

How do I talk to my patient about hospice care?

While challenging, the earlier the hospice conversation takes place the better. Patients, families, and physicians should err on the side of getting hospice involved as early as possible. We can help you have the hospice conversation with patients and their families.

Usually, care is ready to begin within a day or two of a referral. However, in urgent situations, service may begin sooner.

Hospice is a philosophy regarding end-of-life care. The plan of care includes methods for treating a patient's mind, body, and spirit. Hospice care focuses on improving quality of life by controlling pain and managing symptoms when a cure is no longer possible.

Support also extends to family members dealing with the disease process by providing grief and bereavement services. Care is delivered in whatever setting is best for the patient and family. That may be in their private residence, a loved one's home, a senior living community, a hospital, or a specialized inpatient hospice center.

People often believe hospice is only for cancer patients or for the elderly. The truth is that if a physician believes that a patient's life expectancy is less than six months, various illnesses may qualify for hospice.

There is often reluctance on the part of family members to accept that hospice should be considered for their loved one. Part of that struggle comes from the belief that hospice means giving up.

Studies actually indicate that patients live longer with hospice than without. Beginning hospice care at the onset of diagnosis helps the patient as well as the family fully benefit from the emotional, spiritual, and physical care hospice provides.

With the help of hospice, patients and families alike can focus on what's most important – being together and living as fully as possible.

Contact your local provider today for more information.
