

Palliative care is care that helps people live their life as fully and as comfortably as possible when living with a life-limiting or terminal illness. The aim is to give someone the best quality of life in their end-of-life care.

Palliative care is person and family-centred care provided for a person with an active, progressive, advanced disease, who has little or no prospect of cure and who is expected to die, and for whom the primary goal is to give them the best the quality of life possible.

Current Treatment

Palliative care focuses on providing relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness. The goal is to improve the quality of life of both the patient and the family. The palliative care team can involve many different types of health care professionals and workers. It includes looking after physical, emotional and spiritual needs such as:

- Relief of pain and other symptoms such as loss of appetite, nausea, constipation and fatigue
- Treatments to slow the growth or spread of cancer or disease if it cannot be cured
- Support for emotional, social and spiritual needs
- Counselling and grief support for the person and their family
- Providing equipment needed to aid care at home
- Links to other services such as home help and financial support
- Referrals to respite care services

Medical Cannabis and Palliative Care

Medicinal cannabis may be considered as part of add-on therapy for any person with advanced, life-limiting illness whose symptoms have not been sufficiently relieved by first-line treatment. People may also show interest in medical cannabis therapy if they are experiencing many symptoms or unwanted side effects from multiple medications.

Cannabinoid therapeutics as a palliative treatment for cancer patients seems to be well tolerated, effective and safe option to help them cope with their related symptoms. Whilst palliative care providers endorse cannabis for a wide range of palliative care symptoms, the gap between these beliefs and actual recommendation or prescription is significant.

As there are limited studies on medicinal cannabis treatment in palliative care, it should be used only after standard treatments have failed or at the clinician's discretion. It is possible that medicinal cannabis will interact with chemotherapy and other medications used in palliative care.

Support Organisations

Palliative Care Australia <https://palliativecare.org.au/>

There are a range of [national resources](#) and [state resources](#) for people receiving palliative care and their carers. These government and non-government services relate to medical, financial and psychosocial support.

References

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Abstracts

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