

10 tips for understanding how palliative care can help people with cancer

1. Palliative care provides an **extra layer of support** for anyone living with cancer: you may receive palliative care at **any age** and at **any stage** of cancer illness **and at the same time** as receiving treatment for the cancer.
2. Palliative care is not the same as hospice (which is care for people who are usually in the last 6 months of life); **it is not reserved for the end of life.**
3. Palliative care focuses on the person with cancer AND on the person's **family/support system**, since cancer affects you and those who care about you.
4. Palliative care improves **quality of life and wellness** by helping symptoms caused by the cancer as well as symptoms caused by treatments for cancer.
5. Palliative care is **“whole person” care**: your **physical, emotional, and spiritual** comfort all contribute to your quality of life.
6. **You do not have to tolerate pain!** Untreated pain may decrease appetite, interrupt normal sleep, and even cause depression. Always tell your treatment team if you are experiencing pain.
7. **Not all treatments for symptoms are medication**: your team will help you explore effective treatments (like acupuncture, massage, meditation, physical therapy, counseling) to find the combination that works best for you.
8. A big part of whole person care is **understanding what matters most to you** and what your goals for treatment are. **Ask about Advance Care Planning.**
9. Studies show that people with serious cancers who receive early palliative care may **live longer**, as well as have better quality of life!
10. You may qualify for palliative care services at home...ask your team!