

Frequently asked questions

Supporting a loved one during terminal illness – practical daily life issues

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.

How do we balance caring for our loved one with a terminal illness and work and other responsibilities?

This balance requires ongoing adjustment and support from others. Consider discussing flexible work arrangements with your employer and accepting help from family and friends. If it is within your financial means, you can hire a caregiver to look after your loved one during the night so the rest of the family has the opportunity to rest. Remember that you can't do everything alone, and asking for help is essential for sustaining your ability to provide care.

How do we handle visitors when our loved one is very ill?

Establish visiting guidelines that prioritise your loved one's comfort and energy levels. This might include limiting visit length, restricting the number of visitors at one time, or asking visitors to call before coming. It's okay to say no to visitors if your loved one is too tired or uncomfortable. Designate one family member to coordinate visits and communicate guidelines to friends and extended family.

What should we do if our loved one can no longer eat or drink?

Decreased appetite and fluid intake are normal symptoms of terminal illness. Do not force eating or drinking, as this can cause discomfort. If your loved one shows interest, offer small amounts of their favourite foods or liquids. Focus on mouth care to maintain comfort. The medical team can help you understand what's normal and when intervention might be helpful. Decreased appetite and fluid intake are typical symptoms of terminal illness. Do not force eating or drinking, as this can cause discomfort. If your loved one shows interest, offer small amounts of their favourite foods or liquids. Focus on mouth care to maintain comfort.