Explore the full spectrum of palliative care

Palliative care is important, but often misunderstood. Let's explore how it can help people with serious illness live life as fully as possible.

What is palliative care?

Palliative care focuses on improving quality of life for people living with serious illness. It can benefit people:

- of any age
- in any setting
- even while receiving other treatments

When people talk about palliative care, they usually mean **specialist palliative care** provided by a palliative care doctor, nurse, or team. But in many cases, it can be broader than that.

Palliative care can also:

- be provided by a primary care team and other community members
- start at diagnosis and continue throughout an illness

This is called a **palliative *approach*** to care.
It's also known as primary- or generalist-level palliative care.

Care can range from a palliative approach to care to specialist palliative care, and can change depending on a person's needs.

- most people can receive a **palliative approach to care**
- some people need a combination of **both**
- few people need **specialist palliative care** for more complex needs

The truth about palliative care

Despite what some may think, palliative care:

- is not only for when someone is dying
- is for all ages and stages of illness
- can be provided in settings like at home or in the community, including residential care facilities
- can involve doctors, nurses, social workers, counsellors and more
- is not just for treating physical symptoms
- includes emotional, psychological, social and spiritual support
- can be provided alongside other treatments
- includes grief support before and after a loss
- provides practical support for caregivers

Palliative care may be more than you think.

Discover stories from people across Canada and learn more at:

Canada.ca/palliative-care

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of Health, 2024
Cat.: H14-543/2024E-PDF ISBN: 978-0-660-69710-9 Pub.: 230714