time
- A brief surge of energy or alertness may occur before further decline
- Restlessness or agitation at times
- Difficulty swallowing food, liquids, or medications
- Breathing changes with longer pauses or gurgling sounds
- Weak pulse, low blood pressure, and reduced urine output
- Eyes may remain partly open

Final Hours to Minutes

- Breathing slows, becomes shallow, with longer pauses
- Mouth breathing instead of through the nose
- Patient is usually unresponsive and may not awaken

These changes are a natural part of the body's process of letting go. Your hospice team will guide and support you during this time, ensuring your loved one's comfort and dignity.



Letting Go and Saying Goodbye

One of the hardest parts of the journey is accepting that the time to say goodbye is near. Every family experiences this differently, but it is important to remember: letting go does not mean letting go of love. As the body weakens, hearing is often the last sense to remain. Even if your loved one seems unresponsive, assume they can hear you. This is a precious time to:

- Speak words of love and reassurance.
- Share memories, prayers, or blessings.
- Offer forgiveness, or say “I’m sorry” if it feels right.
- Say “I love you” and “thank you” for the ways they have touched your life.
- Simply sit quietly, holding their hand, and let your presence bring peace.

Goodbyes do not need to be long or complicated. Gentle words and quiet presence are often enough. Some families find comfort in playing soft music, reading scripture or poetry, or sitting in silence together.

A Gentle Goodbye

*When words grow quiet, and hands grow still,
love remains stronger than breath, softer than time.*

*A touch, a whisper, a final embrace
these moments become memories that never fade.
Goodbye is not an ending, but a doorway to remembering.
Love lives on, in every heart that carries it forward.*

When Death Occurs

The passing of a loved one may happen at home, in a care facility, or in another setting. No matter where it occurs, New Age Hospice is here to walk beside you with guidance and support.

If the Patient Is at Home

- Call the New Age Hospice 24/7 nurse line. You do not need to call 911.
- Your call will be answered and a registered nurse will guide you through what to do next.
- A nurse will visit your home, verify the death, and notify the physician to officially pronounce your loved one.
- The nurse will help you arrange for your loved one's transfer to the funeral home or mortuary of your choice. This does not have to happen immediately—you may take the time you need, up to 24 hours.
- The nurse will assist with preparing the body, provide instructions on safely disposing of medications, and arrange for the removal of any medical equipment.

If the Patient Is in a Facility

- A hospice nurse will come to the facility to provide support.
- Our social worker can help notify family members if desired.
- The hospice chaplain or social worker may also visit to provide comfort, guidance, and spiritual care.

After the Death

- A member of your hospice team will reach out to check on you and your family. This is a time to reflect on the journey, answer questions, and provide reassurance.
- You will be offered grief and bereavement support, including counseling, groups, or resources.

Bereavement and Grief Support

At New Age Hospice, our care extends beyond the life of your loved one. We know that grief does not follow a timeline, and support is especially important in the months that follow a loss.

Bereavement Services We Provide

Individual Grief Counseling

- One-on-one support with a trained counselor who listens, helps you process your loss, and offers strategies for healing.

Family Support

- Assistance for families as they navigate grief together. Our team can help improve communication, ease conflict, and strengthen bonds during a difficult time.

Telephone & Virtual Support

- Regular check-ins by phone, video, or email to provide ongoing reassurance and guidance—especially helpful if leaving home is difficult.

Memorial Services & Remembrance Events

- Special gatherings to honor and celebrate the lives of those we have lost. These can be a source of comfort, connection, and reflection.

Educational Resources

- Printed guides, recommended readings, and workshops on grief and coping strategies to help you better understand what you're feeling.

Thirteen-Month Follow-Up

- Continued contact and support for at least 13 months after your loss—covering important anniversaries, holidays, and milestones when grief often feels strongest.

Grief is a normal, healthy response to losing someone you love. It can touch every part of your life—emotions, body, thoughts, behaviors, and spirituality. Reactions may come and go, sometimes in waves, and may feel stronger during reminders or anniversaries.

Emotional Reactions

- Sadness, anger, guilt, relief, fear, anxiety, or loneliness are common. You may feel numb at times or experience sudden tears without warning.

Physical Reactions

- Fatigue, changes in appetite, trouble sleeping, headaches, muscle tension, or a sense of heaviness in the chest are normal physical expressions of grief.

Cognitive Reactions

- Forgetfulness, difficulty concentrating, confusion, or even “searching” for the deceased can happen. Some people replay memories or final moments often in their minds.

Behavioral Reactions

- Withdrawing from others, avoiding reminders, restlessness, crying, or immersing yourself in work or activities to cope. Some may find themselves needing more quiet time, while others seek constant company.

Spiritual Reactions

- Grief can stir deep questions of meaning, faith, and purpose. Some people feel disconnected, while others find comfort in prayer, rituals, or spiritual practices.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. What you feel is your unique journey. Healing does not mean forgetting—it means learning to carry love and memory forward in new ways.

Coping with Grief

Grief can feel overwhelming and unpredictable. While nothing takes away the pain of losing someone you love, there are gentle practices that can help you cope and find moments of comfort along the way.

Take Care of Your Body

- Eat nourishing foods, even in small amounts.
- Rest when you can—grief can make you feel tired.
- Gentle movement, such as walking or stretching, can ease stress and improve sleep.

Express Your Feelings

- Keep a journal to write down thoughts, memories, or prayers.
- Create art, music, or crafts that honor your loved one.
- Talk with trusted friends, family, or a counselor about your feelings.

Stay Connected

- Reach out to family or friends for companionship, even if just for a short visit or phone call.
- Join a support group to connect with others who understand what you're going through.
- Allow people to help with meals, errands, or household tasks—it's okay to accept support.

Nurture Your Spirit

- Engage in spiritual practices that bring you peace, such as prayer, meditation, or attending services.
- Spend quiet time outdoors—nature can bring comfort and grounding.
- Light a candle or create a memory space in your home to honor your loved one.



Be Gentle With Yourself

- Grief has no timeline. Healing takes time, and it's normal to have ups and downs.
- Allow yourself to cry, rest, laugh, or feel joy when it comes—these are all natural parts of the process.
- Celebrate small steps of progress, such as getting through a difficult day or milestone.

When to Seek Extra Help

Sometimes grief feels too heavy to manage alone. Consider reaching out to a professional if you:

- Feel hopeless or unable to function in daily life.
- Withdraw completely from friends, family, or activities.
- Use alcohol, drugs, or other unhealthy ways to cope.
- Experience ongoing sleep loss, panic, or overwhelming sadness.

Funeral Planning

Saying goodbye to a loved one is a deeply personal process. For some families, planning a funeral or memorial service brings comfort and provides a way to honor and celebrate a life well lived. New Age Hospice is here to support you with resources and guidance.

First Steps After Death

- Decide on a funeral home or mortuary. If not already chosen, your hospice nurse can help connect you with local options.
- The funeral home will assist with transportation of your loved one, preparation of documents, and coordination of services.
- Gather important papers such as your loved one's will, insurance information, or military records (if requesting veteran honors).

Funeral and Memorial Service Options

Families may choose the type of service that best reflects their loved one's life, faith, and values. Common options include:

- Traditional Funeral Service – Often includes a viewing or visitation, followed by a formal service and burial.
- Memorial Service – A service held without the body present, often after burial or cremation.
- Celebration of Life – A personalized gathering focused on sharing stories, memories, music, or rituals unique to the individual.
- Military or Veteran Services – Honors such as flag presentation, "Taps," or burial in a veterans' cemetery.

Personal Touches of Remembrance

Consider adding meaningful elements that reflect your loved one's life:

- Favorite music, readings, or scripture
- Display of photos, artwork, or memorabilia
- Memory tables or boards where guests can share stories
- Candle lighting, balloon release, or planting a tree in their honor
- Special prayers, blessings, or cultural traditions

Support from New Age Hospice

- Social Workers – Assist with planning, paperwork, and connecting you to local funeral and remembrance resources.
- Chaplains – Provide spiritual guidance, help plan services, and offer prayers or readings if requested.
- Bereavement Team – Offers continued support before, during, and after the service, ensuring families feel cared for through the grieving process.

Funeral & Remembrance Planning Checklist

Funeral Home / Mortuary

- Name: _____
- Phone/Contact: _____

Service Details

- Type of Service (circle one):
 - Traditional Funeral
 - Memorial Service
 - Celebration of Life
 - Military / Veteran Honors
- Location: _____
- Date & Time: _____
- Officiant / Clergy: _____

Personal Touches

- Favorite music or hymns: _____
- Readings, scripture, or poems: _____
- Photos, slideshow, or memorabilia: _____
- Special rituals (candle lighting, balloon/dove release, etc.):

Participants

- Pallbearers: _____
- Speakers / Eulogists: _____
- Musicians / Readers: _____

Remembrance Ideas

- Memory table or guest book: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Video or photo slideshow: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Bereavement Resources

Grief can feel heavy, but you do not have to carry it alone. In addition to the support provided by New Age Hospice, here are some local resources, along with books that many families have found helpful.

Local Resources (Houston & Surrounding Areas)

- **Bo's Place** – Free grief support programs for children, families, and adults. Website: www.bosplace.org | Phone: (713) 942-8339
- **GriefShare** (Houston) - A Christian-based grief recovery program conducted in local churches across Houston. Weekly group meetings help people process grief together. Locations:

Tallowood Baptist Church, Mondays @ 6:30 pm

West University Baptist Church, Tuesdays @ 1:00 pm

- **Grief Guide** - Focused bringing healing through biblical education and support through Zoom calls, pod casts, local groups and seminars. www.griefguideministries.com

Relate Community Church 26206 Aldine Westfield Rd, Spring, TX 77373

Magnolia Apostolic Tabernacle 18235 FM 1488, Magnolia, TX 77354

In His Presence Church, 1202 E. P Street, Deer Park, TX 77536

- **Grief Recovery Center** (Houston) - A private counseling practice that offers individual therapy, grief groups, and structured grief recovery programs. Address:

2000 N. Loop West, Ste 100, Houston, TX 77018 Phone: (832) 413-2410

- Alexander JFS – Grief & Loss Counseling - Offers a weekly peer support group (via Zoom) for adults who have experienced the loss of a loved one, plus counseling services. Phone: (713) 986-7825
- Mabrie Memorial Mortuary – Aftercare & Grief Resources. Provides grief support resources, aftercare sessions, and referrals to local grief groups. 5000 Almeda Road, Houston, TX Phone: (713) 942-7673

Bereavement Resources

Local Resources (San Antonio & Surrounding Areas)

- **Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas** – Free grief support groups and counseling for children, young adults, caregivers, and families who have experienced the death of a loved one. Address: 205 W. Olmos Drive, San Antonio, TX 78212 | Website: www.cbcst.org | Phone: (210) 736-4847
- **GriefShare** (San Antonio) - A Christian-based grief recovery program conducted in local churches throughout San Antonio. Weekly group meetings help individuals process grief alongside others. Locations:
Concordia Lutheran Church, Thursdays @ 6:00 pm
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Saturdays @ 10:00 am
- **The Ecumenical Center – Life After Loss** - Offers grief counseling and a supportive six-week program that helps participants understand grief, share experiences, practice self-care, and adjust to life after loss. Address: 8310 Ewing Halsell Drive, San Antonio, TX 78229 | Website: www.echr.org | Phone: (210) 616-0885
- **CHRISTUS Health Spiritual Care** – Offers spiritual and emotional support, grief and loss counseling, crisis support, prayer, and assistance with memorial services and rituals for patients and their loved ones. Website: www.christushealth.org
- **GriefShare** – Additional participating churches include:
MacArthur Park Church of Christ, 1907 NE Loop 410, San Antonio, TX
Church of the Blessed Sacrament, 600 Oblate Drive, San Antonio, TX
Oak Hills Church, 19595 W. Interstate 10, San Antonio, TX

Bereavement Resources

Local Resources (Rio Grande Valley & Surrounding Areas)

- **Children's Bereavement Center – Rio Grande Valley** – Provides free grief counseling, peer support groups, family counseling, and grief camps for children, adolescents, young adults, and caregivers. McAllen and Harlingen locations are available. Address: 2302 S. 77 Sunshine Strip, Ste. 202, Harlingen, TX 78550 | Website: www.cbc-rgv.org | Phone: (956) 368-4065
- **GriefShare** (McAllen) - A Christian-based grief recovery program offered through local churches. The 13-week program includes educational videos, group discussions, and personal workbooks to help participants process the death of a loved one. Locations:

First Assembly of God, Mondays @ 6:30 pm

BT.Church, Thursdays @ 7:00 pm

- **HOPE Family Health Center** – Grief Support - Provides individual, family, and group counseling for people experiencing grief, depression, anxiety, trauma, or other emotional difficulties. A Spanish-language Grupo de Duelo is available for individuals coping with any type of loss. Address: 2332 Jordan Road West, McAllen, TX | Phone: (956) 994-3319 | Peer Support Warmline: (844) 755-4673
- **The Compassionate Friends** – McAllen Chapter - Offers peer support for parents, stepparents, grandparents, and adult siblings grieving the death of a child. Meetings provide a confidential environment where families can share experiences and receive support from others who have experienced a similar loss. Meeting Location:

McAllen Medical Center, 301 W. Expressway 83, McAllen, TX | Phone: (956) 687-3803

- **GriefShare** – Additional participating churches include:

Valley Community Church, McAllen, TX

The Upper Room RGV, Pharr, TX

Palm Valley Church, Mission, TX

Local Resources (Del Rio & Surrounding Areas)

- **West Texas Counseling & Guidance** – Provides professional counseling for adults and adolescents experiencing grief, loss, trauma, anxiety, depression, and other emotional challenges. Bilingual counseling in English and Spanish is available. Address: 906 E. 11th Street, Ste. 2, Del Rio, TX 78840 | Phone: (830) 256-8255
- **GriefShare** (Del Rio Area) - A Christian-based, 13-week grief recovery program offering educational videos, group discussions, and personal workbooks. Local availability may vary, and online English- and Spanish-language groups are available when an in-person Del Rio session is not currently meeting. Website: www.griefshare.org

Books on Grief & Healing

For Adults:

- *Beyond the First Year* by Gayla Holley
- *See You in the Morning* by Gayla Holley
- *My Friend I Care: The Grief Experience* by Barbara Karnes
- *On Grief and Grieving* by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross & David Kessler
- *Healing After Loss* by Martha Whitmore Hickman
- *It's OK That You're Not OK* by Megan Devine
- *The Grief Recovery Handbook* by John W. James & Russell Friedman
- *Understanding Your Grief* by Alan D. Wolfelt

For Children:

- *One Wave at a Time* by Holly Thompson (great for adults too!)
- *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst
- *God gave Us Heaven* by Lisa Tawn Bergren
- *Someone I Love Died* by Christine Harder Tangvald
- *Something Very Sad Happened: A Toddler's Guide* by Bonnie Zucker
- *I Can't Believe They're Gone* by Karen Brough & Haring Kariyawasam
- *When Someone You Love Has Died* by Stephanie Swidler, et al.
- *Everywhere, Still* by M.H. Clark & Claire Sahara Lemp
- *The Rabbit Listened* by Cari Doerrfeld
- *When I'm With Jesus: For Any Child With a Loved One in Heaven* by Kimberly Rae

Understanding Your Paperwork

Hospice care involves several important documents designed to protect you, your loved one, and ensure care is delivered according to your wishes. The following explains two key forms: **Hospice Consents** (18 pgs) and **Revocation of Hospice Care** (1 pg).

Hospice Consent Forms

Before hospice care begins, you'll be asked to review and sign Hospice Informed Consent forms.

This form:

- **Confirms understanding** that hospice care focuses on comfort, dignity, and quality of life—not curative treatment.
- **Authorizes New Age Hospice** to provide medical, emotional, and spiritual support as outlined in the plan of care.
- **Lists the patient's rights**—including the right to make decisions, refuse treatments, and receive respectful, individualized care.
- **Outlines coverage** through Medicare, Medicaid, or private insurance, so families know which services and supplies are included.
- **Names a representative** (often the legal next of kin or healthcare proxy) who can make decisions if the patient is unable.

Signing the consent forms allows the hospice team to begin providing care and support right away. We encourage you to review it anytime or ask questions.

Revocation of Hospice Care Form

Hospice care is always your choice. Patients or their legal representatives have the right to stop hospice services at any time.

A Revocation Form is used if:

- The patient decides to pursue curative treatment again.
- The family chooses to transfer to a different hospice agency.
- The patient wishes to discontinue hospice care for any reason.

When hospice care is revoked:

- The hospice benefit stops the day the revocation form is signed.
- Care transitions back to your primary physician or hospital, depending on your needs.
- You can re-enroll in hospice later if your condition meets eligibility requirements again.

Talk with Your Hospice Team First

Before deciding to revoke, we encourage you to discuss your reasons with your hospice nurse or social worker.

- Sometimes, your concerns (such as medication, equipment, or goals of care) can be resolved without ending services.
- We can help you explore options so your care plan continues to match your wishes.



Contact Information



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