



Palliative Care and Lung Cancer: Getting the Support You Need

Palliative care is the medical specialty focused on relieving pain, stress and other symptoms to improve your quality of life. It is not the same as hospice care, which is given at the end of life.



How can palliative care help someone facing lung cancer?

Treatment Planning: Palliative care teams can help you and your family understand your treatment options and goals, plan for the future and offer practical advice about talking to loved ones. They also offer assistance with making difficult decisions.

Cancer-fighting therapies: When cancer-fighting therapies like chemotherapy, radiation, targeted therapy and/or immunotherapy are part of your treatment plan for lung cancer, palliative care can help to ease some of the side effects you may experience.

Surgery: Palliative care may be helpful in managing postoperative pain.

Stress: Palliative care may help reduce the anxiety, fear and depression that some lung cancer patients and caregivers feel as they face lung cancer. This type of care may include medication, massage therapy, guided imagery, counseling and more.

Navigating the medical system: Palliative care specialists may help get all of the members of your care team on the “same page” to help you make sure you are getting the care you need. Palliative care social workers are also instrumental in helping design a discharge plan for you that meets your needs and those of your family.

First and foremost, the palliative care team is concerned with helping you and your family get the support you need.





To do:

- ☐ Ask your doctor for a palliative care referral as soon as you can.
- ☐ If there is no palliative care specialist where you are receiving care, visit getpalliativecare.org to find a specialist near you.
- ☐ Before making an appointment, call your insurance company to see what costs are covered with palliative care.
- ☐ Meet the palliative care team and ask questions. Be open about your treatment goals and any symptoms you may be experiencing.

List your questions here:

Where do I receive palliative care?

Palliative care is provided in a variety of settings including the hospital, outpatient clinics, home and long-term care facilities.

Does my insurance pay for palliative care?

Palliative care may be covered under your insurance plan. Talk with your insurance provider about the details of your coverage. If costs concern you, a social worker or financial consultant from the palliative care team can help you.

How do I get palliative care?

Ask for it! Tell your doctors, nurses, family and caregivers that you want palliative care. You can also search for a palliative care specialist at getpalliativecare.org.

How do I know if palliative care is right for me?

Palliative care may be an option for you if you suffer from pain, stress or other side effects due to your lung cancer. Palliative care can be provided at any stage of your lung cancer and along with other treatments.

What can I expect from palliative care?

The palliative care team works in partnership with your own doctor to provide support for you and your family. The team provides symptom management, extra time for communication and helps navigate the health system.



Who provides palliative care?

Palliative care is provided by a team of specialists including palliative care doctors, nurses and social workers. Massage therapists, pharmacists, nutritionists, spiritual care advisors and others might also be part of the team.

Adapted from the Center to Advance Palliative Care's document, *Palliative Care: What You Should Know*.