

## Frequently asked questions

### Supporting a loved one during terminal illness – medical care and treatment

When facing a terminal diagnosis, families often have many questions about what to expect, how to provide the best support, and how to navigate the complex medical and emotional landscape. Here are answers to some of the most common questions families ask.

#### **Should we continue pursuing aggressive treatments even after a terminal diagnosis?**

This decision depends on your loved one's goals, values, and quality of life preferences. Some people choose to continue treatments that might extend life, while others focus on comfort care. The key is ensuring the decision aligns with your loved one's wishes. Discussing the potential benefits, risks, and limits of continued treatment with your medical team might also help you to make an informed decision.

#### **How do we know if our loved one is in pain, especially if they can't communicate clearly?**

Look for non-verbal signs of discomfort such as grimacing, restlessness, changes in breathing, moaning, or resistance to movement. Changes in usual behaviour patterns can also indicate pain. You can also ask your medical team to use the various methods and tools they have to determine whether your loved one is in pain.

#### **What's the difference between palliative care and hospice care?**

Palliative care focuses on comfort and quality of life and can be provided alongside curative treatments at any stage of illness. Hospice care is specifically for people with a life expectancy of six months or fewer who are no longer pursuing curative treatments. Hospice provides comprehensive end-of-life care, including medical care, pain management, and emotional support for the entire family.

#### **Can we still take our loved one to the hospital if they're receiving hospice care?**

Hospice care is provided in the home, hospice facility, or nursing home, and the goal is to avoid hospitalisation. However, if your loved one experiences severe symptoms that cannot be managed at their current location, hospitalisation may be necessary. The hospice team will work with you to determine the best course of action based on your loved one's comfort and care plan.